

**THE STATUS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS IN  
KITWE TOWN**

**BY**

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the award of degree of Master of Education**

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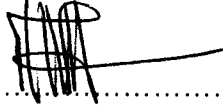
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## DECLARATION

I, Mulando Evans, do declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has never been submitted by anyone at this institution or at any other university.

Signature:



Date:

29/07/11

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father and my late sister Florence, my wife and children Chomba, Musonda, Chilambwe, Makungu and Mulemba, as well as to my mother and all my brothers and sisters.

## APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mulando is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in the school of Education of the University of Zambia.

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## **ACRONYMS**

CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CLT	Christian Living Today
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCC	National Curriculum Count
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RE	Religious Education
RI	Religious Instruction
SAME	Spiritual and Moral Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ZEC	Zambia Episcopal Conference

## **ABSTRACT**

This study set out to find out the status of Religious Education (RE) in eight (8) High Schools in Kitwe Town on the Copperbelt. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative strategies to explore and quantify respectively, answers to fundamental questions affecting the existence of RE as a curriculum subject in the eight High Schools. From the time missionaries introduced formal education in Zambia, RE has been one of the key subjects. It is one of the subjects on the curriculum in Zambia taught in basic schools, high schools, colleges of education and the University of Zambia. Two hundred and thirty five (235) questionnaires were administered to pupils, twenty two (22) to teachers and four (4) to Head teachers to complete. The findings showed that there was a shortage of qualified teachers in RE in the sampled high schools. From individual and group interviews, the study also found that there was a mixture of attitudes towards RE among pupils, head teachers, teachers and pupils. Overall, most pupils expressed interest in the subject, but they were not accorded the opportunity to take RE because their schools were offering it to a limited number of pupils due to shortage of teachers or due to RE teachers opting to teach other subject in which they are equally qualified. The recommendations made by this researcher are that head teachers should take a leading role in promoting the teaching of RE in schools. Furthermore, the two syllabi of 2044 and 2046 should be merged into one syllabus which should be more of religious literacy than Christian indoctrination; only trained teachers in RE should teach the subject; the subject should be treated like any other subject on the school time table; careers, guidance and placement teachers should help pupils understand the importance of the subject in relation to admission to Universities and the Ministry of Education (MoE) should provide enough RE teaching and learning materials to high schools to enhance the teaching of the subject. Overall, this study took the assumption that Zambia is not yet a secularised society. Therefore, most people think about the world in religious terms. Thus, RE has the potential of addressing Christian fundamentalism. By encouraging high school pupils to take religious education, Zambia's future will be assured of a tolerant, moral and educated society.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Chapter one provides a synopsis of the study. This has been done by giving the background to the study, which establishes what prompted the study. RE has often been sidelined by other subjects that some head teachers, careers masters and time table planners think are ‘more important’. However, since the turn of the new millennium, Zambian scholars of RE have justified the provision of RE in Zambian schools. So far, the model Zambian RE syllabus aims at developing in pupils, an empathetic understanding of the world religions represented in Zambia (Simuchimba, 2006).

### **1.1 Background**

Christian missionaries can legitimately claim to have initiated the education system in Zambia. From the 1880s onwards, Christian churches founded schools, trained teachers and organised the school curriculum. The first school was a mission school at Sefula. In 1884, Frederick Anort established this school, with an intention to evangelise and teach the local people how to read the Bible. Thus, RE was one of the earliest school curriculum subjects introduced by the early Christian missionaries in Zambia. It was then known as Religious Instruction (RI) and it was taught by church leaders, pastors and priests with the aim of converting young people to their churches. On the whole, missionaries played a vital role as far as fostering education in Zambia was concerned. They used it effectively to introduce rudiments of Western civilisation as well as Christianity. RE was one of the most important subjects along side such subjects as writing and reading and arithmetic (the so called 3Rs).

It is important to explain why RE is still a curriculum subject in Zambia today. Ideally, pupils are supposed to be encouraged to reflect on and discuss a number of profoundly puzzling yet fascinating questions. Such questions include; whether there is any purpose inherent in life and the universe, why life in general exists, whether human life as such has value, and whether there is an element of evil built into human nature. These questions are seen as distinctively religious.

Overall, RE is meant to contribute to social knowledge and understanding. It can therefore help pupils understand how religion relates to society. RE also contributes to historical knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils can learn about the influence of Christianity on Zambian life. Finally, RE can contribute to the moral well being of human beings. In the 1996 education policy, RE has space because it contributes to the holistic education of the learner (MoE, 1996).

According to Astley and Robbins (2001) in England, RE is often referred to as the fourth 'R' by some scholars. There is a move to refer to it as such because religious literacy means helping pupils interpret and analyse worldviews (Erricker, 2010: 122). Arguably, the end of mission education should perhaps be acknowledged in 21<sup>st</sup> century Zambia. Lay teachers from different denominations now teach RE. Any form of faith nurture or faith formation is a voluntary activity among extra-curricula activities in schools, whether state owned or church owned.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There are many high schools on the Copperbelt which do not encourage the teaching and learning of RE. No systematic inquiry has been made to establish the reasons for this scenario. This study set out to investigate the reasons why RE is discouraged in most high schools on the Copperbelt.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **Main Objective**

The main objective of the study was to find out the status of RE in the 8 selected high schools in Kitwe town.

#### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

In order to address the main objective of the study, the following specific objectives have been formulated to narrow the focus of the research.

- (i) Establish the status of RE in the 8 selected high schools from the views of the RE teachers themselves, pupils taking RE and the school managers.
- (ii) Establish the extent to which RE is being taught in the selected high schools.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

- (i) What are the views of teachers, pupils and school managers on RE in the selected high schools in Kitwe town?
- (ii) To what extent is RE taught in the selected schools?

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

At the moment in Zambia, the concern about RE is that it has to be educational. But no attention has been paid to its status. The significance of this study is that its findings will contribute to the understanding of how RE is perceived by teachers, pupils and school managers in the selected high schools. The findings of the research could feed into the monitoring procedures of the Curriculum Development Specialists and the Education Standard Officers' data bank. RE teachers who are keen to see RE develop as an important subject may utilise the information to find a better approach to handling the subject. The study may also help clear the misunderstanding that many people in Zambia, including many MoE officials have about RE. By and large the study will also feed into the argument that RE in Zambia should be more educational.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

The study was specifically conducted in Kitwe town high schools. It was confined to Kitwe because the city has many high schools, which provided appropriate research sites. It was also chosen due to the researcher's proximity to the schools as he worked within the town.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

The researcher did not find literature on the status of RE in Zambia. However, this did not deter the researcher from going ahead with the study.

## **2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

Throughout the history of humankind, education has been used to transmit values and to shape behaviour. RE is specifically designed to deal with the affective and cognitive domains of the learner. It takes care of the moral and spiritual aspects of the learner to some extent. How this is done is another matter beyond the focus of this dissertation. In the literature review our aim is to derive a framework and to fill a gap in the literature on Zambia about the status of RE. The literature review also takes a glimpse of what other people have written about the subject and what they have not. The chapter has reviewed literature beyond Zambia. Reference has been made to literature from the United Kingdom.

### **2.1 Concept and Role of Education**

To many people ‘Education’ means the process of learning to be a self-reliant person in society. Education helps a person to become human. According to Grimmitt (1987: 198) RE is the critical initiation of pupils into the religious dimension of reality.

By its nature, education implies the transmission of ideals which society considers important and desirable. Education is thus seen to be a process of inducting young members of the society into the culture, norms and habits of the society. The young are taught the values and virtues of the society. Education philosophers in the classical world regarded education as having the responsibility of promoting acceptable behaviour. They saw education as having the role of transmitting desirable knowledge, skills and ideals (Akinpelu, 1985). Durkheim (1956) regarded education as having a vital role in the process of socialisation. He argued that people are not born human in a social sense but it is through education that they are made human. What is worth



noting from the views above is that RE is part of education and a powerful tool for transmitting morals and acceptable behaviour. The existence of RE is, therefore, not only a reflection of the inherent interest of its subject matter, but of the work of dedicated and professional teachers as well as faith communities who have stood by the subject.

## **2.2 Historical Background of RE in England and Wales**

*'So RE will always be an important part of school life despite a crowded curriculum. I want to make it absolutely clear that we do not want RE to be squeezed out.'* These were the words of Jim Knight, MP, a Labour Member of Parliament and Schools Minister, in his speech to the National Association of SACREs in 2008.<sup>1</sup> This quotation may not be quite appropriate to Zambia, but it becomes a constant reminder to Zambians that even in a secularised society such as the UK, RE is maintained in schools despite the fact that it suffers marginalisation. But the point worth driving home is that Zambia needs politicians like Jim Knight to ensure that RE is taught in all schools and to all classes.

In any event, before we briefly look at the historical development of RE in Zambia, there is need to show how RE has developed in England and Wales, because Zambian RE is a carbon copy of RE in England and Wales. In England and Wales, as in many countries, RE occupies a rather anomalous and peculiar position in the school curriculum. RE exists outside the national curriculum and its content is largely locally determined, within some fairly minimal legal requirements, and overseen by national bodies such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (Grimmitt: 1987).

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by Copley, T. (2008). *Teaching Religion: Sixty Years of Religious Education in England and Wales* (new updated edition). Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press. P 199.

RE is a statutory subject and all schools must teach it in the UK. The legal requirements governing RE were first set out in the 1944 Education Act, refined in the Education Reform Act of 1988 and confirmed by the Education Act of 1996 and 1998 (Ofsted, 2007). However, it is an unpopular subject that has multiple problems. Wilson reports that since the enlightenment and secularisation of Western education:

Not only did secular schools replace church schools, but within the secular schools, the significance of RE diminished. It has low status as a subject and is often regarded as make-weight to complete formally the demand for examination passes in a certain number of subjects. Finally, it is an open secret that in many schools, the period allotted to religious instruction is often used for talks on current affairs (Wilson, 1966: 48).

According to the 1944 Education Act, RE was the only compulsory subject in England. There was a general belief that if children acquired a good knowledge of the Bible, they would become very good citizens and help rebuild the society destroyed by the Second World War. The local nature of RE (with over 150 slightly different syllabuses in England) made it difficult to generalise, though these days it is usually a study of world religions, covering a range of perspectives in the 'big questions,' sometimes including humanist ones and almost always atheistic arguments (Hull, 1978).

RE in England and Wales reached the extent that saw parents withdraw their children from it because it did not offer the education needed by learners. However, the subject moved towards a more centralised system. RE pupils now have the opportunities to study humanism alongside the six main faiths found in Britain and some minor ones (Grimmitt, 1987). It is believed that the inclusion of humanism in the RE syllabus made it suffer low status and low standards for many years. In addition, pupils' indifference, lack of qualified teachers and problems with resources

were common problems that accompanied the subject (Manson, 2004). The central aim of all RE was to ensure students obtained knowledge and cultural readiness:

- To become familiar with their own religion's thinking and their own cultural background in order to strengthen their self-esteem and cultural identity.
- To get to know different religions and views of the world and to learn to respect people who have different conceptions and to interact with them.
- To develop an ethically responsible attitude to life, which could be used to make value decisions to be responsible for one's own actions and influence in society.

In addition, some areas of the main content were dealt with in other subjects on the curriculum. That meant that pupils should know about different kinds of beliefs and worldviews. It also entailed an ability to deal with the universal questions that all human beings ask and the ability to analyse and reflect upon them. For Dale (1902), the purpose of teaching religion was to inculcate enthusiasm and devotion of faith.

In Great Britain the National Curriculum Council (NCC) took some national responsibility for the development of RE. The Curriculum Council for Wales had always taken RE seriously (Education Reform Act, 1988: 164). The clear intention of the Cox Lobby in 1988 was to give RE a deliberately Christianising role though the brokerage of the then Bishop of London, deprived them of this by including expressly all the other major religions represented in Great Britain. Nevertheless, the Lobby had communicated to the media its view that the Act required RE to be mainly Christian and organised attempts were immediately mounted to ensure that this interpretation of the law was accepted. The Lobbyists' argument was that RE should mainly be playing a Christian role (Education Reforms Act, 1988). In a similar manner, the Zambian RE has found itself with two camps, one for those advocating for RE to be more Christian especially

those who have fallen for the declaration of Zambia as a 'Christian Nations' and on the other hand those who want it to remain education 'educationist' (Ziwa, 2008).

On the nature and content of the subject, Crawford and Rossiter (1993) argued that if RE acknowledges the ways the youths perceive religions and meaning, then would more likely make constructive connections with the spiritual processes that are most prominent for them at that stage of their lives. This was just as important for those who would not have any association with organised religions as it was for those who would. If the teaching of religion in state or church schools does not make some connections with what young people see, there is a greater likelihood that they will look at the material in a clinical and anthropological way, because it exists and has some pattern to it. The overall impression is that it has no compelling links with what they themselves experience as important issues of their life.

Crawford and Rossiter (Ibid) further argued an attempted to focus on spiritual issues or life themes would not increase young people's interest in the study of religion, the subject should have content that had a higher probability of occasioning interest than something that was too descriptive. The latter had a higher probability of being treated with the clinical anthropological detachment as referred to above (Crawford and Rossiter, 1993).

Although it is often remarked that RE still contains residual elements of cinderella or the suffering servant in the British curriculum, it is worth noting that in some respects British religious educators led the field in terms of research and influence, certainly in the English-speaking world and increasingly more widely in Europe and beyond. The innovative ideas and methodologies of British RE were quickly appropriated and integrated into the on going theorising and practice of RE in other places, including Zambia.

At secondary level, RE remained the subject with the highest percentage of lessons taught by non-specialists. At primary level, most teachers felt insecure when teaching RE, partly because it was not given adequate provision in their training course (Gallagher, 1987). RE in schools faced both structural and policy related problems. Though RE is a core subject to date, it does not receive the same consideration as other core subjects like English, Mathematics and Science. RE, according to Gallagher (1987), is very much neglected throughout the world due to lack of education systems' interest in religious matters.

Gallagher (1987) found that in all secondary schools, the majority of RE teachers in Britain were non-specialists with no academic qualification for teaching the subject. This was somewhat less of a problem in the grammar schools where there was greater use of part-time teachers of RE such as ministers of religion. It was found that RE in Britain was rarely examined in schools. Thus, Gallagher concluded that in these schools, RE lacked the status of other subjects and had become 'the cinderella' of the curriculum, the last subject to be considered seriously when manpower, finance and timetables were being considered. Gallagher (1987) went on to suggest that, this uncertain position contributed to the tensions and negative attitudes, which were reflected in the comments made by both teachers and pupils. Gallagher account is reflected in the findings of this study which was concerned about the status of RE in Zambia.

### **2.3 Brief history of RE in Zambia**

Having looked at the historical background of RE in England and Wales, we can now consider the development of the subject in the Zambian situation. In his recent article, Simuchimba (2010: 95 in Charles Lwanga College Journal, Vol. 1 (2).) points out that educationally, the period before independence can be divided into three roughly different eras: the traditional era, the pre-

missionary era before 1883, the missionary era from 1883 when the first mission school in the territory was opened, and the colonial era from 1925 when the Northern Rhodesia colonial government got involved in funding and directing African education. Before the coming of missionaries to Zambia, what we now call RE was orally taught as part of the tradition. The traditional Zambian society used informal education to teach the young the values, morals, virtues of society and to promote responsible sexual behaviour. Therefore, both the formal and informal type of education were primarily concerned with shaping the young people's values and attitudes, forming their behaviour and endowing them with morals and manners. This means that children learned acceptable ways of behaving through their encounters with the elders in the society as well as through the informal education system of the traditional set up.

Children learnt the acceptable ways of behaviour informally through examples and reprimands from elderly people and through stories, riddles, proverbs, songs and lullabies which carried moral signals. In some societies, the climax of this traditional education was the initiation at puberty. At the initiation school, the young adolescents learned about the right behaviour and their responsibility in the community. This form of traditional education has been replaced by the modern school system of education. The work of teaching adolescents about values, norms and acceptable behaviour has been taken over by teachers. It is now the work of teachers in schools to teach values and morals of the society and to promote acceptable behaviour among adolescents and a subject like RE is capable of promoting this (Simuchimba, 2001; Akinpelu, 1985).

The situation changed greatly after the arrival of Christian missionaries who established churches and built schools where formal western type of education could now be provided. The colonialists who came almost at the same time as the missionaries, worked hand in hand with the missionary societies in providing formal education to the local African people. The growth and development of RE in colonial and independent Zambia can be divided into three stages: the denominational, the interdenominational (ecumenical) and the educational stages (Flynn, 1989 and Carmody, 2004 or Simuchimba, 2004).

Between 1886 and 1971, the teaching of RE was described as 'denominational'. As mentioned earlier, the first and earliest schools in Northern Rhodesia were mission church schools whose main textbooks were the Bibles translated in local languages. Children who attended such schools were expected to become adherents to the church running the school. Religious Instruction (RI) was an important subject (if not the most important) on the school curriculum. It was taught in each school according to the doctrines, beliefs and values of the particular mission church running the school or the dominant Christian denomination in the area. In most cases, the mission school was an extension of the parish (Carmody, 2004).

According to Simuchimba (2007), the school was expected to do among children what the parish was doing among adults. As such, one important role of the mission school was to prepare young converts for membership in the church, in whatever way was appropriate to that particular denomination. RI, therefore, was a process of indoctrination in the teaching, beliefs, values and practices of different denominations. The denominational approach to RE continued even after independence until 1971. In church schools, RI was timetabled like any other subject, while in

vernment schools it was usually taught after classes by catechists or elders from different churches in the area. Each church or denomination had its own syllabus at primary level.

At junior secondary level, there were two syllabuses: syllabus A for Catholic schools and Catholic pupils in government schools and syllabus B for all Protestants. At senior level, the Cambridge Bible Knowledge syllabuses were accepted and used by all denominations.

The different RI programmes led to confusion and operational problems in government schools, notably the dividing of pupils belonging to the same class into different groups according to their church affiliation during RI lessons. Consequently, the government asked the churches to come with one common or joint syllabus for primary and junior secondary school levels if they wanted religion to continue being taught in schools (Carmody, 2004: 81; Simuchimba, 2004).

The RE between 1972 and 1984 has been described as Interdenominational or Ecumenical. This is because in 1972, a common primary school Religious Knowledge (RK) syllabus prepared by the Ministry of Education through the Primary Teachers Training College lecturers was accepted by the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) and was introduced in schools. The move made Zambia the first country in Central and Eastern Africa to put an interdenominational RE syllabus into use (Masterton, 1987).

In 1973, a two year East African syllabus called 'Developing in Christ' and a locally written one-year syllabus called 'Zambia Supplement' were accepted by the three church umbrella bodies, ZEC, CCZ and the newly created Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) to become the joint syllabus for junior secondary schools. 'Developing in Christ' was used in form one and two whereas the 'Zambia Supplement' was covered in form three. However, because of the difficult language in the 'Developing in Christ' syllabus, a modified joint version of it was later prepared



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by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) with the help of some missionaries, especially Catholics (Masterton, 1987; Simuchimba, 2005).

In 1975, the Ministry of Education introduced 'Christian Living Today' (CLT), also from East Africa, as an alternative RE syllabus to the Cambridge Bible Knowledge syllabuses at school certificate or senior secondary level. 'Christian Living Today' was a continuation of the 'Developing in Christ' syllabus and was taught mainly in the Catholic-run and some government schools. The interdenominational approach to Zambian RE continued until 1984 (Simuchimba, 2005). Meanwhile, discussions for a more educational approach to the subject were already going on as part of wider proposals for educational reforms published in 1977 (MoE, 1977).

From 1985 to date, the situation can be described as the educational stage. The main aim of the 1977 nation reforms was 'to create a system of education which was properly attuned to and more fully met the needs and aspirations of Zambians' (MoE, 1977). In line with this, from 1984/5, RE as a school subject was made more educational and Zambian in approach. At junior secondary school level, a 'Zambianised' version of the 'Developing in Christ' syllabus was introduced in 1984. At senior secondary school level, two new syllabuses were introduced; a 'Zambianised' version of 'Christian Living Today' called 'RE syllabus 2044' and a modified version of the 'Cambridge Bible Knowledge' called 'RE syllabus 2046'. All the three new syllabuses became pluralistic by including aspects of other religious traditions in Zambia namely: Zambian Traditional Beliefs, Islam, Hinduism and religious aspects of the then national philosophy called 'Zambian Humanism' (Simuchimba, 2005).

According to Mudalitsa (2006), both 2044 and 2046 syllabi are of British origin. The 2046 originated in the 1940's and came to Zambia long before independence under the name of Bible Knowledge syllabus, while the 2044 originated in the early 1980's and came to Zambia via East Africa as the Christian Living Today syllabus.

With these changes, the name of the subject also officially changed from RE to Spiritual and Moral Education (SAME), although the old name RE continued to be popularly used. The aim of the subject was also broadened and stated as follows:

The main aim of spiritual and moral education is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from four main religious traditions in Zambia, namely; Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian Beliefs and Islam, and from religious elements of the Zambian philosophy of Humanism (MoE, 1983: 3).

The ongoing educational reforms since 1996 have been a challenge for the country to make Zambian RE even more educational and relevant to society. Accordingly, the junior secondary syllabus was revised in 1995, while the senior secondary syllabuses are being revised or new ones are being prepared. The situation regarding RE in secondary schools in Zambia is such that *it is more or less compulsory in mission schools and optional in some public schools. However, a situation has arisen in public schools, especially basic schools, where RE is still compulsory due to scarcity of subjects. Even in mission schools, not all pupils willingly choose RE.*

A research on the attitude of teachers towards RE was conducted on a small scale by Mubanga (1994). He found out that many trained Zambian teachers had a negative attitude towards RE and were not teaching the subject for various reasons. The investigation pointed out that some teachers stopped teaching RE owing to frustration or because they found RE not worth teaching (Mubanga, 1994). Mubanga's research is important to this study in that he found out that RE at

secondary school was regarded as a subject for dull teachers and pupils. He called these, misconceptions that teachers and pupils have about RE. Some teachers told him that RE was boring to both teachers and pupils (Mubanga, 1994: 34). There was a feeling among some people that if you took up RE, you would be considered dull. Many teachers felt very proud if they taught Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry. To them, these were the real subjects. RE was a subject of pastors and other clerics.

The inclusion of the philosophy of Humanism, Islam and Hinduism discouraged and put off many teachers. Some teachers shunned RE because it required them to discuss traditional rituals and initiation ceremonies with the pupils, which seemed to be against Zambian traditions and customs. Some teachers were discouraged by syllabus 2044, which they thought was Catholic oriented.

Mubanga's study was undertaken in 1994. There does not seem to have been any other similar study in Zambia. *Thus, there is a lacuna that the current study might fill. Moreover, this study reminds RE teachers to take seriously their subject because once it is sidelined, they will lose out professionally. Above all, the current study brings some fresh information to the study of RE in Zambia, although a national survey is required in order to have a complete picture of the status of RE in the country.*

## **2.4 The Status of RE in England and Wales Today**

The intention of showing the status of RE in England and Wales today is to later relate what is obtaining in the schools that were visited and the situation in the model countries of RE as we know it today in Zambia. Copley (2008: 210) provides us with achievement, failures of RE and what RE represents in England and Wales. The first achievement of RE is that it is still existing

as a school subject in a society, which for over sixty years appeared to discard religion as a majority occupation and RE was at the risk of being replaced by social studies or Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) or citizenship or philosophy despite a challenge from each of them and a political settlement in 1988 that disadvantaged it.

The second achievement in the sixty year period is a strong and assured professionalism fostered by various RE associations. The National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) along with their journals, curriculum support materials, conferences and advisers have helped RE teachers to feel part of a large group and not isolated individuals. The idea that anybody can teach RE even though they are not trained has gone.

The third achievement that RE in England and Wales is associated with is an active research community mainly in higher education, which is seeking to advance its pursuit and sharpen its pedagogical bases. Copley (*ibid*) points out that the roots of serious research in RE can be traced to the 1930s and even earlier but research was put on hold by the war. Related to research is a steady stream of books that has flowed through the decades to provide a rationale for RE and to argue the case for particular pedagogies. Alongside these have been many textbooks and other resources designed to make RE interesting and relevant at classroom level.

The fourth achievement for British RE is that it is now part of a European and global community of religious educators who with different conceptions of RE, in part shaped by their differing cultures, find it useful and important to engage in dialogue and share experiences. The fifth achievement for RE is that it is moving closer to curriculum parity. One lesson per week at the beginning or end of the day, usually with a non-specialist teacher, has gradually moved towards one hour or more per week in secondary schools. Homework, external examination entry, outside

visits and fieldwork, post-16 opportunities and almost National Curriculum status within a national framework are now being undertaken, though The legal quirks surrounding RE allow head teachers who are somehow personally against it to cause damage by starving it of staffing and resources. The sixth achievement of RE is that it appears to be a popular subject with students in school.

Copley (*ibid*) also posits the failures of RE in the UK. There are basically five failures. The arrival of some secondary Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses of graduates with little formal academic study of religion in higher education has meant a dilution of subject background and new entrants to RE teaching who do not always have an understanding grounded in experience of what the academic study of religion entails. Thirdly, RE seems to have studiously avoided studying ‘popular religion’ thus failing to address where many of its pupils are. Fourthly, RE has received little funding. Fifthly, for nearly forty years, there has been almost no dialogue between professional religious educators and professional theologians in the UK. This has led to misunderstanding, exaggerated differences and tension between education (RE) and religion (theology). Overall, the story of RE from 1944 to 2007 reveals perhaps a uniquely English and Welsh paradox: sincerely to affirm the importance of RE while neglecting its position on the national curriculum (*ibid*: 208).

This chapter set out to find and review literature on the status of RE in Zambian schools. The stark reality is that there is no literature. In our search we came across some Bachelors degree dissertation albeit on attitudes of RE teachers towards RE. What we hope to contribute to the literature on the status of RE in Zambia are issues beyond attitudes that account for the current status of RE in high schools in the town of Kitwe.

### **3 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methods that were used in this study. It describes the research design, population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments and data collection techniques and the analysis of the data. It informs the reader how data were solicited from the sampled population.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to gather data. This combination was necessary as the study sought to collect quantitative data as well as in-depth information about the subject area. The quantitative approach collected data that is numerical in nature while the qualitative approach collected explanatory type of information.

The way a researcher chooses his or her methodology and area of study usually depends on the existing worldviews. Every researcher must, therefore, identify with one of the existing world epistemologies of positivism and interpretivism. In terms of the research paradigm, the study employed positivism and interpretivism to guide the perception of the whole process. The positivism paradigm applies to the quantitative part. The positivism paradigm is mostly used for study collecting quantitative data. The positivism paradigm is based on the premise that it is possible to be truly objective when studying reality as one can suspend his/her own values as an evaluator such that the findings can be generalized to the rest of the population. The positivism paradigm provides an opportunity for a study to determine quantitative changes in terms of set targets by the programme objectives.

The positivism paradigm also puts one in a position of control with technical expertise and sees things objectively rather than subjectively. However, the positivism paradigm has been criticized and is seen not to be the best paradigm for evaluation of primary health care programmes. The positivism paradigm has been criticized as it is seen not to be participatory involving the community or clients. It is also seen to be inducing a political aspect based on the decisions made on the programme's performance.

The interpretivism paradigm is employed in the qualitative part of the research. This enables the collection of in-depth and explanatory information about the status of RE in school. The interpretivism paradigm is premised on the assumption that knowledge and meaning is a product of interpretation of one's perception of the situation, and as a result there is no objective knowledge which is devoid of thinking and reasoning (Gephart, 1999). Hence, the interpretivism approach seeks an in depth understanding and interpretation of the situation by the people. In this case the perceptions of respondents on RE will only be utilized according to the knowledge and interpretation of the people. The interpretivism paradigm is criticized for relying so much on an individual's meaning and understanding of the world. It is therefore subjective and the researcher does not have control.

The quantitative design was mainly used in order to categorise and summarise data obtained from questionnaires. The qualitative strategy was used to get the views and opinions about RE. In these two strategies, the researcher gathered data by interviewing and administering questionnaires to a sample of respondents.



### **3.2 Population**

A population is a group of individual objects or events with common characteristics. In this study, the population was from schools in Kitwe city. The population for this research consisted of all the high schools, head-teachers and pupils in the city of Kitwe.

### **3.3 Sample**

A sample is defined by Best and Kahn (2008: 264) as a ‘small proportion of the population that is selected for observation analysis’. Ghosh (2003: 117) also defined a sample as ‘a subset of the whole population which is actually investigated by a researcher and whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population’. Purposeful sampling as a tool for data collection enabled me to select the people that I assumed had the information that I was looking for. It was important to purposively sample because I needed informants of different ages so as to be able to get varying information pertaining to each age group. This strategy does not allow me to generalise my findings to a larger population other than the one I dealt with during my fieldwork. Indeed, generalisation is not a goal of qualitative research, rather in-depth, rich information is favoured. The sample for this study was twenty-two (22) teachers from eight (8) high schools; two hundred and thirty-five (235) pupils from seven high schools and four head teachers.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

Sampling according to Kulbir (2006: 252) is referred to as ‘the process of selecting a sample from the population’. For this purpose, the population is divided into a number of parts known as sampling units. The researcher used purposive sampling to come up with those schools in which RE was receiving the least attention in Kitwe district. Purposive sampling according to Kulbir (2006: 265) is ‘the type that is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher’. The sample consisted of elements which contained the most representative characteristic or typical attributes

of the population. Purposive sampling has the elements of probability, since the researcher was aware and exactly knew who to interview. The twenty-two RE teachers from seven high schools were selected using simple random sampling technique. This was to enable each individual teacher have a chance of being included in the sample. Random sampling was used also in order to accommodate both sexes. This technique was used to avoid biasness in data collection as gender had been taken care of.

### **3.5 Data Collection and Research Instruments**

Data was collected by using interview guides, interview schedule and questionnaires. A cursory document analysis was also done to check the pattern of performance. Interview guides helped the researcher to explore and get the required information. Interviews have advantages as well as disadvantages. Some of the advantages of interviews as outlined by Bryman (2008) include the importance of getting access to information that cannot otherwise be observed and also that interviewers do not intrude in people's lives more than observers do. Additionally, the outline that is usually applied in interviews "increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent" (Patton, 2002: 349). Indeed the interviews helped me to get comprehensive data and the use of an interview guide allowed for systematic data from the informants.

Despite the few mentioned advantages and the others not mentioned, interviews have disadvantages as well. One of the disadvantages is the issue of reactive effects. Though reactive effects may not be as much as those that characterise observations, they still nevertheless occur with interviews, especially that the latter usually have unnatural character (Bryman, 2008). One initiator viewed the interview as a form of an evaluation and so she was worried about how she was going to fair in comparison to the others. Though I continually assured her that the purpose

of my interviews was not to assess who has more knowledge than the other, it is possible that her concerns could have influenced the way she gave her responses. Reactive effects can also be self on the part of the interviewer, resulting from lack of training (Patton, 2002). Since I did not receive training in interview techniques prior to entering the field, it is possible that I exhibited some reactive effects, especially during the first interview.

Questionnaires in this case were the quantitative method of data collection. Questionnaires comprised structured questions, both closed and open-ended questions were administered to the respondents to solicit their views. A questionnaire is defined by Kulbir (2006: 131) as a 'form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions'. In other words, it is a means for securing answers to questions by using a form, which the respondent completes by himself. Interview guides were used to gather as much information as possible from head teachers. Kulbir (2006: 145) describes interviews as a way of collecting information verbally in a face-to-face relationship.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data collected was analysed by making a comparative analysis following statistical guidelines used in descriptive statistics. The process of data analysis involved the use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). SPSS as a software was selected because it has provisions for data entry screen design as well as statistical analysis functions at the same time. It is also user friendly. The data from the interviews were also coded and analysed by categorising information under themes. This constituted the larger section of data collected from interview with teachers.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues arise through the entire process of an interview investigation, and potential ethical concerns should be taken into consideration from the start of an investigation to the final report. Since ethical considerations have to be borne in mind during the whole process of research, it is common nowadays to have the approval of an ethics committee well ahead of commencement of fieldwork that deals with human subjects. The researcher accepted individual responsibility for the conduct of the research and ensured that informed consent from respondents in the study was obtained in order to make sure that all respondents participated freely and voluntarily.

## **4 CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the study that aimed at investigating the status of RE in selected high schools in city of Kitwe. The researcher used questionnaires for different categories of respondents and employed interviews for methodological triangulation in order to achieve greater validity of the data that was being solicited.

### **4.1 Findings from Head-teachers**

#### **4.1.1 RE as a Subject**

Sampled head teachers in the study were asked to indicate if their schools offered Religious Education. It was found out that all the eight head teachers interviewed offer RE in their respective schools. A further question was asked about whether they had adequate staffing in the RE section. The Head teachers were of the view that the staffing levels in RE were low.

#### **4.1.2 Qualifications of the RE Teachers**

In four schools, all the teachers of RE had the appropriate qualifications to teach the subject. Some were diploma holders and others were degree holders. In the other four schools, the head teachers reported that not all the teachers were qualified to teach RE. The researcher was given to understand that some teachers had just volunteered to teach RE out of interest. However, although there are fewer trained teachers for RE in some schools, the pass rate in RE was high, average and above average. The researcher had a cursory look at the 2009 results to have a feel of how the pupils performed in RE

As regards the number of pupils taking RE in schools under study, the head teachers said that this was disappointing because there were fewer pupils taking RE. They did not seem to know why this was the case as they had no influence on the pupils' choices of subjects.

#### **4.1.3 Whether RE was a Compulsory Subject**

*Head teachers were asked to say whether RE was a compulsory subject or not. All of them indicated that it was an optional subject. They added that the subject was time-tabled.*

#### **4.1.4 Levels of Staffing in RE**

Staffing levels in RE were disappointing in all schools. The researcher was given to understand that if a teacher's teaching subjects were RE preferred and English, when a shortage of teachers of English occurred, the teacher would be asked to teach more of English than RE classes. The implication was that fewer teachers of RE meant restricting the number of pupils taking RE. One head teacher reported, 'of course in such an event we tend to share out RE hours to needy subjects. Sometimes, the teachers themselves feel that they will not utilise all the periods allocated to them because they choose which topics in RE to focus on'.

#### **4.1.5 Head teachers' View of RE as an Optional Subject**

Head teachers from the selected schools in this study indicated that RE was an optional subject. Five head teachers stated that teachers of RE preferred teaching other subjects to RE. Of course, the researcher was not arguing for making RE compulsory. What was striking in some schools was the fewer numbers of pupils taking RE. One head teacher argued that books for RE were not available to encourage pupils to take the subjects.

4.1.6 Views of Head teachers on the Cinderella Status of RE

The head teachers indicated the following as causes of RE’s cinderella status. Most of the head teachers were of the view that lack of knowledge of the role and function of RE on the curriculum was a major cause. Two head teachers said that it was due to the fact that the subject was optional. The responses came out as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: RE as a Cinderella Subject

Cause	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of knowledge of the role and function of RE on curriculum	4	50.0
Making it optional	2	25.0
No enough trained teachers	2	25.5
Total	8	100

Source: Field Data, 2010

4.1.7 Suggestions on How the Subject could Reclaim its Importance

Finally, head teachers were asked to suggest ways they thought could make RE popular in their schools. Three were of the view that recruitment of teachers be looked into while two felt that pupils must be sensitised on the importance and function of RE in the curriculum. Three felt that the situation was complex and it was interplay of many factors. One factor mentioned was that perhaps the current RE syllabi were inappropriate and not appealing to pupils.

4.2 Findings from the Teachers

RE teachers also participated in the research and their responses are indicated below.

**4.2.1 Whether Teachers who Teach RE are Trained to Teach the Subject**

Teachers were asked to indicate whether they were trained to teach Religious Education. The majority of them twenty (90.9%) said ‘yes’ while two of them said ‘no’. Those who said ‘no’ were interested in RE and indicated that they volunteered to help because they had the time.

**4.2.2 Experience in Teaching Religious Education**

Respondents were asked to indicate their teaching experience in Religious Education. The table below shows their responses. The table shows that most of them, nine (40.9%) had teaching experience of between four to six years followed by those who said they had teaching experience of between one to three years. The rest of them had between ten to twelve years; seven to nine years and less than one year teaching experience.

**Table 2: RE Teaching Experience**

Years of teaching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 1	2	9.1
1 – 3	5	22.6
4 – 6	9	40.9
7 – 9	2	9.1
10 – 12	2	9.1
18 and above	1	4.5
No response	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

In individual interviews, teachers who had taught for many years said that they could not agree to be stopped from teaching RE because they were markers and they were interested in teaching RE. Three of these teachers reported that they were studying with the University of Zambia by distance learning.



**4.2.3 Whether Respondents liked Teaching Religious Education**

Teachers in the study were asked to indicate whether they liked teaching RE. The majority of them twenty-one (95.5%) said they liked teaching the subject while two of them said they did not like teaching the subject. Those who said that they liked teaching the subject were mostly with longer years of service. In the interview one of them reported, ‘at school I liked history and RE and went to Nkrumah to study these two subjects. I have since been teaching history and RE. I teach African history and the 2046 RE syllabus and I am a hard worker’. One of the teachers who said he did not like teaching RE said that his grades at college were disappointing and she found some lecturers not inspiring and too mean with their marking. The table below shows these responses. One respondent did not volunteer back the questionnaire.

**Table 3: Reasons for Liking to Teach the Subject**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It hinges on real life morals	10	47.6
It is very interesting and a passing subject	5	23.8
Gives broader perceptive of how to view other religion	4	19.1
It covers everything, social life inclusive	2	9.5
Total	21	100.0

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

**4.2.4 Persons Mandated to Teach Religious Education**

Teachers were asked to state who should teach RE. Eighteen said ‘any person trained to teach RE, while two of the respondents said ‘devoted Christians’. Two respondents said religious leaders could teach RE. The two argued that there was a shortage of RE teachers in high schools, so it was justified to employ religious leaders, especially Catholic priests who could either be paid by the School Board or PTA.

### **4.2.5 Knowledge of Teachers who Stopped Teaching RE for Another Subject**

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to say whether they knew any teacher who stopped teaching RE for another subject. Thirteen said 'no', while eight of them said 'yes'. One respondent did not respond to the question. For the respondents who said 'yes', they were further asked to give the reasons to explain why some teachers stopped teaching RE. The reasons ranged from under staffing in what school managers thought were more important subjects, over staffing in RE, loss of interest in RE by some teachers who simply felt that teaching RE did not earn them much respect and status in the school. In individual interviews, one teacher reported that he was slowly moving away from teaching RE because he did not want to be perceived by pupils as Pharisee.

### **4.2.6 Syllabus Choice**

Teachers were also asked to indicate the RE syllabus they preferred at senior level. The majority of them (16) preferred 2046 while four preferred 2044, and two of them preferred both syllabuses. The reasons for preferring 2046 were that it seemed to be easy for most of the pupils and pupils' books were available. In interviews, those who volunteered to be interviewed pointed out that in 2046, there was not much teaching because notes were what pupils wanted. Asked whether 2046 should be the RE syllabus for the schools so as to attract pupils, the respondents did not think so. They argued that career masters needed to popularise the subject.

### **4.2.7 Whether School Administration does Support the Teaching of Religious Education**

Teachers were asked to state whether the teaching of RE received support from the school administration. Nineteen said 'yes' while one respondent said 'no'. Two respondents did not answer this question.

For the teachers who responded in the affirmative, a further question was asked to indicate how the school administration supported the teaching of RE in their schools. Sixteen said, ‘by procuring teaching and learning materials, while three said by allowing the teachers to attend workshops and seminars linked to the subject. The aspect of school managers deliberately making a case for RE in their schools was under reported.

#### **4.2.8 Why Teachers Thought RE was a Neglected Subject**

As regards to why teachers thought RE was a neglected subject, five said because it was not compulsory and that pupils think it is only about the Bible. Nine did not answer this question.

Other reasons volunteered in individual interviews were summarised by the one who said:

I honestly think that RE should be compulsory though this has myriad of implications. It should be compulsory just like civic education ought to be because this nation should aim at creating a democratic and a moral society. We also have to correct the thinking that RE is Bible study.

#### **4.2.9 Who is to Blame for Non-Teaching of RE in Schools**

The teachers who participated in the study were also asked to point out who was to blame for the cinderella position of RE in schools. Six said that the Ministry of Education was to blame. Three felt that the school administrations were responsible while five said they did not know who to blame. Eight did not respond. When asked in interviews to tell the researcher who has to be blamed, the views seem to have singled out school managers. The school managers were said to be oblivious of what was being taught. There was the unsolicited response that pointed to the inactive Zambia Association of Religious Education Teachers (ZARET) in the district.

#### **4.2.10 Teachers’ Suggestions on the Way Forward Concerning the Status of RE**

Finally, teachers were asked to give recommendations on how to improve the status of RE in schools. The table below shows that most of the teachers were of the view that it should be made

a compulsory subject like English. Seven of them said there was need to train more teachers and provide enough teaching and learning materials. Four of the teachers said the two courses (2044 and 2046) should be merged to become one. The other responses are shown in the table below.

**Table 4: Teachers’ Recommended Ways of Improving the Status of RE in Schools**

Recommendation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Make the subject a compulsory	10	45.4
Send more trained teachers to schools	7	31.8
Merge the two courses 2044 and 2046 so that it becomes one	4	18.2
Shorten the syllabus	1	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

### 4.3 Findings from the Pupils

As indicated in the methodology pupils were invited to complete a questionnaire. However, a number of them in four schools were invited to a focus group interview.

#### 4.3.1 Whether Pupils Willingly Chose to take RE

Pupils were asked to state whether they willingly chose to take RE. Their responses varied. The majority of them said ‘yes’ while thirty said ‘no’. Two respondents did not volunteer an answer. In focus group discussions in school, pupils expressed the view that their careers master was very good at identifying subjects for them when consulted. ‘We went with our grade nine results to her office and she gave us good pieces of advice’. One pupil said that her father was a teacher and was able to convince him to take RE instead of Commerce. ‘I do not regret’, he said, ‘because I am actually doing better in RE’. Overall, pupils willingly chose RE and some expressed happiness with the subject not only as an academic subject but as something that has helped them in their personal relations and in matters of sexuality.

4.3.2 Popularity of RE among Pupils and Teachers

The study sought to find out how popular RE was among the pupils and teachers in the schools under study. The study showed that 120 (48.9%) said it was popular while 108 (48.1%) of them said it was not. Seven (7) pupils did not respond to this question. Although the difference between the respondents was small, there was an indication that RE was popular among the teachers and pupils in schools. Although popular, there were fewer pupils taking it and few teachers of RE in schools. Ideally, high schools are supposed to be staffed by degree holders. This was not the case.

4.3.3 Reasons Why RE is a Popular Subject among Pupils and Teachers

Pupils were asked to indicate why they felt RE was a popular subject among the pupils and the teachers. Table 4.5 shows that most of them, forty-four (48.9%) said RE was popular because some pupils were taking the subject while thirty-one (34.4%) of them were of the view that it teaches about God and good morals. Ten indicated that it was a passing subject.

Table 5: Reasons why RE is said to be a Popular Subject among Pupils and Teachers in Schools

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It is a passing subject	26	11.1
It teaches about God and good morals	81	34.4
The school has clubs like Scripture Union where it is taught	13	5.6
Most pupils are taking the subject	115	48.9
Total	235	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2010

4.3.4 Reasons Why RE is not a Popular Subject among Pupils and Teachers

Asked to state why RE is not so popular, the pupils' answers came out as in the table below.

**Table 6: Reasons why RE is said not to be a Popular Subject among Pupils and Teachers in Schools**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It is optional	161	68.3
Some pupils think it is only for Christians	15	6.5
Some pupils feel it is boring and has no future	19	8.1
It is a difficult subject	13	5.7
Because of lack of teachers and learning materials	25	10.6
Because of lack of sensitisation and information about the subject	2	0.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

Focus group interviews reported the intrinsic value of RE and argued quite strongly that in the shadow of AIDS in Zambia, RE should be compulsory and that the subject should contain issues of sex.

#### **4.3.5 Who Should Teach RE?**

Pupils were asked to indicate as to who they feel should teach RE in schools. Table 4.7 shows that almost all the pupils, 217 (92.3%) said ‘a trained teacher’ followed by five (5%) of them who said ‘pastors, priests, nuns, elders or reverends’. The findings showed that pupils were aware of the importance of RE and as such they believed that it should be taught by teachers who were trained to teach the subject.

**Table 7: Pupils Perception on Who should Teach RE in Schools**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Trained RE teacher	217	92.3
Untrained teacher	2	0.9
Pastors, Priests, Nuns and reverends	5	2.1
Any person who goes to church	3	1.3
No response	8	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

interviews, some pupils argued that there was little teaching going on even by the trained teachers because emphasis was on copying notes, ‘Sometimes, I do not feel like going to class for RE because I have the books to read on my own’, said one pupils. Some teachers are not helping us at all, argued one pupil.

### 3.6 Pupils’ Assessment of Teachers Teaching RE

the questionnaire, pupils were asked to indicate how their teachers taught RE. The majority of them, 181 (77.0%) said ‘very well’ followed by sixteen (6.8%) who said teachers taught the textbook, while thirteen (5.5%) of the pupils said teachers used the Bible and other materials related to the subject to help pupils learn the subject better.

**Table 8: Assessment of Teaching in RE**

<b>How does your teacher teach RE?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Very well	181	77.0
At times goes out of topic	7	3.0
Using the Bible and other materials related to the subject	13	5.5
Teaching the textbook	16	6.8
Lacks confidence	7	4.7
No response	7	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2010**

the researcher asked pupils about the notion of merely teaching what is exactly in the textbook in order to explore pupils’ notion of learning RE. In one school, pupils reported that one teacher was fond of going beyond RE by giving what they described as ‘sermons’.

### 3.7 Teachers Perception of RE According to Pupils

pupils’ answers are indicated in the table below. In the interviews, they reported that some teachers had told them about the uselessness of RE. pupils reported that some teachers made remarks when ‘they found us copying RE notes and we were delaying their lesson’.

In interviews, some pupils argued that there was little teaching going on even by the trained teachers because emphasis was on copying notes, ‘Sometimes, I do not feel like going to class for RE because I have the books to read on my own’, said one pupils. Some teachers are not helping us at all, argued one pupil.

**4.3.6 Pupils’ Assessment of Teachers Teaching RE**

In the questionnaire, pupils were asked to indicate how their teachers taught RE. The majority of them, 181 (77.0%) said ‘very well’ followed by sixteen (6.8%) who said teachers taught the textbook, while thirteen (5.5%) of the pupils said teachers used the Bible and other materials related to the subject to help pupils learn the subject better.

**Table 8: Assessment of Teaching in RE**

How does your teacher teach RE?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very well	181	77.0
At times goes out of topic	7	3.0
Using the Bible and other materials related to the subject	13	5.5
Teaching the textbook	16	6.8
Lacks confidence	7	4.7
No response	7	3.0
Total	235	100.0

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

The researcher asked pupils about the notion of merely teaching what is exactly in the textbook in order to explore pupils’ notion of learning RE. In one school, pupils reported that one teacher was fond of going beyond RE by giving what they described as ‘sermons’.

**4.3.7 Teachers Perception of RE According to Pupils**

Pupils’ answers are indicated in the table below. In the interviews, they reported that some teachers had told them about the uselessness of RE. pupils reported that some teachers made such remarks when ‘they found us copying RE notes and we were delaying their lesson’.



**Table 9: What teachers say about RE**

What do your teachers say about RE?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It is a simple and passing subject	100	42.6
It is a good subject and helps in character building	81	34.5
It is a subject like any other	20	8.5
It helps in understanding and appreciating other religions	17	7.2
In order to pass RE one has to study hard because the syllabus is too wide	3	1.3
RE has no future market for an individual	1	0.4
No response	13	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

**4.3.8 Availability of RE Textbooks and other Learning Materials**

The study also sought to find out from the pupils whether their respective schools had enough textbooks and other learning materials. Pupils reported that they did not have enough textbooks. They also complained about the absence of variety in textbooks of RE. It is like we only have to memorise one textbook and that is all. At first the researcher did not quite get the point, but pupils gave examples of a variety of textbooks in History, English and Geography.

**4.3.9 Position of RE in the School**

Pupils were asked to rate RE in their schools and the majority reported that the subject was popular. However, the resaercher’s investigations suggested that while the subject was popular, it is offered only to a few because of school managers’ positions in terms of curriculum, staffing and othe issues. In one school, RE was most popular among APU pupils. The question on low status of RE was answered in the following manner:

**Table 10: Status of RE in Schools**

Views	Frequency	(%)
It is a waste of time because we won't be pastors	77	32.9
Because teachers are not willing to train as RE teachers	33	13.9
It tends to be difficult no matter how hard you study	18	7.5
It lacks textbooks	9	3.8
People say RE should be taught in church and not in schools	3	1.3
It is believed and considered to be a girls' subject	3	1.3
No response	92	39.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

As already mentioned, the researcher is a trained RE teacher and occupying a managerial position in one of the schools in Kitwe. The need to find out who was responsible for the non-teaching of RE arose and pupils were asked to tell the researcher who was not doing their job. The pattern of responses was as follows:

**Table 11: Who was responsible for Low Status of RE**

Who to blame	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government	80	34.0
School administration	70	29.8
Teachers	25	10.6
Pupils	18	7.7
Pupils and government	1	0.4
No response	41	17.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

**4.3.10 Pupils’ Suggestions on the Way Forward Concerning the Status of RE**

Finally, pupils were asked to give suggestions on the way forward as regards the status of RE. Table 4.22 shows their responses. The results show that most pupils, 52 (22.1%) felt that the Ministry of Education on behalf of the government should provide enough materials and trained teachers in RE, while 50 (21.3%) of them said RE should be made a compulsory subject’ enough materials should be provided. 45 (19.1% of them said schools should be supplied with adequate textbooks in RE.

**Table 12: Pupils’ recommendations on the way Forward concerning the Status of RE**

Recommendations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
MoE should provide enough materials and trained teachers in RE	52	22.3
Make the subject compulsory and provide enough materials	50	21.3
Supply schools with adequate textbooks	45	19.1
Recruit more RE teachers in government run schools	32	13.6
Teachers who teach RE should be serious in their teaching	12	5.1
No suggestions	12	5.1
No response	31	13.2

*Source: Field Data, 2010*

This chapter has considered a number of issues that have affected the provision of RE in the schools under study. The chapter that follows analyses the findings.

## **5 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

The study, based on 8 high schools used questionnaires and interviews to quantify and explore respectively the views of high school pupils, high school RE teachers and head teachers about RE in their schools. In the analysis of the findings, the researcher interprets what the participants in the research said. Interpretation helped the researcher to explain what was going on. Before getting into analysis, it is perhaps worthwhile to state the objectives of the study again.

- a) Establish the status of RE in the 8 selected high schools from the views of the RE teachers themselves, pupils taking RE and the head-teacher.
- b) Establish the extent to which RE is being taught in the selected high schools.

### **5.1 Teaching of RE**

The discussion here will encompass who was teaching RE; staffing levels; qualification of teachers and pupils liking of RE. We have already alluded to the fact that the current RE syllabuses in high schools in Zambia have been influenced by the developments of RE in the UK. Worth pointing out, therefore, is the additional fact that the status of RE in the UK is that it is the most controversial subject in the school curriculum. This is not our concern though, but mention should be made because it is possible that in fact, RE world over is a controversial subject.

The contested nature of religious education in the UK derives from three aspects: different perceptions of its aim and purpose; the fact that it is a compulsory subject in a secular curriculum; and lack of agreement as to the domain of the subject (see editorial, *British Journal of Religious Education*, 2005: 3-4, Vol 27, No. 1). The foregoing invites the researcher to therefore address the question of making RE compulsory.

### **5.1.1 Making RE Compulsory**

RE in the eight (8) schools was not subscribed to as much as other subjects that were also optional. Staffing levels were a variable to this problem. One obvious reason is that there has been a proliferation of high schools, but also that RE teachers output is still low. In our findings we also learnt that RE hours could be reduced when need arose. Clearly this points to the low status of RE in the rank and file of other subjects. That a teacher could choose which topics to teach and which ones to ignore suggested that RE was a 'passing subject'. The researcher was in fact informed that teachers leaned much to giving notes more than to actual engaging pupils in understanding the materials in their text-book by employing appropriate strategies of teaching. So, teachers or some teachers do not seem to understand the aim and purpose of RE and the domain of the subject.

Although pupils, teachers and school heads expressed the view that making RE compulsory would uplift the status of RE, the question of who would teach the subject in view of the low output of RE teachers and the 'defection' of some teachers to other subjects they are equally qualified to teach arises. What would be the justification for making RE compulsory at high school level? The researcher problematised this option and in the recommendation chapter makes a different proposal. In fact pupils reported that what partly makes RE popular is that it is optional. Although from the findings most pupils liked RE because it could assist them get good points and because it assisted them become fully human and fully alive, it required qualified teachers. Unlike in the UK, RE teachers in Zambia are qualified to teach the subject. They are not theologians with some diploma in teaching methodologies although there could be some in the schools. In any case, the majority of pupils in the schools under the study said only qualified teachers should teach the subject. Two hundred and seventeen (217) out of two hundred and

thirty-five (235) pupils who answered the questionnaire stated that only trained teachers should teach RE.

This study established that RE is a popular subject and that it was a simple and passing subject and good for character building. So, who is to blame for the Cinderella position of RE in the schools surveyed? In the next section my attention turns to answering this section, drawing evidence from the findings.

## **5.2 Reasons for Low Status of RE**

Yet such studies would help to discover the popularity of the subject, perhaps with a view to making curriculum development more pupil-friendly. One thing is sure though, as Henze (2011: 21) puts it: “The present examination system stresses memory work. The national examination must demand higher skills such as application, analysis and evaluation. Such a change in the examinations would bring about, not only critical and creative thinking, but also a more interesting and worthwhile experience in the classroom”.

When pupils were asked to indicate who was responsible for the low status of RE in schools eighty (80) of them out of two hundred and thirty-five (235) said ‘Government’; seventy (70) said school administration; twenty-five (25) said ‘teachers’ and eighteen (18) said ‘pupils’ themselves. Unfortunately forty one (41) did not volunteer any response and one (1) said pupils and government. We have repeated this data because we have to make a firm conclusion out of these responses. In making sense of this data the researcher brings in data from interviews. The idea is to seek explanations of the responses which raised three key problems: structural issues, the standard of teaching experienced by pupils, and broader religious attitudes in society. Structural issues include, as far as this researcher can discern from the findings:

- RE has been marginalised by school authorities and planners.
- Teachers haven't sufficient time for RE.
- RE has to compete for hourage with other subjects, and the headteachers don't think it is important.
- It is difficult to get RE teachers to take RE seriously.
- Some RE teachers are not proud of being RE teachers.
- Randomly allocating classes to take certain subjects without consulting pupils about their preferences.

As far as teaching of RE is concerned, pupils reported unsatisfactory teaching of largely note taking and selective teaching of topics in order to pass the examination. We argue that this kind of teaching is not only schooling but coaching, which ignores the idea of education

On the broader religious attitudes in society, we think that some non RE teachers, some headteachers and members of the public have challengeable ideas about religion which influence their understanding of Religious Education. The idea that religion is what is in the scriptures that people follow is pervasive and this makes people think that RE is Bible Knowledge.

### **5.3 Raising the Status of RE**

Copley (2008: 208) points out that in England and Wales, RE from 1944 to 2007 revealed a paradox: "sincerely affirming the importance of RE while neglecting its position on the curriculum map". The Zambian government does not have a policy on RE just as it does not have a policy on other subjects. From the findings, pupils suggested the following in order of frequency that the MoE should provide enough materials and trained teachers in RE; make the subject compulsory and provide enough materials; supply schools with adequate textbooks; recruit more teachers in schools; make teachers of RE become serious with the teaching of the

subject. The researcher thinks that the pupils' suggestions are useful, but making the subject compulsory does not raise the status of RE because this is more or less imposing the subject on pupils unless there are compelling reasons to do so. Even the argument advanced by one of the pupils that since Zambia was a Christian nation, RE had to be compulsory does not preclude the question of human rights. Of course the researcher realises that English is compulsory for other reasons. The researcher feels that RE will be popular to pupils if there are teachers who are passionate about the subject and teach it in an appealing manner. It also requires head-teachers who are not prejudiced against RE.

It is quite fascinating to be informed by pupils that RE teachers tell pupils that RE is simple; a good subject for character building and that it is like any other subject but fail to motivate pupils to take the subject by denying them the opportunity in countless ways. We did not encounter questions of legitimacy of RE in the curriculum. What head-teachers and RE teachers themselves do not seem to understand is its aims, its focus, content and purpose. Out of the twenty one (21) RE teachers who were asked to state why they continued to teach RE, ten (10) said that the subject taught morals and the other ten gave a variety of questions that had nothing to do with what high school RE is about. In short, the twenty RE teachers did not understand the subject of RE properly. Some teachers do not understand the purpose of high school RE in Zambia and other Commonwealth countries). From the findings, pupils who take RE are happy with the subject and choose to take it. A check on the results in RE in Grade 12 of previous years indicated that pupils do pass the subject with merits and credits and distinctions as well. These results could be better if the subject is taught by teachers who are supported by their head-teachers in terms of books and time. These teachers would also need Continuous Professional Development, specifically in RE.



## **6 CHAPTER SIX: Recommendations**

### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter makes recommendations basically on how RE can compete with other so called ‘more important’ subjects in the schools that were studied. The recommendations derive from the evidence in the findings and what became apparent after analysis. Before the recommendations, a summary of the work has been given.

### **6.1 Conclusion**

Currently RE is an optional subject in all schools surveyed. However, eighty-six per cent of the pupils interviewed take RE willingly. Despite the fact that the majority of the pupils are willing to take RE, the subject is still viewed as one of the neglected subjects. Thus, in order to reclaim its importance, forty-one per cent of the teachers interviewed suggested that RE should be compulsory like other subjects. This, however, will have little or no effect on its current status because most pupils are willing to take RE. This can also explain why sixty-eight per cent of the pupils suggested that there is need for the government and school administration to provide enough learning and teaching materials and also increase trained teachers for the subject. More than fifty per cent of head-teachers were consistent with this suggestion.

## 6.2 Recommendations

This section of the chapter makes suggestions for the teaching of RE as a core subject. Based on the findings of the study the following are recommended:

1. A pragmatic approach within the classroom context to develop pedagogies of RE that inspire and motivate pupils so that they can themselves become ambassadors for the subject. Teachers of RE should use methodologies of learning that promote positive perceptions and attitudes towards RE learners. Apart from having sound religious knowledge, teachers must deepen their understanding of the subject matter or learn to think about academic content from a pupils' point of view and present RE lessons in appropriate and engaging ways.
2. ZARET has to help the situation in Kitwe schools by organizing solid Continuous Professional Development for teachers. ZARET should engage professionals in RE in the universities and colleges.
3. The MoE should provide enough teaching and learning materials to enhance the teaching of the subject.
4. The two syllabi, 2044 and 2046 should be merged to form one syllabus. The new syllabus should be more of religious literacy rather than Christian indoctrination.
5. The Education Standards Officers have to seriously monitor what is going on in schools as far as the teaching of RE and allocation of time to the subject are concerned.
6. Schools must be persuaded to provide proper RE to pupils. This requires new ways of stating the case for its contribution to overall education.

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## 7 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am a Master of Education Student in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Zambia. I am carrying out a research on why RE is a Cinderella subject in Schools. You have been chosen as a possible source of information for the research. I am seeking your co-operation by completing this questionnaire.

This research is purely academic and the information you provide will be treated strictly confidential.

#### INSTRUCTION

Please do not write your name.

Tick your responses or fill in the spaces provided.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the School \_\_\_\_\_

Sex            male \_\_\_\_\_            female \_\_\_\_\_

Age: 20-25 [   ]   26-30 [   ]   31-35 [   ]   36-40 [   ]   41-45 [   ]   46-55 [   ]

What is your denomination? \_\_\_\_\_

Professional qualification:   Certificate [   ]        Diploma [   ]        Degree [   ]

Which college did you go to \_\_\_\_\_

Are you trained to teach RE?            YES [   ]            NO [   ]

For how long have you been teaching RE? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like teaching RE?            YES [   ]            NO [   ]

Give reasons for your answer in 9 above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who should teach RE in schools?

Religious leaders: Devoted Christians: Any person trained to teach RE

Do you know of any teacher(s) who stopped teaching RE for another subject?

YES [ ☐ ]                      NO [ ☐ ]

If your answer in 12 is 'yes', what reason(s) do they give? \_\_\_\_\_

Is RE compulsory in your school at senior level?    YES [ ☐ ]        NO [ ☐ ]

Which RE syllabus do you prefer at senior level? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you prefer such a syllabus to the other? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the school administration support the teaching of RE?    YES [ ☐ ]    NO [ ☐ ]

If your answer in 17 is yes, how does the administration show the support? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think RE is a neglected (Cinderella) subject in your school?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is to blame for the non- teaching of RE in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

Please make any suggestions and recommendations on the way forward concerning the status of RE \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your participation!**

**APPENDIX 2: PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Respondent,

I am a Master of Education Student in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Zambia. I am carrying out a research on why RE is a neglected (Cinderella) subject in Schools. You have been chosen as a possible source of information for the research. I am seeking your co-operation by completing this questionnaire.

This research is purely academic and the information you provide will be treated strictly confidential.

**INSTRUCTION**

*Please do not write your name.  
Tick your responses or fill in the spaces provided.*

\_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL** \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE:** 12-15 [    ]    16-19 [    ]    20-23 [    ]

**SEX:** MALE                      FEMALE

**DENOMINATION** \_\_\_\_\_

Did you willingly choose to take RE?        YES [    ]        NO [    ]

Is RE compulsory at your school?        YES [    ]        NO [    ]

Is RE popular among pupils and teachers at your school?    YES [    ]        NO [    ]

Give reasons for your answer in 8 above \_\_\_\_\_

Who should teach RE?

- a. Trained RE teachers
- b. Any teacher even if he/she is not trained to teach RE
- c. Pastors/priests/nuns/elders/Reverends
- d. Any person who goes to church.

How does your teacher teach RE? \_\_\_\_\_

What do your teachers say about RE? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have enough textbooks and other learning materials in your school?



YES [ ] NO [ ]

Is RE a neglected subject in your school? YES [ ] NO [ ]

If your answer in 14 is 'yes', what has made RE to be like that? Give reasons \_\_\_\_\_

Who is to blame for the non-teaching of RE in your school?

- a. Teachers
- b. Pupils
- c. Administration
- d. Government

Please give any suggestions and recommendations on the way forward concerning the status of RE? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Thank you for your co-operation!!!**

### **APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD-TEACHERS**

Do you offer RE in your school?

How is the staffing in the RE section?

Are all the teachers teaching RE trained?

How is the pass rate in RE for the past three years?

How many pupils are taking RE in your school?

Is RE a compulsory or option subject in your school?

What do you do in the absence of trained teacher of RE?

What is the status of RE in your school?

**Thank you for your cooperation!!!**

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