



**EXPLORING THE ROLE OF MARRIAGE COUNSELLORS IN RESOLVING  
MARRIAGE CONFLICTS: A CASE STUDY OF SENAMA AREA IN MANSA  
DISTRICT**

By

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## **APPROVAL**

I certify that this work has passed the scholastic standards re-quested by the Zimbabwe open University in collaboration with the University of Zambia as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science in Peace, Leadership and Conflict Resolution.

Approved:

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Supervisor  
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## DECLARATION

I, Mwanankopa Milambo whose computer number is 717819687, do hereby solemnly declare that the contents of this research paper entirely represent my own work, and where work of other individuals is involved, it is expressly cited and referenced appropriately. It was supervised by Dr. Simalalo Magdalene.

.....

Student's Signature

.....

Date

## **DEDICATION**

To my family and friends, my mother Ms. Mildred Chabala Kabali, my Grandmother Mrs Mercy Kabali, my uncle, Collins Kabali, my cousin, Mushota Mulubwa, my son Alinane Sikazwe, Green Mark Sikazwe my husband and to all my friends who happened to be my course mates. All of you, your support and love has been overwhelming and unimaginable to my studies. I love you all and I remain humbled and highly indebted.

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Other thanks go to all the respondents whom I were privileged to interview during data collection as their responses were of great help to me in the data analysis process, which is the basis of reporting my findings.

Finally, I wish to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement and above all our Jehovah creator for granting me life and good health to write this report.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to explore the role of traditional marriage counsellors in resolving marriage conflicts in Senama village. The objectives included; to determine the nature of counselling offered to married couples by traditional counsellors. Secondly, to assess factors that influence accessibility of traditional counselling services among couples thirdly, to ascertain challenges faced by traditional counsellors in conflict resolution and lastly, to establish measures to enhance traditional counselling in conflict resolution.

An explorative design was used. A qualitative technique was used in the collection of data. The qualitative techniques involved use of interview, semi structured interviews, questionnaires and focused group discussion. The sample comprised 51 participants. The findings revealed that majority of the participants were aware of the existence of traditional counselling services and felt that such services had the potential of providing viable knowledge and information on marriages and in fact reducing divorce and GBV although others still felt traditional marriage counsellors were not helpful.

The study also found out the factors that influence the accessibility of marriage counselling included; culture, unfaithfulness or infidelity were some of them. The participants also faced a number of challenges when it came to traditional marriage counselling, such as; lifestyle or culture of the contemporary generation, skills or qualification of tradition marriage counsellors and the inefficiency of legal institutions such as the courts of law and the Victim Support Unit. However, the participants also mentioned some of the measures that could address the challenges, these include; inculcating traditional values in the future generation, revising the curriculum for traditional marriage counselling and couples to minimise seeking help from traditional marriage counsellors.

The following recommendations that traditional counselling had the potential of sustaining marriages and could help to reduce rate of divorce and GBV if the society gave marriage counselling the outmost respect that it holds in the society that is preserving the culture among others. Furthermore, the environments for counselling should be improved to enhance privacy which most couples look for. Lastly, that, marriage counsellors should have a common syllabus and not a tribal based one because there a number of intermarriages in the recent years.

**Key Words:** *Counselling, Divorce, Gender Based Violence, Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Statutory Law Marriage and Customary Law Marriage.*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>VSU</b>	Victim Support unit
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children Emergency fund
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Overview

The chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, and study questions, significance of the study, delimitation and operational definitions.

### 1.1 Background

Marriage is the basis of human society. Marriage forms society as our social forms are reinforced by marriage. It is a basic institution found in all human societies because no other union of men and women meets all the requirements of mating, homemaking, love and personality development at the level of biological, psychological, social, ethical and spiritual evolution. Casual intercourse suffices for sexual satisfaction up to a point, but it does not and cannot create marital or family life. Man and woman constitute two parts of complete whole the one complementary to the other with corresponding distinctions and relations. To regard marriage a mere means of sexual satisfaction is to reduce it to a sub-rational level of instinctive mating.

It is a well-known fact that Zambia is a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious society with varying marriage systems like Moslem marriages, Hindu marriages and many more. For the purpose of this research I have confined myself to the study of the two major marriage systems that is customary and statutory marriages the rationale is that these two systems apply to the majority of the multi-racial and cultural groups of the Zambian society which are customary marriage and statutory marriage.

Customary marriage according to (Bishop, 1967) who made a general survey of African marriage law and pointed out that ‘The marriage transaction is normally a long-drawn out process and there is often some doubt, both as to the exact point in that process at which the parties become husband and wife, and also as to which (if any) of the accompanying ceremonies and observances are strictly essential to the conclusion of a valid marriage’.

This observation is also true for the customary marriage in Zambia. A research made by Women and Law in Southern Africa is a good reference point. For a union to be recognised as

a marriage, a variety of procedures are ethnic group specific and depend on whether one belongs to a matrilineal or patrilineal group.

The English law marriage or statutory marriage applies to Zambia by virtue of Section 11 of the High Court Act. In its preamble, the Marriage Act states that it is, ‘An Act to provide for solemnisation of marriages; to provide for validation of marriages already solemnised; and to provide for matters incidental to or connected with foregoing’. The rationale for the enactment of the Zambian Marriage Act is to modify English law which was made applicable to the country to suit local conditions and also to set up the administrative machinery necessary to administer marriage laws, such as the delimitation of districts, the appointment of registrars of marriage and the detailing of marriage ceremony procedures.

Marriage is the foundational unit of human society, because it exists for the good of husband and wife and the strengthening of their unique, permanent, and faithful bond of love. In addition, because human sexuality orders the transmission of human life through man and woman, children “are part of the glory of marriage,” as St. Augustine wrote many centuries ago. Marriage is founded on sexual difference and ordered toward the fulfilment of husband and wife and the procreation and rearing of children. This basic understanding of marriage and family is “built in” to the very nature of man and woman.

For the unity of marriage to stand there is need for a marriage to undergo marriage counselling. Therefore, it is imperative that this study outlines the role of marriage counselling. The primary role of marriage counselling is to help couples to live and stand that pressures that might come with the unity. Several skills are taught to the couples and communication happens to be one of them, this is also couples with trust, love and honesty (Gottman 2016).

Marriage counselling is generally provided by licenced therapists, religious leaders as well as people with experience in a marriage life who are known as ifi mbusa in a Zambian context. These therapists provide the same mental health services as other therapists, but with a specific focus on a marriage relationship.

Marriage counselling is often a short term. One may need only a few sessions to help them weather a crises or make their marriage successful. Sometimes marriage come in to counsel for several months if the marriage relationship has greatly deteriorated. Most marriages and other relationships are not perfect. Each person brings his or her own ideas, values, opinions and

personal history into a relationship, and they do not always match their partner's. Those differences do not necessarily mean one's relationship is bound to conflict. To the contrary, differences can be complementary just like the saying opposites attracting although this might not always be the case (Bishop, 1967).

Every marriage is a union between two individuals who bring their own opinions, personality quirks, family backgrounds, and value system. It's no surprise that even in very happy marriages the husband and wife must deal with a host of marital issues. Though one may feel one's circumstances are unique, Gottman (2016) asserts that all marital conflicts from minor annoyances to all-out wars, fall into one of two categories. Either they can be resolved or they cannot. Gottman calls these unresolvable conflicts "perpetual" problems. These conflicts will be a part of one's life forever, in some form or another. The other type of conflict as coined by Gottman (2016), is the solvable conflict. He says just because the problem is solvable it does not mean it gets resolved. When a solvable problem causes excessive tension, it is because the couple have not learned effective techniques for conquering it.

There are several causes of conflicts in marriages just like among human beings. Conflicts are inevitable between married couples just like they are inevitable among other people. According to Stevenson, & Wolfers, (2007) they highlight some of the causes of conflicts between the married couples which are:

In-laws, these set of people wield powerful influence, when it comes to a marriage. A lot of influence often comes from these set of people. Unmet Expectations is another cause of conflict in marriages for instance, bad or lack of employment can be the expectations that can lead to frustration and resentments and this can bring conflicts. Bad habits could be another reason for instance excessive beer drinking and infidelity are some irritating habits that can put off a spouse. Money especially when little or the lack or abundance of it. Friends are the external influence who can make it easy way for conflicts to arise. Lastly, sex is a major cause of conflict in marriage.

The research was prompted due to the number of gender based violence cases that are rampant in the recent years and to make it worse the high rate of divorce that have equally been recorded as compared in the past years.

It is also important to note that because of conflicts in a marriage Gender Based Violence (GBV) is likely to occur. GBV has been in existence since time immemorial. It is a global

affront to human rights, a public health crisis and a major barrier to development. Gender Based Violence includes sexual violence, femicide (female killing) battery, property grabbing, verbal abuse and rape inside and outside marriage. This act can happen to anyone such as the minority women, indigenous women, refugees, children and also men (UNICEF, 2009).

Zambia has in recent year's reports of GBV of which more brutal forms have been shown. These range from physical, sexual, psychological, emotional abuse and harmful traditional practices. Records at the Victim Support Unit (VSU) of the Zambia Police Service have recorded an upward swing in the first three quarters of 2013 and 2014 countrywide. GBV is clearly not an isolated problem but rather a widespread violation of human rights and has serious implications on Zambia's development agenda that transcend geography, sex, class, culture, age, race, religion and political affiliation (Ministry of Gender and Child Development, 2015).

Additionally, the Zambia Demographic and Health Survey of (2013-14) indicate that the divorce rate in Zambia was equally rising as it stood at 23.0 percent in the urban and 9.5 percent in rural Zambia. Based on religious (Christian) and traditional beliefs in Zambia, marriage is expected to be a life-long venture which requires that those who enter it are mature enough and prepared through religious and traditional teachings to meet its challenges hence the local saying refers to marriage as – *shipikisha club* - meaning *marriage is a perseverance club*) (Kabosha, 2015:18). From a traditional marriage counselling angle, puberty indicate the maturity and readiness of a boy or girl to marry or get married respectively (Maggai, 2016). As a result, the family through its own or community social structure finds it prudent to prepare the young man or woman for his or her adult responsibilities including managing a family.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The number and rate at which divorce and gender based violence cases are reported to the churches, Zambia Police Victim Support Unit, customary marriage counsellors and indeed Zambian courts of law, was alarming even in amidst traditional, modern and pastoral marriage counselling (Ministry of Gender and Child Development, 2015, Zambia Daily mail August 28<sup>th</sup> 2017). Violence and divorce affect the communities in such a way that it increases the rate of crime, broken homes lack support and indulge in illicit behaviours for survival. In addition to this, divorced adults are more likely to be impoverished while death, separation and injury, may cause lasting emotional and psychological damage especially to children who witnessed the violence and divorce which hinders their social development (National Legal Aid Clinic

for Women 2017, CSO 2018). Few studies have been done on traditional counselling and marriages among couples in Afrocentric and multicultural places like peri-urban areas. The views of stakeholders on the contributions of traditional marriage counselling towards the reduction on the rate of divorce and gender based violence among couples in peri-urbanized areas of Zambia are unknown, hence this study.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of marriage counsellors in resolving Marriage Conflicts, a case study of Senama area in Mansa district.

#### **1.3.1 Objectives**

The broad objective of this research was to explore the role marriage counsellors are playing in order to reduce conflicts in Senama compound of Mansa district. The specific objectives were:

1. Determine the nature of counselling offered to married couples by traditional counsellors
2. Assess factors that influence accessibility of traditional counselling services among couples
3. Ascertain challenges faced by traditional counsellors in conflict resolution
4. Establish measures to enhance traditional counselling in conflict resolution.

### **3. 4 Research Questions**

1. What is the nature of counselling do traditional counsellors offer to couples?
1. What influences accessibility of traditional marriage counselling?
2. What kind of challenges do traditional counsellors face in conflict resolution among couples?
3. What measures can be put in place to enhance traditional counselling in conflict resolution?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study was aimed at generating knowledge that would give the feedback on the roles of marriage counsellors. Secondly the results obtained would be compared to other outcomes generated from other studies done elsewhere. Similarities and differences in terms of the

theoretical, practical and statistical significance that would be found would be viewed in this research. Furthermore, the study results would give an insight to policy and decision makers who are aimed at reducing gender based violence and divorce among couples through effective traditional marriage counselling.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study focused on Mansa district in Senama village. Mansa is the headquarter Luapula Province of Zambia. The study focused on Senama area because there are a number recorded divorce and GBV cases that have been reported in the recent years.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

While conducting the study the researcher had limitations related to the reference materials in libraries and bookshops for it is known that very few people had done works on the role traditional marriage counsellors and if they had most of it had not been documented but had been passed through from one generation to another orally.

Additionally, cultural and other type of bias which included the level of education and the researcher being female was another limitation to the study. Traditional marriage counsellors were expected not to be very free revealing their nature of counselling for they thought that the researcher would get their job for many are earning a living through marriage counselling. Additionally, some were not formally educated and that led to them having problems to comprehend the main purpose of the research. Not only that, but male traditional counsellors were not free revealing all the needed information considering the fact that the researcher was female.

Furthermore, language interpretation was another limitation. That is so because traditional marriage counsellors used certain cultural symbols and signs and it could happen that the researcher was not conversant with all of them. Besides that, the researcher was not able to interpret my questions to their understanding considering the fact that she is not Ushi and the scope of study was an Ushi speaking area.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

The Karl Marx's Conflict Theory of (1959), was used to guide the present study. The theory discusses the modern day conflict theory from the concept of the power of 'the elites'. It acknowledges that the conflicts in marriages and families was as a result of social change; modern life styles which had created the urban nuclear family and was divorced from

traditional family system values. The nuclear family has been seen as an elitist family system characterized by much improved life style and de-linked from cultural family norms and practices. The theory alludes to the new position of women in families who had become more emancipated by higher education, better job opportunities and more freedoms; and independence from spousal control under the traditional marriage practices. According to Stevenson, & Wolfers, (2007), they assert because of modernity, the position of a woman for example in marriage had been redefinition in the context of family gender roles. Hence, less subject to traditional marriage practices where a woman was under a man's control. In the present study, this was seen as a conflict scenario in the family systems which had the propensity of discouraging married couples from seeking traditional marriage counsel in times of marital crisis and consequently contributed to the increasing rate of divorce among couples in peri-urbanized areas in Zambia.

Additionally, power is an uneasy word, a word people do not like to acknowledge in proper company and usually this comes when ones attains education or working. Perhaps one may even shy away from it in improper company, because to speak it is to make it crass. It is certainly a word that social scientists are uncomfortable yet obsessed with. Social scientists understand that power makes the human world go round, but they have a devil of a time defining it or determining where it exists. In the present day this has been viewed as a source of conflicts for women are equally considering themselves to be very powerful and resulting in them being less submissive which is resulting in conflicts because men never want women to be at the same level with them. Additionally, the level of education they have attained usually make them think they cannot seek counselling from traditional marriage who are deemed to have low levels of formal education (Kabosha, 2015).

The theory also highlights violence of a conflict is also negatively related to the presence of legitimate ways of regulating conflict. In other words, the greater the level of formal or informal norms regulating conflict, the greater the probability that both parties will use the norms or judicial paths to resolve the conflict rather than traditional methods, this is more reason couples are divorcing rather than asking for a third person to help them resolve their problems. However, this factor is influenced by two others. In order for the two interested parties to use legitimate roads of conflict resolution, they must recognize the fundamental justice of the cause involved (even if they don't agree on the outcome), and both parties need to be well organized. In addition, the possibility of violent conflict is positively related to a sense of relative deprivation.

The predominant role that conflict theory plays in the interpretation of trends in family life of late calls for a theoretical dialogue. Conflict theory views recent developments as resulting from efforts by social categories lacking material resources to liberate themselves by redressing inequality. The traditional family pattern is thought to be the product particular society that patriarchal, sexist, capitalist and is off relevance for the future. This alludes that because of the nature of marriage that is being patriarchal, that used to work well in old times because that was one thing that couples used to accept and it worked well for their marriage. However, the nature of it being patriarchal is now being received with mixed feelings hence causing conflicts in marriages (Bishop, 1967).

### **1.9 Definition of Terms**

There are a number of terminologies that have been used in this study. It is therefore necessary that to define some key terminologies for the better understanding of the research and these include:

**Counselling:** Counselling is a relationship between a concerned person and a person with a need. This relationship is usually person-to-person, although sometimes it may involve more than two people. It is designed to help people to understand and clarify their views, and learn how to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices, and through the resolution of emotional or interpersonal problems (UNESCO 2018)

**Divorce:** The action or an instance of legally dissolving a marriage (UNFPA 1998).

**Gender Based Violence:** Includes battering, intimate partner violence (including marital rape, sexual violence, and dowry or bride price- related violence, feticide, sexual abuse of children in households, honour crimes, early marriage, forced marriage, genital mutilation, sexual harassment, commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of persons (UNFPA 1998).

**Conflict:** Conflict refers to, an expressed struggle between at least two independent parties who perceive incompatible goals, and interference with other party in achieving their goals, (Hocker and Wilmot 1991).

**Conflict Resolution:** This refers to the process used by parties in conflict conflicts to reach a settlement, (Sweeney and Carruthers, 1996)

**Statutory Law Marriage:** This refer to a union between one man and one woman for life to the exclusion of all others. This marriage is contracted under the marriage Act Chapter 50 of the laws of Zambia (National Legal Aid Clinic for Women 2017).

**Customary Law Marriage:** This marriage that is contracted under traditional rites of the respective parties to it. This marriage brings together two families. It has a number of stages

and customs that must be observed for it to be valid, it can potentially be polygamous or polyandrous (National Legal Aid Clinic for Women 2017).

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Overview

This section looks at the empirical work that other scholars have written on the subject of traditional marriage counsellors concerning the nature, challenges, factors and measures towards marriage counselling.

#### 2.1 Nature of Marriage Counselling

The underlying issue concerning marriage counselling is that, people generally enter marriage experience with greater but often unrealistic expectations, which invariably lead to corresponding disappointments if such expectations are not met accordingly. Both women and men have primary needs which they look out for in a marriage. From a traditional perspective, women have five major needs in a marriage comprising: affection, conversation, honesty; openness, financial and material support and family commitment; fidelity (Bracher, Santow and Watkins, (2004). On the other hand, Stevenson, & Wolfers, (2007) identifies five major things men seem to look for, in a traditionally grounded marriage: sexual fulfilment, recreation and companionship, an attractive spouse, domestic support, admiration; submission and respect for the husband. Hence it is incumbent upon elderly family members from both couples and traditional marriage counsellors to help preparing the would-be couples and married couples through reconciliation of these primary needs and expectations. Bracher, Santow, and Watkins, (2004) calls for the synergizing of those expectations through traditional teachings to make marriages realistic and make couples manage the unanticipated frustrations and disappointments that often goes with marriages and tend to sometimes lead to violence or divorce.

African society is built on collectivist principles which attends to joy and sadness within in family circle. Africa has a tradition of family, neighbourhood and community approach to mediation on various issues including issues of marriage related issues (Bishop, 1967). The elders in the family as well as community facilitates guidance and counselling on marriages and related family problems, married couple conflicts. In a traditional manner, the mediation on marriage conflicts takes place in an atmosphere of togetherness and in the spirit of *Ubuntu* (*Ubuntu* - refers *African collectivism*). According to Boniface, (2012), African mediation in married conflict is seen in its social context a process building oneness. It does not only look

at the consequences of the marriage couple but also the consequences of other members of the couple's family a move that attracts traditional counsel on issues of marriage. The objectives of African mediation are directed at soothing the hurt feelings that go with conflicts in the marriage. It helps couples under stress reach an amicable solution to the marriage problem and reach a compromise that seeks to improve their future relations and sustain marriage (Thole, 2013). The African style of mediation is traditional value-based, community oriented and directed towards a restorative outcome of marriage conflicts with less emphasis on court of law as institution for resolving such conflicts. Traditional marriage counsellors for example, as mediators use very strong mitigation strategies; often wear the faulty person- taking place of a counselee and speaking as if it is the traditional counsellor that had actually wronged or injured spouse (Raditloaneng, 2010). Sometimes traditional marriage counsellors would plead and present a token that ranges from a white chicken, a goat or a herd of cattle depending on the gravity of the problem within the marriage (Batcher, Santow & Watkins, (2003), Mtswanga, (2010).

The major step to marriage system is the premarital and marital counselling which is normally done by traditional marriage counsellors and elders who are experienced and familiar with the traditions (Thole, 2013). Counselling is part of the informal or lifelong learning which couples receive from adults and this form of education is not part of the formal education system in Zambia as discussed by Namonje (2016). This form of training has helped to bond Zambian societies together by a common culture and has also given community distinct identities. Most marriages' in Zambia despite being influenced early missionaries of faith they go through the marriage counselling with traditional marriage counsellors locally known as Alangizi in Cinyanja language (Cichewa) or banachimbusa in Bemba language (Munyenyenbe, 2015).

## **2.2 Factors that Influence Accessibility of Traditional Counselling Services among Couples**

The study by Namonje (2016) on *Traditional marriage counselling in Zambia: Exploring the views of stakeholders in Kabwe Urban, central province* looked at the failure of financial resources to meet the increasing cost of living among couples, infidelity or unfaithfulness, marital disputes, couples wanting to reduce incidences of separation or divorce, various kinds of violence, bareness and drunkenness among couples being an influence to access traditional counselling services.

The results revealed that there was a relationship between infidelity or unfaithfulness and unwillingness to seek traditional marriage counselling among married couples. Unfaithful

partners, barren and drunkards felt that through interactions with traditional marriage counsellors, there was a possibility of them being exposed over their private lives to the public hence making them not to reveal the truth about their partners or what was the true reflection of the happenings in their marriages.

According to Boniface, (2012), another critical area in which traditional marriage counsellors offer counselling services is to promote openness between couples in marriage. Being open in marriage is critical, couples need to feel free to each other and share almost anything. The idea of keeping secrets is not encouraged by the traditional counsellors when offering counselling to couples. Therefore, the means of effective communication in marriages is highly promoted by traditional marriage counsellors. Furthermore, openness in marriage helps couples to clearly distinguish their different roles. This also helps them to overcome negative external influence which are likely to cause conflicts. When couples are open to each other, they solve conflicts in a healthy manner and further foster commitment throughout their daily life in ways which improve their marriage (Namonje 2016).

### **2.3 Measures to Enhance Traditional Marriage Counselling**

Though traditional counsellors often do not have formal counselling qualifications, their mediatory authority is conferred on them because of their reputation in marriage and in the community as persons with wisdom and integrity and because they understand the traditions, culture and norms of their people. The traditional counsellors are nominated or selected on the basis of their lineage, notable status, and proximity in their relationship with the family (Munyenembe, 2015). Hence, traditional counsellors have certain powers in them that have a potential of helping couples in a marriage crisis resolve their problems without injuring their own relationships. Stevenson, and Wolfers, (2007) in a working Paper on “*Marriage and Divorce: Changes and their Driving Forces,*” provide key facts about marriage and divorce, and compares trends through the past 150 years and outcomes across demographic groups and countries of the efforts of traditional marriage counsellors. It discusses changes in family forms and how house-holds now-days can exist without the necessity of marriage. The article lays the groundwork for a reconsideration of the theory of the family by describing the tremendous changes in family forms, pointing to some of their driving forces, and suggesting ways of expanding the thinking on the family to better understand its future in its attempts to reduce rate of divorce in African context. This has implications for both the modern and pastoral counselling approaches on issues of marriage and calls for a cultural based approach.

African mediation in married conflict is seen in its social context a process building oneness. It does not only look at the consequences of the marriage couple but also the consequences of other members of the couple 's family which is a move that attracts traditional counsel on issues of marriage. The objectives of African mediation are directed at soothing the hurt feelings that go with conflicts in the marriage. It helps couples under stress reach an amicable solution to the marriage problem and reach a compromise that seeks to improve their future relations and sustain marriage (Thole, 2013). The African style of mediation is traditional value-based, community oriented and directed towards a restorative outcome of marriage conflicts with less emphasis on court of law as institution for resolving such conflicts.

Marriage preparation (counselling) is conducted with the help of elderly trusted, honest traditional marriage counsellors. They take the responsibility of preparing the young couple to be, through a series of lessons over a period of time. The two spouses are prepared separately until such a time they are about to be traditionally wedded (Namonje 2016). Kabosha, (2015) notes that by the time the young man and woman become married they are believed to have assumed sufficient knowledge and skills towards their socio-economic roles and responsibilities in the new family. Where these family roles are negated by either spouse their home often experience problems, and parents would arrange for re-counselling by traditional counsellors in order to put the couple back on track and indeed save their marriage from collapse or divorce.

#### **2.4 Challenges Faced by Traditional Marriage Counsellors.**

There are several factors contributing to increased divorce and calls for improved marriage relationships among which are the meditative and traditional counselling on marriages. As a result of urbanization, wide range of economic which include failure of couples to paying the money due to lack of financial resources by some couples, social, and cultural factors that have arisen, traditional marriage counselling have been seen to have insignificant role to play on the institution of marriage including arresting the rate of divorce and violence among couples (Moroccan Government, 2011) Paradoxically, the challenges of traditional marriage values and norms bring to urbanized marriages are seem to be in conflicts and in some cases putting either the female or male partner at an advantage or disadvantage within the relationship.

Additionally, other participants observed that it was increasingly becoming difficult for couples to find traditional marriage counsellors from their own tribe especially those with skills in marriage counselling that conformed to their culture, traditions, and customs. The participants also felt that most of the available traditional marriage counsellors in urban setting were those

born and bred in the urban areas with very little knowledge and value of traditional teachings on marriages as was observed by one of the female participant. “Many of these traditional counsellors are born in town; they have never been to the village where they can learn about traditional values and acquire proper traditional marriage counselling skills to support their marriages. Most of these people can mislead young couples especially those under intermarriages thereby leading them into seeing divorce an answer to their marriage crises” 29 year old female married participant (Namonje 2016).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This section contains the sampling methods that will be used in the study, the target population, the sample size, the research design, research instrument to be used and the data sources. And ethical consideration constituting the last segment of the chapter.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

According to Creswell (1994), a research design is a set of methods and procedures that are used in collecting and analysing measures of the variables specified in the problem research. The qualitative study was an exploratory research. The qualitative study solicited information on the role of traditional marriage counsellors in resolving marriage conflicts in Senama village. The study sought to use the purposive research design so as to explore the role of traditional marriage counsellors in resolving marriage conflicts. Additionally, qualitative data, is more subjective and open-ended that is why the researcher opted to use it. The researcher used questionnaires, interviews and a focus group, were the participants responded fully helping the researcher with the study. Therefore, the qualitative data was used because it was particularly useful as the topic required to get views of the respondents. That further enabled a holistic research.

#### **3.2 Target Population**

The study was conducted in Senama village. It targeted residents of Senama village both male and female that were eligible to take part in the research study. That village had been used because it was observed to have a high number of single headed homes and most traditional marriage counsellors resided there.

#### **3.3 Sample Size**

The participants for the proposed study were broken down as follows 15 traditional marriage counsellors and 2 officers from the local court, 7 victims of divorce and 7 victims of Gender Based Violation (GBV) from the selected study area. Therefore, the total number of participants for the study involved 31 participants

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

Sampling procedure is a process used in statistical analysis in which predetermined number of observations are taken from the larger population (Creswell 2006). The study was designed to employ purposive sampling method which was employed on court officers and traditional marriage counsellors and snowball sampling which was employed on victims of divorce and Gender Based Violence (GBV). They are non-probability sampling methods that are selected based on characteristics of the population and the objective of the study.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection instruments refers to the device used to collect data, such as a paper questionnaire or computer assisted interviewing system (Creswell 1994). Questionnaires were used most especially for the officers who are literate. A questionnaire is most useful when one want to collect a small amount of clearly defined facts from a large number of people. Semi-structured interviews was another instrument that was used when collecting data from illiterate participants. And lastly the focus group was used for traditional marriage counsellors. This method is frequently used to explore a new issue in monitoring and evaluation studies and to discover what a group of people feel about a question or problem. The goal was to provide an opportunity for participants to talk to one another about the topic. By using self-administered questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, solicited information concerning how marriage conflicts result in divorce and gender based violence in Senama village.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

Warner (1965) developed a data collection procedure, the randomised response technique that allow researchers to obtain sensitive information while guaranteeing privacy to respondents Borg et.al (1996). Before conducting the research, the researcher sought permission from the University of Zambia to carry out the research.

In this study the researcher used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion.

Data was collected through face-to-face interviews. Additionally, the researcher used the focus group guide for the traditional marriage counsellors. The results were recorded using electronic gadgets such as a recorder. Lastly, the research study employed questionnaire instrument which was useful in the study because it was easy to collect information from two court officers who

were literate, they were left with the questionnaires so that they could answer them in their ample time for the research did not intend to intervene with their work.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

According to Brymanm (1988), he asserts that data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming and modelling. The analysis will be done in the form of frequencies, graphs such as pie charts, bar charts and histograms. The data to be derived from one-to-one interviews and the focus group discussions will be listened to repeatedly in order to capture the context and meaning and transcribed verbatim. The translated scripts will be exported to Nvivo 10 for data management. Thematic analysis will then be used to identify common themes with sub-themes being direct quotes from participants and the main themes being directed by the BMCF. The questionnaire will be checked for completion, edited, coded, entered and then analysed. The information obtained from the interviews will be recorded and put on CDs for participants that are comfortable with being recorded and other information will be written -- putdown. Content analysis will be used to analyse qualitative data and will aid in the writing of the report.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness**

For quantitative studies trustworthiness is referred to validity and reliability in the research. However, in qualitative studies, this concept is more obscure because it is put in different terms. Since qualitative researchers do not use instruments with established metrics about validity and reliability, it is pertinent to address how qualitative researches establish that the research study's findings are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable (Dempsey, 2000). Trustworthiness is all about establishing these four things. Furthermore, Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (2006) define triangulation as a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon. Triangulation increases the comprehensiveness and completeness of the research, an enhanced ability to confirm trends and identify inconsistencies and an improvement in the reliability and validity of findings. Altrichter et al. (2008) contend that triangulation "gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation. Therefore, this study ensured that it used different instruments in order to achieve that. That helped to establish that the research study's findings accurately portrayed participants' responses. Lastly, the research shall be dependable to the extent that the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations refer to ethics which are a system of moral values that is concerned with the degree to which research procedure adhere to professional, legal and social obligation to the study participants (Dempsey, 2000). The Academy of Management Code of Ethical Conduct states that, it is very important for each and every participant who will be involved in the research to be informed of the objectives, methods and anticipated benefits of research beforehand. The researcher with all due respect to ethics got permission from the highest authorities such as the Chinese Local court to allow the research to be carried out.

Moreover, in conducting the research, maintenance of dignity and welfare of all participants was considered through assurances of confidentiality, informed consent, none doctoring of data and none deception as these obligations also implies protecting them from harm, unnecessary risks, or mental and physical discomfort that might be inherent in the research process.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### 4.0 Overview

The chapter presents the results of the study. The findings are presented under the headings derived from the study objectives. The objectives were to determine the nature of counselling offered to married couples by traditional counsellors, assess factors that influence accessibility of traditional counselling services among couples, ascertain challenges faced by traditional counsellors in conflict resolution and establishing measures to enhance traditional counselling in conflict resolution.

The chapter begins by presenting the demographic characteristics. Then it will later highlight what determines the nature of counselling offered to married couples by traditional counsellors. Next, it shall have the assessment of factors that influence accessibility of traditional counselling services among couples. Thirdly, it will ascertain challenges faced by traditional counsellors in conflict resolution. Lastly, measures to enhance traditional counselling in conflict resolution will be established.

#### 4.1 Demographic Information

**Table 4.1 indicates the distribution of respondents by gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Females</b>	20	65%
<b>Males</b>	11	35%
<b>Total</b>	31	100%

**Source: Field data, 2019**

Figure 1.1 presents the percentage of sex of respondents. According to the research 11 (35%) of the respondents were males and 20 (65%) were females. This is because most male members of member in the village did not participate. Additionally, it was also noticed that most male respondents did not make themselves available for they showed discomfort that the researcher was female. This data indicates to the researcher that most males rarely disclose their marital problems.

A total number of 2 Court clerks who participated in the study. Their characteristics are presented in table 4.2 below

**Table 4. 2: Characteristics of Court Clerks**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Job Description</b>
CC 1	Male	30- 35 years	Keeping records of court appearances.
CC2	Male	35- 40 years	Prepares dockets of cases to be called by a court.

*Source: Field Data*

A total number of 14 Traditional Marriage Counsellors who participated in the study. Their characteristics are presented in table 4. 3 below

**Table 4. 3: Characteristics of traditional Marriage Counsellors**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Work Experience</b>
FTMC 1	Female	20 years and above
FTMC 2	Female	15 years and above
FTMC 3	Female	7 years and above
FTMC 4	Female	20 years and above
FTMC 5	Female	5 years and above
FTMC 6	Female	10 years and above
FTMC 7	Female	25 years and above
MTMC 1	Male	7 years and above
MTMC 2	Male	15 years and above
MTMC 3	Male	25 years and above

MTMC 4	Male	12 years and above
MTMC 5	Male	10 years and above
MTMC 6	Male	5 years and above
MTMC 7	Male	15 years and above

Source: Field Data, 2019

**Table 4.4: The response of victims of divorce and GBV**

Code	Gender
VC 1	Female
VC 2	Female
VC 3	Female
VC 4	Female
VC 5	Female
VC 6	Female
VC 7	Female
VC 8	Male
VC 9	Male
VC 10	Female
VC 11	Female
VC 12	Female
VC 13	Female
VC 14	Female

## **4.2 The Nature of Counselling Offered to Married Couples by Traditional Counsellors**

One of the issues raised during the interviews was the question on the nature traditional marriage counsellors provide to the counselees. Therefore, participants responded by stating the nature of counselling by giving the characteristics below:

### **4.2.1 The Characteristics of Traditional Marriage Counselling**

VC 1 had this to say:

*“They do the counselling orally, in a house and sometimes privacy is compromised because everyone in the house tends to know that you are being counselled”*

Additionally, VC 4 was asked the same question and had this to say:

*“It has been observed that women actually spend more hours and days being taught as compared to the male counterparts who are sometimes not even taught at all. What has cost this whole system is the tradition because they believe umwanakashi eewusunga inga’nda, (a woman is the one that keeps a home) when in the actual sense even a man should be inculcated with the same values if divorce and GBV are to be avoided completely”*

Marriage counsellors were also asked during the interviews to comment on the nature of counselling that they provide to the couples and this is what the Female Traditional Marriage counsellor 5(FTMC) had to say:

*“We teach them according to our own experience that we have encountered in life. This is because we have worked for long in this service. And we embed this with our cultural values so that we do not lose our culture”*

VC 6 has this to say on the nature too:

*“...privacy is limited in traditional marriage counselling places as complainants are interviewed or cases discussed in the presence of other people who will occasionally interject or comment on the issue off hand making the victim/complainant feel rather uncomfortable”.*

### **4.2.2 The Benefits of Marriage Counselling to Couples.**

As a follow up question, participants were asked whether the marriage counselling that the traditional marriage counsellors were given was actually beneficial to them or not and this is what VC 8 had to say:

*“It is not beneficial in any way for the traditional marriage counsellors are not practical in many instances. They tend to teach on a lot of things that are not practical in any way. I also hate the fact that they teach us to be tolerating being beaten and we should not voice out in order for us to keep our marriages, which is an infringement of human rights”.*

However, VC 4 had a different view on the same matter and had this to say:

*“It is very beneficial because it helps in curbing GBV and divorce”*

The court clerk 1 (CC) also responded to the same question in the questionnaire where he had this to say:

*“Marriage counselling is very helpful in such a way that couples learn how to keep a home and if they just follow everything that they were taught, GBV and divorce are rarely recorded at least this helps children to grow up nicely as compared to those that are brought up in disputing who in many cases are affected psychologically”*

During the Focus Group Discussion FTMC 1 responded that:

*“It is very beneficial because it reduces on marital disputes in marriages which usually have a negative impact on the children”*

#### **4.2.3 Effectiveness of Marriage Counselling**

One of the questions this study examined was on the effectiveness of marriage counselling as a strategy for reducing incidences of GBV or divorce. During the interviews, FTMC 5 said:

*“I am of the view that traditional marriage counselling has a cultural backbone of the African marriage hence, recognized that couples in the study area just like those elsewhere in other settings has a lot to benefit from traditional counselling in a multicultural environment such as this area and it is this same understanding of culture that can make the couple understand the real values of marriage hence avoid divorce and GBV”.*

MTMC 2 had this to say:

*“I believe that traditional teachings on marriages has greater potential of strengthening marriages just like modern counselling. The services are a source of knowledge and wisdom for a sustainable marriage life hence, contributes to a reduction of the rate of GBV or divorce”.*

FTMC 2 responded that:

*“Those who follow our teachings to the latter end up living in peaceful marriages with less difficulties”*

CC2 however had a different response over the effectiveness of marriage counselling. And this is what he had to say:

*“I don’t think marriage counselling is very effective nowadays, it seems couples undergo it just for the sake of the society. Nowadays we receive a lot of disputing couples who have undergone marriage counselling and want to separate, if it were effective we could have been recording very few cases of GBV and divorce”*

### **4.3 Factors Influencing Accessibility of Traditional Counselling Services among Couples**

There were a number of factors that participants during interviews and focus group discussions came up with as the reason to access marriage counselling and below are some of the factors that they came up with:

#### **4.3.1 Culture**

It was observed that most participants thought it was important for one to access traditional counselling all because of culture. Below are some of the responses which were given based on the same factor:

VC 1’s response is as follows:

*“I would love to access marriage counselling so that I would know how to take care of my husband in bed, for he complains each time we copulate”*

Older neighbours, female and male traditional marriage counsellors (ifiimbusa) were involved in the provision of services especially to young couples and the would-be married couples. It was also revealed from the findings through the response of MTMC10 who said:

*“bashi bukombe and bana bukombe (male and female marriage go betweens or the middle men and women) were responsible for negotiations on marriage-rites or dowry and we would later engage in counselling the person we represent”.*

VC 7 gave the following response

*“I believe that traditionally oriented couples have high chances of seeking traditional counsel in order to sustain their marriages than those who did not value traditional knowledge and values on marriages”*

However, some participants cited their religious convictions which looked at traditional marriage counselling as a practice against their religious beliefs. This made them to stay away from traditional marriage counselling sessions hence missing out on the cultural values which if brought into a marriage can make their marriage hold as alluded to by one the female participant labelled as VC 14:

*“These traditional counsellors tend to introduce backward and unchristian things when counselling people intending to marry. My conscious is not clear when it comes to such practices thus I do not value their teachings on marriage”*

Additionally, the other factor that made some married couples not access marriage counselling is that fact that some couples felt that traditional marriage counselling was outdated hence shunning it. This is what CC 2 had to say:

*“Because young married couples think that (the new school) modern one, was better than the old school (traditional counsel) they were of the opinion of that the old school tended to dilute their expectations of a marriage hence, not keen at seeking services from traditional counsellors.”.*

#### **4.3.2 Unfaithfulness or Infidelity**

The other factor that was pronounced in most of the responses that participants gave as the factor of accessing traditional marriage counselling is infidelity and unfaithfulness. Although some responses showed that it is not all involved in infidelity that would love to seek for traditional marriage counselling. Below were the reasons given:

FTMC 4 had this to say during the Focus Group Discussion:

*“Yes, spouses who involve themselves in extra-marital relationships frustrate their wives or husbands; the cheating spouse will tend to spend time and financial support on the extra-marital relationship, insecurity and loss of trust builds up in the matrimonial home to the extent that the injured spouse makes a decision to beat the spouse and end the marriage; but for some*

*couples they would love to save their marriages hence want to access traditional marriage counselling in times like this”*

MTMC 1 had this to say:

*“The truth of the matter is that homes are shaken and eventually broken especially in young couples over the issues of infidelity or unfaithfulness even if traditional counselling was provided, therefore some spouses sometimes try so much to keep their marriages most especially the one with an extra marital affair to access marriage counselling so that the victim spouse is talked to keep the marriage from breaking”.*

However, infidelity and unfaithfulness among married couples had a significant role to play on couple’s unwillingness to seek traditional marriage counselling when in marital problems. This is what VC 3 had to say:

*“I have fear of being exposed in the process of seeking help through traditional marriage counselling hence, I prefer not to seek such services but to take cases to other institutions such as courts of law or better still divorce”*

#### **4.4. Challenges Faced by Traditional Counsellors in Conflict Resolution**

Most of the participants, during the focus group discussions and the interviews said that one of the factors that led to high rate of separation and divorces in the study area was the services provided by the legal institutions.

##### **4.4.1. The Inefficiency of the Zambia Police, Victim Support Unit and Courts of Law in Resolving Marital Conflicts.**

Some of the challenges that were given by participants to have paused a challenge for traditional marriage counsellors to do their work dully is the existence of the legal institutions. The following are some of the responses gotten from the research.

FTMC 4 said:

*“The Zambia Police Victim Support Unit seems to favour divorce rather than reconciliation and this paused a very big challenge on the role of traditional marriage counsellors. The counsel appeared to centre on violence aspect in a marital problem with a focus on punishing one partner under the umbrella of human rights (especially the male) rather than the female which often resulted into a separation or divorce”.*

CC 1 gave the following response:

*“women tend to report most marital cases to the Zambia Police victim support unit as opposed to traditional marriage counsellors or church marriage counsellors because they tend to have the cases in their favour than when handled by traditional or church counsellors who usually put the blame on the females”*

VC 12 during an interview said:

*“I feel like the Zambia Police Victim Support Unit and courts of law significantly interfere with knowledge and values that go with traditional counselling thereby contributing to high rate of divorce cases in Senama village of Mansa”*

CC 2 also observed that some couples believed more in the legal institutions as compared in traditional married counsellors helping them resolve marital disputes. This is what he had to say:

*“Cases do not usually come as divorce cases but as victims of gender based violence in the home. Divorce is mentioned in the course of the interview especially by the victims who feel they cannot bear it any longer and neither can it be resolved through elderly or traditional marriage counsel advice.”*

#### **4.4.2. Skills or Qualifications of Traditional Marriage Counsellors**

The other factor that paused as challenge for people to access traditional marriage counselling was the qualification of marriage counsellors. In the contemporary world marriage counsellors faced a lot of challenges because of skills or qualifications which were not appreciated by the participants. Below are some of the responses to support the notion:

VC 1 responded:

*“Many of these traditional counsellors are born in town; they have never been to the village where they can learn about traditional values and acquire proper traditional marriage counselling skills to support their marriages. Most of these people can mislead young couples especially those under intermarriages thereby leading them into seeing divorce an answer to their marriage crises”*

FMTC 3 said:

*“Most of us who counsel couples are elderly women (ifiimbusa) and young people think we are too old fashioned to teach about marriage in this era, they tell us our teachings do not agree with modern marriage life hence we are irrelevant in this kind of setting”*

The other challenge that makes many couples not to seek marriage counselling is the biasness in the teachings of traditional marriage counsellors. This is supported by the response below:

*“during pre-marital counselling traditional counsellors we advise the young brides to persevere (local term-shipikisha) in amidst of any problem she is likely to face in the marriage. They are sworn to keep their marriage issues as a secret which the wife should uphold in order to preserve the dignity of their marriage”* said the FTMC 3

VC 11 said:

*“I feel like traditional marriage counsellors have no formal training and that they are mainly depended on personal marriage experiences which may not be helpful to modern couples in marriage problems”*

VC 6 had this to say:

*“My opinion is that because traditional marriage counsellors are not formally trained, they find it difficult to win the trust and confidence of young couples for them to seek their services”*

However, VC 2 had a different view and this is what he had to say:

*“I feel that counsellors have sufficient knowledge and experience to assist couples in a struggling marriage looking at the experience that they have”*

MTMC14 complained about having limited time counselling people in the study era. This is what he had to say:

*“I’m very experienced and I have been counselling persons and couples for over 15 years but the problem of teaching today’s couples or persons is that you have limited time to teach to finish the syllabus seeing that most persons or couples are busy with work be it informal or formal as compared to the persons or couples of old times. Surprisingly, some couples do not have the same regard for marriage as they used to have hence rarely concentrate when you are teaching them”*

#### 4.4.3 Lifestyle/Culture of the Contemporary Generation

During the study one traditional counsellor MTMC 5 lamented that:

*“Traditional marriage counsellors faced a number of challenges because of the way parents and guardians are raising their children. They had observed that most couples that had gone to them for marriage counselling usually did that for formality’s sake and never adhered to any teachings. Furthermore, marriage counsellors were not given the utmost respect that they deserved thus in some cases discontinued their teachings”*

Further investigation revealed that the contemporary lifestyle as opposed to the old one was a challenge for many participants to attain traditional marriage counselling. VC 9 had this to say

*“...traditional counselling demands the seclusion of the candidate (mostly women in some Zambian cultures) over a long time, which is not suitable or convenient for women who are young and in regular employment or those running their own businesses hence are less exposed.”* Further, one young male spouse noted that, *“most of these elderly women ifumbusa associated with traditional marriage counselling are too old fashioned to teach about marriage in this era, their teachings do not agree with modern marriage life hence are irrelevant to urban marriages.”*

Other parents believe that girls who get pregnant out of wedlock are a disgrace and they do not deserve undergoing traditional marriage counselling. Just like VC 13 had to say:

*“Our parents chase us from homes when we get pregnant before marriage. They force us to join the men who are responsible for our pregnancies without teaching us anything about marriage hence, our marriage easily collapses when misunderstandings step in. We are also afraid to approach traditional counsellors for support because of the way we get in our own marriage”*

FTMC 5 observed that most young couples had no or little regard because they thought traditional marriage counselling is outdated. This is what she had to say:

*“Because young married couples think that (the new school) modern one, was better than the old school (traditional counsel) they were of the opinion of that the old school tended to dilute their expectations of a marriage hence, not keen at seeking services from traditional counsellors.”*

For other participants the negativity of accessing counselling came from the fact that they were from a different ethnic group as opposed to that of the traditional counsellors. VC 1 had this to say:

*“I am Lozi by tribe (one of the tribal groups in the western part of Zambia) with ‘our own’ perception of marriage and how to deal with marriage crisis, why go to seek advice from a traditional counsellor from another tribe with different beliefs and practices about marriage, I will be miss led.”*

#### **4.5. Measures to Enhance Traditional Counselling in Conflict Resolution**

When participants were asked on different ways of curbing divorce and GBV, they came up with a lot of responses which could help traditional marriage counselling be embraced by the society and those that undergo it. Therefore, below are some of the responses which participants came up with:

##### **4.5.1. Inculcate Traditional Values in the Future Generation**

It is imperative that values of the existence of traditional marriage counselling are heard of by people starting from a tender age so that when a time come for counselling they might not disregard it. MTMC 1 had this to say:

*“ we need to take traditional marriage counselling very seriously, not only serious but we also need to educate our own children about it while they are young so that when the time comes to be counselled they shall see the importance, by that we will be able to make the work easy for ifimbusa (traditional marriage counsellors)”*

FTMC 1 told the researcher that it would be very important for people of Zambia to start seeing themselves as one regardless of the ethnic group where one came from. This is what she had to say:

*“It will be very important for us as Zambians to embrace one another’s culture, by that no one shall look down upon another’s person’s culture hence making it easy for marriage counselling to counsel the persons from any ethnic grouping”*

People believe so much in legal authority, therefore, it is important that marriage counselling should be made law for anyone about to get married so that the importance is seen. This is supported by what VC 4 had to say:

*“They should make it law that everyone that is about to get married undergoes marriage counselling whether they like it not, that will make traditional marriage counselling to be respected by everyone in the society”*

The government can also play a very important in order to enhance privacy during the teaching and also make the citizens to appreciate traditional marriage counselling. VC 14 had this to submit:

*“... Ummm maybe the government can build up structures where marriage counsellors can be holding their meetings and doing the marriage counselling from. At least places that would be totally independent to exhibit privacy and in order for everyone to see that marriage counselling is very important”*

#### **4.5.2. Revise the Curriculum for Traditional Marriage Counselling**

It has been observed that the teachings of marriage is in many time biased and usually focuses on females thus making those women who are educated not to appreciate the teachings fully. This in many cases has led to GBV and divorce. Therefore, the traditional marriage counsellors should revise their curriculum and teach men the vitals of marriage too. CC 2 had this submission to make.

*“It has been observed that women actually spend more hours and days being taught as compared to the male counterparts who are sometimes not even taught at all. What has cost this who system is the tradition because they believe umwanakashi eewusunga in'ganda (a woman is the one that keeps a home) when in the actual sense even a man should be inculcated with the same values if divorce and GBV are to be avoided completely”*

Additionally, during the focus group discussion, one of the marriage counsellors admitted that it is important for them to be meeting and Ifiimbusa (marriage counsellors) in order for them to be revising and teaching themselves on how and what to deliver. This is supported by what FTMC 7 had to say:

*“...all of us in the marriage traditional counselling committee are not trained we use life marriage experience when dealing with marital problems of others. However, we also receive some counselling information through marriage gatherings which we use during our own counselling (Ifi Bwanse or Insaka-marriage gatherings) and also through discussions with experienced traditional marriage counsellors, bana chimbusa,”*

It was also important for traditional marriage counsellors to work hand in hand with the elderly of the society because they also can just be as helpful as traditional marriage counsellors. VC 9 had this to submit:

*“Traditional counsel can be given even by neighbouring elderly couples once a marital problem arises between the spouses and their advice is taken seriously because they are regarded as parents full of wisdom by the warring couple”*

It was again seen that traditional marriage counsellors sometimes did not have anywhere to refer to during their teachings which again posed as a challenge, therefore, MTMC 6, said:

*“It would be nice if all the teachings were documented, for future reference”*

#### **4.5.3 Couples to Minimise Seeking Help from Legal Institutions.**

CC 1 also responded in the questionnaire that couples who usually bring their disputes to the local court are usually told to divorce which he thought was not a solution to resolving the conflict but rather made other people like children suffer. In support of this view, this is what he had to say:

*“...success in resolving marital problems which are already in court is hard but those taken to either traditional or church counsellors before rushing to court are always successful”*

Additionally, CC2 had this to say:

*“our mission is to usually protect the victims in difficult situations, therefore, we feel victims being separated is usually the solution.”*

*“Many couples hurt themselves so much during court proceedings by what they reveal about each other so much that they feel the marriage should just come to an end to avoid further embarrassment.”* This view was supported by the MTMC 9

VC3 had this to say:

*“Legal personnel rarely have to time to counsel couples but usually just encourage them to either go on separation or divorce if they take the problem to the court”*

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 Overview**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The study explored the role marriage counsellors are playing in order to reduce conflicts in Senama compound of Mansa district. This chapter presents the discussion of the findings and therefore, the main issues that have been presented in the previous chapter shall further be highlighted and discussed in relation to the objectives of the study and literature that has been reviewed.

#### **5.1 Demographic Data**

The demographic information revealed that 20 (65 %) of the respondents were females as compared to 11 (35%) of the respondents who were male. This translated to the researcher that most women were more open revealing their status of either being married, divorced or undergoing any form of GBV and what was prevailing in their marriage as compared to the male counterparts.

Additionally, 7 (50%) of female respondents and 7 (50%) of male respondents of marriage counsellors were very cooperative and took part in the research. This indicated that both the male and the female marriage counsellors were very willing to participate in the research which was a positive indication that both the male and the female marriage counsellors could be used in curbing GBV and divorce. Furthermore, 2 male court clerks also responded through the questionnaire and 2 male victims answered the interviews out of 14 victims. The researcher thus concluded that most males were not comfortable responding to the female researcher.

#### **5.2 The Nature of Counselling Offered to Married Couples by Traditional Counsellors**

It was evident that traditional counsellors had no formal training in marriage counselling. Counselees therefore perceived them to have inadequate skills to deal with socio-emotional and physiological problems that surrounded marital lives. It was also common knowledge that traditional counsellors mainly used their marital experiences to assist others with difficulties in marriage. Ambert (2009) in support of this view cites, secularization trends, the liberalization of norms concerning individual choice, and the lessening of family influence as additional

forces that have affected access to traditional marriage counselling services among couples in communities.

Additionally, it was evident that traditional marriage counselling was based on oral tradition and cultural mythology; the threat here was that because of the convergence of cultures in the urban areas those norms, values and knowledge systems were slowly being lost as the holders and custodians of such knowledge passed on thereby making traditional counselling on marriage less popular among the new generation (Ambert, 2009; Kabosha, 2015). Modern couples were not taking interest in the values of traditional counselling, hence a glaring knowledge gap on how to synergize the various counselling strategies made available to them.

Participants were asked to explain the nature of marriage counselling the traditional marriage counsellors provide. The responses revealed that, the curriculum followed in during pre-marriage and married traditional counselling sessions focused more on subject on women submission to their husbands in marriages which in a lot of cases marriage counsellors used their own experience to counsel the couples. Further, participants were of the view that pre-marriage teachings emphasized more on preparing a woman for marriage and family than they did on preparing men for married lives hence, the many broken marriages in the area. Those who felt that teachings were weak on marriages believed that the curriculum had negative implications on access to traditional marriage counsel among couples in the study area.

People in the study area lived in a melting pot of multiculturalism; their environment was amenable to partially due to inter-marriage amongst different tribes and ethnic groups which brought with them a large variation in marriage customs. These variations in culture could be a source of conflict and divorce, thus traditional counsellors need to be aware of these variations and what they entailed as regards marriage counselling; they also needed the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively counsel couples of diverse backgrounds. Literature reviewed agreed with the observation that modern life styles among couples had a telling effect on the status of their marriages even if they were exposed to traditional marriage teachings before they got married Mapalo, (2015). The findings also pointed out that as a result of women's advancement in education and labour market participation, many women had a mobility they did not have in the past to remain under the influence of traditional teachings about marriage. Through modern life styles they had become more exposed to human rights issues, more assertive and have higher expectations of what they wanted and what they deserved in a long-term relationship like a marriage; which most husbands were not able to meet. Hence, most married women had no taste for traditional marriage counselling which

appeared to depress their human rights and dignity in homes and families thus leading to a separation or a divorce (Bracher, Santow, and Watkins, 2004). However, the study also observed that a few individuals agreed that marriage counselling was beneficial to them. It was observed that if then couples were culturally ignorant of the traditional values on marriage as was the case among some couples, was a recipe for difficulties in marriage life. The present study therefore found the assumption traditional marriage counselling was a strategy for reducing rate of GBV or divorce couples had a lot to benefit from traditional counselling in a multicultural environment in the study areas.

It was evident that marriages in the study area were being contracted by persons as young as between 16 and 21 years (CSO, 2010). High rates of divorces were also recorded within this age group for various reasons such as; inadequate skills to manage homes; low economic income; and difficulties in getting counsel from family members and the rest of the community. The Panos Institute Southern Africa (2014) noted that teenage marriages were by law and constitution illegal. According to Ambert (2009), young people, especially adolescents lacked the maturity and experience to cope with the demands of a marital relationship. Furthermore, their personalities were not yet stabilized to cope with marriage stressors. Very young people also had low incomes; this, along with low educational levels, was another risk factor for divorce (Clark and Crompton, 2006). It therefore was clear that traditional marriage counsellors had a role to play in helping reduce rate of divorce more so among young couple if only services could be made increasingly accessible to them and would be effective in that GBV and divorce would be reduced in the study area.

The findings also showed that another area in which traditional marriage counselling was effective was in the moments when counselees followed what they were counselled to the latter. The factors were raised here in line with Mapalo (2015) who reported that there were several factors that led to divorce and these include sexual matters such as lack of sexual intimacy, lack of counselling both premarital and marital counselling, childishness and family as well as friend's interference have ruined a lot of marriages in Zambia. Maggai (2016) further emphasized that counselling services helps to prepare individuals who were to enter marriages and those already in marriages how to live in marriages for a long period of time. This is because the marriage counsellors give information on marriage life.

However, some participates told the researcher that marriage counselling was not very effective in that they still saw a lot of couples who still underwent divorce and experienced a lot of GBV despite undergoing marriage counselling. Marriage counselling is concerned primarily with the

interpersonal relationship between spouses who are having difficulties in maintaining a satisfactory marriage (Maggai 2016). A marriage relationship is something the sum of the personalities that make it up. Although individual personality problems must, of necessity, be a part of these difficulties, the marriage counsellor's main function is to help with the intra-marital situation. It is felt that only a solution which comes from the clients' own thinking and feeling can be of lasting value (Mutswanga 2010).

### **5.3 Factors That Influence Accessibility of Traditional Counselling Services among Couples**

There are a number of factors that influence accessibility to traditional counselling. The present study therefore found out that culture and infidelity among couples were the reasons couples would or would not access traditional counselling.

Literature reviewed revealed that urban couples were of a multicultural background hence, were not willing to access traditional marriage counselling which may have had a leaning towards a particular ethnic or tribal group. Because of this access to traditional marriage counselling was quite limited in the study area. Mutswanga (2010:79) observed that people from different ethnic, tribe, religious, socioeconomic status and language backgrounds often were not keen at receiving counselling services which did not agree with their own beliefs, culture and traditions. Mapalo (2015) identified differences such as educational, gender, age, physical and mental abilities between marriage couples and traditional counsellors which made social interactions quite difficult. In short this study felt that the traditional counselling services though available in the area, were not easily accessible to all couples because of multicultural element surrounding such services (McFadden 1998).

On the issue of infidelity or unfaithfulness contributing to failure to access traditional marriage counselling and increasing the rate of divorce, it was evident that this was one of the factors that had led to the current situation of unwillingness in getting counsel in the area. Available literature had indeed supported this view. Literature reviewed had widely identified infidelity and unfaithfulness as among the most prominent causes of failure to seek traditional marriage counsel more so among young couple. Mulenga (2016) in the *Zambian Sunday Mail* of 18th October, 2016 gave quite a coverage on court divorces, he observed that the rising cases were as a result of adultery; mismanaged of family finances and drunkenness that might not have been accommodated in the curriculum framework for the would be couples or the ready married couples. Bracher, Santow, and Watkins. (2004) and Cherlin, *etal* (1998) also documented this view extensively. The present study affirmed the assumption based on the

views and opinions of participant couples with literature sources which accepted the assumption that problems of infidelity or unfaithfulness were more prominent in divorce and that they were out of fear by individual couples to be exposed over their private lives.

Additionally, the study observed that people in that couples in the study area tended to avoid traditional counselling when there was conflicts in marriage because both or either of the couples may have already developed other extra marital relationships during the time of conflict so much that when divorce was imminent, they were in a hurry to do away with the marriage so that they could settle in a new relationship. Achaje (2016) reported that, as a result of the extra marital affairs, couples were not willing to seek traditional marriage counselling for fear of being exposed. Hence, no opportunity was given to traditional marriage counselling to help mend the broken marriage. The consequence was the failure to reconcile and indeed divorce. In the present study, participants observed that in the event of a marriage break down, couples were more interested in sharing property than seeking traditional counselling with a view to reconciliation. It was also revealed that sometimes, married couples avoided traditional counselling because they thought they were able to pull through the problem on their own and that traditional marriage counselling was an interference. McFadden (1998) reported that most women would rather suffer quietly than come out in the open including seeking traditional counsel on marital conflicts. Because of traditional teachings, beliefs and customs which do not support assertiveness among women in marriages, marital conflicts end up in a broken marriage (Clark and Crompton, 2006). Stevenson and Wolfer (2007) observed that young couples especially those who were financially successful, were simply unadvisable because they felt could use finances to mend the marriage or simple felt they knew it all and that traditional marriage counselling was an interference into their private lives. They also pointed out that young couples had fears of being misunderstood if they allowed traditional marriage counsellors to get involved in their marital conflicts.

#### **5.4. Challenges Traditional Marriage Counsellors Face in Conflict Resolution among Couples.**

Traditional marriage counselling is not a straightforward service but has a number challenges that have been highlighted below according to this research.

Frontline institutions like the Church, the Courts of law, The Police Victim Support Units, Educational Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, had no network platforms for knowledge sharing and joint action in developing local marriage counselling programmes and co-

curricular on traditional marriage counselling to assist and sustain marriages (Cherlin, *etal* 1998) but in most cases just acted as destructors for traditional marriage counselling.

By today's standards some marriages are not worth saving, and should be determined for the welfare of the concerned. Marriage, if a mistake is not irrevocable. Sometimes a good divorce is better than a bad marriage for loss of lives are common in bad marriages which are full of violence (Mulenga 2016). Where this is indicated, the job of the marriage counsellor and the lawyer is one of education for divorce and perhaps future marriage. This may present one the most difficult problems for the counsellor. Shall he discourage divorce and insist upon reconciliation procedures, or should he proceed to expedite the final breakup of the family. It is a hard option but professional people who deal with such problems cannot avoid them, and the best thing is to help the clients to make the decisions on the available evidence and in the light of scientific knowledge and experience (The Panos Institute Southern Africa 2014).

From the findings it was evident that most cases are reported to the legal institutions as GBV, this is because women feel that they might be favoured there as compared to reporting them to traditional marriage counsellors (Mulenga 2016). Actually, most divorces occur during the first five years of marriage and most couples have one or more children within this period (CSO 2010). In the current trend for early marriage this means that most couples are still young and frequently immature during the first five years of marital and tend to report any sort of dispute in their homes which usually lead to the legal institutions advising them to divorce than make up. When young couples divorce they end up having multiple marriages in their lives which lead to individuals failing to meet the high standards of living which makes people to be walloping in poverty for them and their lineage (Panos Institute Southern Africa 2014).

Furthermore, it was evident that traditional counsellors had no formal training in marriage counselling. Counselees therefore perceived them to have inadequate skills to deal with socio-emotional and physiological problems that surrounded marital lives this somehow made them to fail to meet their duties of effective marriage counselling which would lead to a long marriage (Munyenyembe 2015). It was also common knowledge that traditional counsellors mainly used their marital experiences to assist others with difficulties in marriage. Ambert, (2009) in support of this view cites, secularization trends, the liberalization of norms concerning individual choice, and the lessening of family influence as additional forces that have affected access to traditional marriage counselling services among couples in communities. It was equally noted that, the traditional aspects were largely missing in the institution of marriage because de-culturization that has been associated with urbanization

(Bowen, 1978). For many, marriage had become an individual choice rather than a collectivist or family issue. Divorce and in some cases GBV often arose because of the missing family system ingredients and this had the physiological and psychological negative effect not only the couple involved but on the children and dependents of the couple.

Additionally, the researcher concluded that because of traditional teachings, beliefs and customs which do not support assertiveness among women in marriages, marital conflicts end up in a broken marriage and being beaten massively (Clark and Crompton, 2006). Stevenson and Wolfer, (2007) observed that young couples especially those who were financially successful, were simply unadvisable because they felt could use finances to mend the marriage or simply felt they knew it all and that traditional marriage counselling was an interference into their private lives. They also pointed out that young couples had fears of being misunderstood if they allowed traditional marriage counsellors to get involved in their marital conflicts as observed in the findings.

Interestingly, some of the participants agreed with the assertion that traditional marriage counselling did not allow for counselling of young girls who were forced into marriages especially in the event of pregnancy before marriage. Participants felt that this somehow, contributed to failure to access traditional marriage counselling as such young couples did not have the courage to face counsellors. Participants went on to say that parents looked at pregnant daughters as deflowered and valueless thus forcing the girls to join the men or boys responsible for the pregnancies without preparing them traditionally for married lives and responsibilities. Studies such as Indabawa and Mpofu, (2006) and Maggai, (2015) observed that parents of girls with a pregnancy outside marriage, appeared to be more pre-occupied with receiving the “*damage fees*”-payments made by a man responsible for impregnating a girl outside marriage than preparing the girl for home making. In the present study, the participants noted that there was little or no counselling traditionally, rendered to persons who entered marriage under these conditions thereby making it difficult for them to turn to traditional marriage counselling for support in times of marital differences. Such couples instead entered marriages with no pre-marital counselling thus were too afraid to seek traditional marriage counsel in the event of marriage crisis resulting in them seeing courts of law as a solution yet ending up result with failed marriages.

Additionally, other participants during the study lamented that traditional marriage counsellors faced a number of challenges because of the way parents and guardians are raising their children. They had observed that most couples that had gone to them for marriage counselling

usually did that for formality's sake and never adhered to any teachings. Furthermore, marriage counsellors were not given the utmost respect that they deserved thus in some cases discontinued their teachings (Achaje 2016).

In the present study, participants observed that in the event of a marriage break down, couples were more interested in sharing property than seeking traditional counselling with a view to reconciliation. It was also revealed that sometimes, married couples avoided traditional counselling because they thought they were able to pull through the problem on their own and that traditional marriage counselling was an interference. McFadden, (1998) reported that most women would rather suffer quietly than come out in the open including seeking traditional counsel on marital conflicts.

Literature reviewed agreed with the observation that modern life styles among couples had a telling effect on the status of their marriages even if were exposed to traditional marriage teachings before they got or during married Mapalo, (2015). The findings also pointed out that as a result of women's advancement in education and labour market participation, many women had a mobility they did not have in the past to remain under the influence of traditional teachings about marriage. Through modern life styles they had become more exposed to human rights issues, more assertive and have higher expectations of what they wanted and what they deserved in a long-term relationship like a marriage; which most husbands were not able to meet. Hence, most married women had no taste for traditional marriage counselling which appeared to depress their human rights and dignity in homes and families thus leading to a separation, conflicts or a divorce (Bracher, Santow, and Watkins, 2004). This was also said during the focus group when one of the female marriage counsellors complained that women who attained formal education were not easy to counsel.

### **5.5. Measures to Enhance Traditional Marriage Counselling**

Despite traditional marriage counselling having a lot of challenges, the present study however came up with some of the measures that can enhance traditional marriage counselling. Below are some of them.

It was evident from the findings that, a higher number of the participants were of the view that traditional marriage counselling approaches to complement services provided through modern and pastoral marriage counselling. Participants felt that more exposure to traditional counselling would help to reduce the rate of divorce among couples and parents and guardians telling their children on the importance of marriage counselling would be of so much help.

These findings were supported by the works of Gboku and Lekoko (2007), Panos Institute Southern Africa (2014). Who advocated for knowledge systems that that tended to synergize traditional counselling protocols that would assist married couples develop the desire to seek such services.

The present study nonetheless showed that the views of the participants that traditional marriage counselling had the potential of helping to lower the rate of GBV and divorce were of a mixed nature and many told the researcher that marriage counselling would be more effective if the marriage counsellors improved on their teaching, reducing on being very biased that is by focusing on women to be keeping their marriages as opposed to men and documenting their teachings for future reference would be of so much help so that other or rather future marriage would equally rely on the same information. These findings were in line with those of (Bracher, Santow, and Watkins (2004); Achanje, (2016) and Maggai, (2016) supported the need to promote traditional marriage counselling as an act of preserving culture and also the blending of different cultures seeing that even marriages of today are from different ethnic groups. This study also encouraged traditional marriage counsellors not to work in isolation but also to work with other traditional marriage counsellors, elderly members of the society who might be of help during the counselling sessions and also encouraged the government to partner with them by helping building places for counselling which would also effect privacy. Knowledge sharing is very important and in most cases leads to effective teaching (Gboku and Lekoko 2007).

Furthermore, it was also evident from the findings that females who were educated and in employment did not really appreciate the teachings from traditional counsellors because of traditional teachings, beliefs and customs which do not support assertiveness among women in marriages, marital conflicts end up in a broken marriage (Clark and Crompton, 2006). Therefore, marriage counsellors were encourage to revise their curriculum to an extent that it would be appreciated by people with any background. Stevenson and Wolfer, (2007) observed that young couples especially those who were financially successful, were simply unadvisable because they felt they could use finances to mend the marriage or simple felt they knew-it-all and that traditional marriage counselling was an interference into their private lives.

It was evident that traditional marriage counselling was based on oral tradition and cultural mythology; the threat here was that because of the convergence of cultures in the study area those norms, values and knowledge systems were slowly being lost as the holders and custodians of such knowledge passed on thereby making traditional counselling on marriage

less popular among the new generation (Ambert, 2009); Kabosha, (2015). Modern couples were not taking interest in the values of traditional counselling, hence a glaring knowledge gap on how to synergize the various counselling strategies made available to them. Therefore, participants suggested to the researcher that traditional marriage counselling should be documented in order to preserve the values and meet the modern lifestyle of the couples

The study advises couples on the verge of divorce not to run to the Zambia Police Victim Support Unit or divorce lawyers instead of positively considering the option of searching assistance from traditional counsellors in their reconciliatory efforts to save marriages. In view of this view the present study therefore accepts the assumption that traditional marriage counselling approaches can complement efforts of modern and pastoral counselling initiatives in reduce the rate of divorce in urban areas. This is in line with what Achaje (2016), asserts that it is not all the time that a lasting solution can be found through seeking legal advice because sometimes solutions are found through people around us with so much experience and knowledge in the related area.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Overview

This chapter seeks to give the summary of, and conclusion to, the findings of the study on the role of traditional marriage counsellors in resolving marriage conflicts. A case study of Senama village in Mansa district. The chapter further gives recommendations which could act as a guide for future of curbing of divorce and GBV in marriages.

#### 6.1 Conclusion

Marriage has been seen as the most important stage in one's life in Zambia. There are various steps that one is expected to undergo in order to have a successful marriage such as marriage counselling. However, marriage as important as it is. It comes with various challenges which sometimes lead to GBV and broken homes such as divorce in situations where challenges are failed to be handled properly. Therefore, traditional marriage counsellors have been seen to be helping resolve some of the marital problems in order to curb GBV and divorce.

The study came up with nature of traditional marriage which brought out; the characteristics of traditional marriage counselling, the benefits of traditional marriage counselling and effectiveness of traditional marriage counselling.

Factors influencing accessibility of traditional counselling services among couples was also explored and the study concluded that, culture, unfaithfulness or infidelity were some of the factors that made couples want to access traditional counselling.

The study highlighted some of the challenges traditional marriage counsellors face in resolving marital conflicts; the skills and qualifications of traditional marriage being criticised by many participants, the lifestyle or culture of the contemporary generation, it was found that most of the participants in the study area were from the mixed culture, that in some cases led to them to fail to access the services from the traditional marriage counsellors who were from another culture for fear of diluting their culture and the inefficiency of legal institutions which sometimes allow couples to divorce to safe guard the human rights and sometimes tended to be gender biased, were some of the challenges that the study came up with.

However, the study also came up with some measures to enhance traditional counselling in conflict resolution and these include; inculcating traditional values in the future generation so

that they could embrace traditional marriage counselling, revising the curriculum for traditional marriage counsellors and couples to minimise seeking help from legal institutions but rather to traditional marriage counsellors.

It was however evident from the study that, traditional marriage counselling as a social institution, is viable in that it has the potential of helping to reduce rate of divorce and gender based violence among married couples.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Due to the complex and nature of the role of marriage counsellors in resolving marriage conflicts I hereby make the following recommendations in order to make it more effective in resolving marital conflicts;

1. That, marriage counsellors should be documenting or recording their lessons so that it can be easy for future generations to be referring to them whenever they are counselling too.
2. That, marriage counsellors should improve on their environments for counselling for that would bring about privacy which most couples look for.
3. That, marriage counsellors should be updating their syllabus every now and then so as to become relevant to the contemporary couples.
4. That, marriage counsellors should have a common syllabus and not a tribal based one because there are a number of intermarriages in the recent years.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Introductory Letter**

#### **THE ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA.**

#### **TOPIC: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF MARRIAGE COUNSELLORS IN RESOLVING MARRIAGE CONFLICTS. A CASE STUDY OF SENAMA AREA IN MANSA DISTRICT.**

Dear respondents,

I am student pursuing Master of Science in Peace, Leadership and Conflict Resolution carry out a study entitled; exploring the Role of Marriage Counsellors in Resolving Marriage Conflicts. A Case Study of Senama Area in Mansa District, from the University of Zambia in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University (UNZAZOU). In this brief survey, you have been selected to participate in this research as a research respondent and your answers will be helpful in acquiring relevant information for my research. Please be advised that the research is purely an academic exercise and your response will only be used for academic purposes and be treated with maximum confidentiality. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

#### **DISCLAIMER**

All the questions and activities being carried out are for academic purposes, I therefore request you to be truthful in your responding because the information that will be given will be highly confidential.

#### **BENEFITS**

There might not be direct benefits for your participation in this study. However it is hoped that the information gathered shall be of great help to the would be affected persons in the future, traditional marriage counsellors, the government and the non-governmental organisations through the documentation of this study

Yours sincerely,

Milambo Mwanankopa

Contact number: 0978889454

**Appendix II: Questionnaire for Local Court Officers**

**SECTION A: LOCAL COURT OFFICERS' PERSONAL DETAILS**

1. What is your gender?

.....

2. How old were you at your last birthday? (provide the range)

.....

3. Mention your job description?

.....

**SECTION B:**

4. What is the nature of marriage counselling do most married couples receive?

.....

5. How effective is the marriage counselling?

.....

6. Does the nature of marriage conflicts help to curb marriage conflicts?

.....

7. What influences the accessibility of married couples to seek marriage counselling?

.....

8. How many cases of GBV and divorce have you recorded concerning married couples despite couples undergoing marriage counselling?

.....

9. What factors lead to couples to access marriage counselling

.....

10. What challenges do married couples encounter?

.....

11. What challenges do traditional marriage counsellors face?

.....

12. How helpful is marriage counselling to preventing marriage conflicts and divorce?

.....

13. What measures can be put in place in place to enhance traditional counselling on conflict resolution?

.....  
14. What are the main causes of divorce and GBV?

.....  
15. How many victims of GBV willingly report the cases to your office?

**THE END! THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**

### **Appendix III Interview Guide for Divorce and Gender Based Violence Victims.**

1. What is the role of marriage counsellors in resolving marriage conflicts?
2. What is the nature of counselling do traditional counsellors offer to couples?
3. How is the way of counselling by traditional marriage counsellors beneficial to married couples?
4. What influences accessibility of traditional marriage counselling?
5. How do you access traditional marriage counsellors?
6. What factors lead couples seek traditional marriage counselling?
7. What kind of challenges do traditional counsellors face in conflict resolution among couples?
8. How do marriage counsellors overcome the challenges?
9. What measures can be put in place to enhance traditional counselling in conflict resolution?
10. What are your recommendations in curbing marriage conflicts?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**

## **Appendix IV: Focus Group Guide Questions for Traditional Marriage Counsellors**

1. For how long have you been a marriage counsellor?
2. What is your marital status?
3. What nature of marriage counselling do you offer?
4. How many couples have you counselled before?
5. Why do they seek marriage counselling?
6. Why is marriage counselling important?
7. What kind of reward do you get from couples after marriage counselling?
8. How effective is marriage counselling in curbing divorce and GBV?
9. What challenges do you face when counselling the couples?
10. If you face any challenges, how can you curb those challenges?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**