

**ZAMBIAN CULTURE:  
HARNESSING CULTURAL LITERACY WITH A  
FOCUS ON SELECTED MYTHS AND TABOOS**

*Second Edition, 2019.*

by

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*Published by UNZA Press, Lusaka-Zambia*

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*Published by UNZA Press  
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**ISBN: 978-9982-03-105-9**

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## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to the culturalists and fanatics of culture

## *Acknowledgements*

Sincere gratitude to all respondents that took part in the study that culminated into this book. The valuable information that you provided on culture, myths and taboos from all provinces of Zambia helped in reshaping this book. Our sincere gratitude to some University of Zambia lecturers, students, and researchers. We also acknowledge some elderly relatives to the authors and senior citizens of Zambia vested with wisdom and knowledge of traditions that served as informants for some parts of this book. Special gratitude to the following people for providing some information on marriage processes per ethnic group: Kasonde Mundende, Patrick Sikayomya, Zebron Tembo, Chilambe Patience, Chishala K. Getrude, Kalubale Makumo, Mbaka Elizabeth, Noximba, Mhlanga Angel and Tepula Fredrick.

## Foreword

This book, ‘Zambian Culture: Harnessing Cultural Literacy with a focus on selected Myths and Taboos in Zambia’ is a unique text depicting the Zambian culture in general. The book starts with a discussion on culture, its significance in society and further situates the concept of cultural literacy and discusses the differences between Zambian culture and Zambian cultures at different levels with the use of relevant examples. What is more peculiar about this book is its effort in contextualising the composition of Zambian culture. The authors outlined the constituent of Zambian culture ranging from national symbols to the general lifestyle of Zambians. The authors further outlined six unique ways of marrying in Zambia, which could be familiar even to some neighbouring countries that share a similar culture with Zambia. The book focuses on selected myths and taboos where each myth and /or taboo, has been outlined, followed by their application and a possible interpretation in modern society.

## Preface

I am very delighted to provide this preface, made towards “*Positioning Culture as a bedrock for national development planning in Zambia*” (GRZ, (2017) ‘7<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan 2017-2021’, page 30).

My remarks gladly re-project the late Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe’s words in a paraphrased and direct manner when he introduced (GRZ, 1970) ‘*The Treasures of Zambian Traditional Art, National Museums of Zambia, Lusaka*’. This booklet contains valuable cultural aspects including myths and taboos selected from across Zambia. This represents but a small part of our total stock of myths and taboos. These valuable collections signal what is possible when dedicated people resolve to sustain our Zambian cultural heritage.

Must modernity kill Zambian culture? No, our modernity should concentrate on stopping the growing of aimlessness and emptiness in our Society; and one way of doing this is through drawing up schemes and programmes of cultural research and building the discoveries like those in this book, into an important beacon of knowledge for the present generation and those who will come after us. I am positively sure that discoveries of our history and culture will strengthen our intention to recapture our heritage and thereby project our identity in the international society.

Some people have openly said that history is a dead subject and culture is nothing but primitive relics; I say lucky are those who can distinguish gold from ordinary stones. History is people’s memory that help them reflect on the past, understand the present and project the future. Without historical memory, man is demoted



to the lower animals. Culture is an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle. It has greatly contributed to the fight for anything meaningful in a society worldwide. In all continents of the world, culture has been a springboard against societal vices such as colonialism. It is a fact to say that it was culture that helped men and women of Zambia, Africa, Asia, Latin America and India refuse to live in perpetual enslavement by Britain. Therefore, freedom must protect, promote and support culture which is a foundation of our dignity. Because of these reasons, we shall, therefore, continue to discover our culture and make our cultural treasury big and rich; and in so doing, we shall be refusing to be suburbanised by any other culture, and it is from this that we shall draw our inspiration and strength because we know that a nation without culture is like a tree without roots.

I must sound a word of warning to all my country men and women, including those friends who may wish to be swallowed completely by western culture; they will be a floating weed on the ocean of nations (men and families on the crossroad), for in concrete facts, he that rides a lion which leads into the bush, ends up in the lion's stomach.



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2019

# Chapter 1: Context of Cultural Literacy

## Definition of Culture

Different scholars and fields of study have defined culture differently. Spencer-Oatey (2012) affirmed this assertion when he stated that, culture is a notoriously difficult term to define.

*In 1952, the American anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn critically reviewed concepts and definitions of culture and compiled a list of 164 different definitions of culture from various fields (Spencer-Oatey,2012: 1)*

This means that there are several views on culture that cannot be exhausted in this book. Out of the many definitions, few that are linked to the context of this book have been selected and used.

Avruch (1998) defined culture as socially inherited, shared, and learned ways of living possessed by persons by virtue of their membership in social groups. This definition suggests that culture is something that is socially inherited (not biologically) by being members of our communities. It is our acquired social ways of life that are passed on from one generation to another. In agreement, Spencer-Oatey (2012: 3) defined culture as “A fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour”. Hofstede (1994: 5), noted that “Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”. This definition was further amplified by Matsumoto (1996: 16) who observed that “Culture is a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from

one generation to the next”. Furthermore, Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952: 181) indicated that “culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action”. According to Schwartz (1992), culture consists of derivatives of experiences, more or less organised, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves. Bate (2009: 96) sums up all these definitions by stating that, “Culture is a way of life.” Culture is the distillate of the total human behaviour that is passed on from one generation to the next. In summary, culture refers to routine activities and symbols that members of a community do on a daily basis including the social rules agreed upon by the same society that can be transmitted from one generation to another.

## **The Importance of Culture**

Culture influences activities of members in a particular society as reflected in what they do on a daily basis. In other words, culture guides members of a community on what they can and/or cannot do. Culture also helps in creating our identities about who we are, where we come from and what we believe in through mannerism, dressing, the foods we eat, the way we raise our families and the values shared with them and, the general life style we lead. Culture also helps in creating routine practices such as telling stories, singing, celebrations, routine

foods, remembering the past and imagining the future. Culture helps in weighing our life style in comparison to others. This is why some communities abandon certain forms of practices in preference for the new ones. In addition to its intrinsic value, Gilmore (2014) noted that, culture provides important social and economic benefits. Furthermore, a good cultural practice helps in improving learning and health, increased tolerance, and opportunities to come together with others.

Culture enhances our quality of life and increases overall well-being for both individuals and communities. Culture is also important intrinsically because it can benefit individuals deeply as it can be a source of delight and wonder with unlimited experiences both pleasurable and unsettling ones. In addition, certain forms of culture can be a source of edutainment, leisure, and sharing experiences with other people. These views were further echoed by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports (2016: 8) where they reported that “Cultural experiences are opportunities for leisure, entertainment, learning, and sharing experiences with others. Gilmore (2014) also echoes that culture brings people together as it provides some forms of entertainment, ranging from museums, theatres, dance studios to public libraries. In other words, cultural activities such as festivals, fairs, or artistic classes create social solidarity and cohesion, fostering social inclusion, community empowerment, and capacity-building. Our diverse cultural heritage resources tell the story of our shared past, fostering social cohesion (McCarthy et al., 2004).

Culture also helps in raising and enhancing confidence, civic pride, tolerance, self-esteem and value among the citizens especially the younger generation. In the case of children and youths, participation in culture helps develop thinking skills, builds self-esteem, and improves resilience, all of which enhance education outcomes. Culture is also cardinal in helping members

of the community understand their historical background better through appreciation of their cultural heritage.

Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe Consortium (CHCfE) (2015) observed that, culture helps in building social capital, the glue that holds communities together. Social capital in this case refers to the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. Through cultural activities, a nation's social capital is boosted. The social capital created through culture increases with regular participation in cultural activities (Delaney and Keaney, 2006). Furthermore, cultural engagement also plays a key role in poverty reduction and improves the social welfare of communities. Another important aspect of culture is that it makes a significant contribution to the tourism industry. Many tourists visit particular activities and places in Zambia such as witnessing traditional ceremonies, art galleries and museums which in turn, helps in raising the revenue for the state.

## **Understanding Literacy**

There are two major views in which the world perceives the term literacy. The first is 'Conventional Literacy' which has to do with technical reading and writing skills. Street (2014) described conventional literacy as a discrete set of technical skills of reading and writing. This view of conventional literacy is known as the Autonomous Model of Literacy (Street, 2006). The second view is to look at literacy as a body of knowledge, competencies and skills in a particular field (Mkandawire, 2018, and Barton, 2007). In the second view of literacy, the term is used in diverse areas reflecting knowledge and skills. This also include Functional Literacy which looks at the everyday social practices of how people use reading and writing in situated contexts (Silavwe et al, 2019). Functional Literacy in Zambia is

also construed in line with social life and entrepreneurship skills (Mkandawire, 2012). It is equally related to the ideological model of literacy (Rogers & Street, 2012). The conventional literacy is the oldest view of understading literacy that existed as reading or writing studies while understanding literacy as a body of knowledge, competencies and skills is a more recent neologism that expanded the meaning of literacy.

Several definitions of literacy from the two views have been provided by governments, institutions, organisations and scholars. For instance, the *Zambian National Literacy Framework* (2013), *National Reading Panel of 2000*, Mkandawire and Daka (2018), define literacy as “the ability to read and write”, while Barton (2007) defines literacy as knowledge in a specified area. Similarly, the *Oxford Dictionary* (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/literacy>) defined literacy as competence and knowledge in a specific area. Defining literacy as knowledge and competencies in specific fields was supported by Barton (2007) definition of Literacy literacy. UNESCO (2003a) reported that literacy is about how we communicate in society through social practices and relationships, about language and culture. It is also acknowledged that the use of written communication finds its place in our lives alongside other ways of communicating. This speaks to the different forms of literacy including print and digital literacies (UNESCO, 2013b). While the diffinition of literacy by UNESCO highlights other community literacies, its ending premise is in written communication.

In this book, literacy is used to mean a body of knowledge, competencies and skills in a particular field as established by Barton (2006). In other words, cultural literacy should be associated with knowledge in cultural matters as discussed in the next section.

## Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is the knowledge individuals possess about the culture of their environments and selected cultural aspects outside their vicinity. Mkandawire (2015:190) defined cultural literacy as “an individual’s ability to understand and appreciate the customs, values, beliefs and lifestyle of people in a particular cultural setting”. Furthermore, Freire and Macedo (1987), defined cultural literacy as a familiarity with particular linguistic traditions or bodies of information, acquiring a knowledge of selected works of literature and historical information necessary for informed participation in the affairs of a nation.

This book highlights some aspects of Zambian culture particularly, myths and taboos with the view of informing our readers about how communities use, perceive and apply myths and taboos. The authors interpreted the myths and taboos based on research and their experiences from both traditional and modern societies. The analysis and interpretation of myths and taboos in this book was based on three theories: Sociocultural, Constructivism and Interpretivism.

Some of the myths and taboos in this book were analysed based on the sociocultural theory as discussed by Cherry (2018). The sociocultural theory stresses that learning by humans is a social process that demand interaction among people especially between the older and the younger generations. In this case, myths and taboos were mainly used by adults to inculcate values and practices in the young ones.

Other myths and taboos were analysed and interpreted from the lens of the constructivism theory. The constructivist theory according to Vygotsky (1980) purports that, people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Our

argument for the choice of this theory was that myths and taboos were constructed based on people's daily experiences in their communities. When members of a community encountered something new, they had to reconcile it with their previous ideas, experiences and probably adjust to something new as humans under constructivism, are active creators of their own knowledge.

Interpretivism theory was also used to help understand the interpretation of other myths and taboos. Myers (2008) noted that Interpretivism believes that reality is given or socially constructed. In this case, myths and taboos are social constructions by members of the community with shared language, consciousness and meanings for purposes of teaching values. For instance, when a community creates a taboo, it is meant to teach realities of life in that society.

### **Zambian Culture versus Zambian Cultures**

There is a distinction between Zambian culture and Zambian cultures. Zambian culture refers to practices, symbols and life style that is common or unique to Zambia as a whole and is practiced or used by all or most Zambians. In other words, Zambian culture is a term used to refer to shared ways of doing things as exhibited by most Zambians such as mannerism, raising a family, cuisine, work culture and others. Mkandawire (2015:194) defined Zambian culture as a collection of behaviors, practices, values, attitudes, beliefs, laws, morals, procedures and other common ways of doing things as exhibited by Zambians that can be transmitted from one generation to another and that these practices are subject to modifications by members of the society as it changes. For example, in terms of food, the eating of nshima (nsima or sima-solid porridge made of mealie-meal, see Figure 1), is a Zambian culture as it is eaten by almost all Zambians and it is common in every ethnic group in Zambia.



Figure 1: Nshima ( Nsima or Sima)



Source: (Field Data, 2019)

Nshima in Figure 1 above, is a staple food that is served usually with a protein such as Beans, Kapenta, Beef, Chicken and vegetables.

Zambian cultures on the other hand, are those practices and ways of life that are specific to ethnic groups that are found in Zambia. Examples of Zambian cultures include the practice of eating nshima or samp with sour milk (See Figures 2) is mainly common among some tonga speaking communities. while one can find other ethnic groups eating this kind of food, it is predominantly eaten by the Tonga people of Zambia due to their lifestyle of keeping cattle.

Figure 2: Samp with sour milk.



Source: (Field Data, 2019)

The eating of monkey meat in Zambia is prominent among some Bemba speaking communities (now obsolete as monkeys are rarely seen in traditional villages populated by the Bembas) especially those in the rural parts. The practice of eating monkey meat was common in the past but this time, it has reduced imersely to the extent that, some members of the new generations are not aware of the practice especially those in towns. While there may be no health hazards or effects in eating monkey meat, it is not common to feast on such meat across ethnic groups in Zambia because the species is considered human like in appearace and behaviour.

The eating of mice (see figure 3) is common among the people from eastern province and some members of certain ethnic groups in Muchinga Province. The mice in discussion

is different from the world-domestic rats that stay in people's homes. Mice eaters say that they hunt for those in a bush and not those rats that take themselves into people's homes for shelter and survival. When asked why they did not eat world-domestic rats, most respondents indicated that domestic rats were dirty, clever and not attractive. In comparison to world rats, they said those in the bush are clean, healthy and delicious. While eating mice is common among easterners, other ethnic groups such as the Luvala also eat them. There are also ethnic groups that do not eat rats in the country.

Figure 3: Mouse or rat (Mice - plural)



Source: (Rodents images)

The eating of Water Lizard or Water Monitor (Hopan in Silozi, See figure 4), is common among some Lozi people. Furthermore, the wearing of an ivory bangle on the wrist, Siziba (A Man's dress) and Musisi (female attire) are unique to the Lozi people of Western province of Zambia. While the eating of water lizard is common in other ethnic groups as well such as the Sengas, Tumbukas and Ngonis, it is more pronounced among the lozi people, especially those found in the rural parts of the country.

Figure 4: Water Lizard



Source: (Picture by Phanuwat Nandee)

The Makishi dance (Ref. figure 5) in Zambia, is unique to the Luvale people. The Makishi masquerade is performed at the end of the Mukanda Ceremony, an annual initiation ritual for boys between the ages of eight and twelve. This ritual is celebrated by the Vaka Chiyama Cha Mukwamayi communities, which include the Luvale, Chokwe, Luchazi and Mbunda peoples, who live in the Northwestern and Western Provinces of Zambia. Usually at the beginning of the dry season, the young boys leave their homes and live for one to three months in an isolated bush camp. This separation from the outside world marks their symbolic death as children. The Mukanda involves the circumcision of the initiates, tests of courage and lessons on their future role as men and husbands. Each initiate is assigned a specific masked character, which remains with him throughout the entire process. The Chizaluke represents a powerful and

wealthy man with spiritual influence; the Mupala is the “lord” of the Mukanda and protective spirit with supernatural abilities; Phwevo is a female character representing the ideal woman and is responsible for the musical accompaniment of the rituals and dances.

Figure 5: Makishi Dance



Source: (Zambia National Commission for UNESCO).

The Makishi is another masked character, representing the spirit of a deceased ancestor who returns to the world of the living to assist the boys. The completion of the Mukanda is celebrated with a graduation ceremony. Some members of the village attend the Makishi dance and pantomime-like performance until the graduates re-emerge from the camp to reintegrate with their communities as adult men.

The Mukanda has an educational function of transmitting practical survival-skills as well as knowledge about nature, sexuality, religious beliefs and the social values of the community. In former times, it took place over a period of several months and represented the reason for the existence of the Makishi masquerade. Today, it is often reduced to one month in order to

adapt to the school calendar. This adjustment together with the increasing demand for Makishi dancers at social gatherings and party rallies, might affect the ritual's original character (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/makishi-masquerade-00140>).

Vimbuza dance is predominantly practiced and performed among the Tumbuka and Senga people of Lundazi and Chama districts of Zambia as well as certain Tumbuka dominated regions such as the Northern part of Malawi. Vimbuza is a spiritual and physical healing dance. The local people take it as an important manifestation of the Ng'oma, a healing tradition found throughout Bantu-speaking Africa. Ng'oma, meaning "drums of affliction", carries considerable historical depth and attachment to the spiritual realm. The examples provided above are part of Zambian cultures as they are unique to specific ethnic groups within the borders of the country.

Many times, 'Zambian culture' and 'Zambian cultures' are used interchangeably to mean one thing, even when they are two different concepts. For instance, some people would define Zambian culture as all cultures found and practiced in Zambia whether unique to a particular ethnic group or not. This is a lay man's way of defining Zambian culture. Similarly, one would also say that Zambian language refer to all languages spoken in Zambia which is not correct. Does it mean that all cultures found and practiced in Zambia are Zambian culture(s)? Or does it mean that all languages spoken in Zambia are Zambian Languages? Definitely not. Zambian culture or cultures are those cultures that may have originated in Zambia or a region in Africa where Zambians came from and there is a unique ethnic group based in Zambia that practices that culture or those cultures. The same apply for language as there are languages spoken in Zambia such as French, Chinese and English that are not Zambian languages.

There are a few circumstances that would make an exotic



culture or language to be localised. One way is where politicians adopt an exotic culture to be part of the local cultures for some reason through political announcements and legalisation. Another way is where the citizens and the general public copy exotic ways of doing things such as dressing, food and other life styles through globalisation and technological advancements. The third way is where an exotic culture or language is adopted by the local people due to colonisation, genocide and migration. It is not the focus of this book to discuss everything there is about Zambian culture (s) but only selected Myths and Taboos in Zambia.

### **Ethnicity, Multilingualism and Multiculturalism**

An ethnic group is a social group of people that affiliate or identify themselves with each other because they share a common name, history, language, religion, cultural background and descent or ancestry. It can, therefore, be associated with a tribe because within a tribe, people are more close and united. An ethnic group is usually led by a traditional leader such as a headman, chief or chieftainess. This is the case for Zambia as shown in Table 1, which shows the list of over 286 chief related positions. It should be noted that certain ethnic groups or tribes are led by more than one leader. This is what Mkandawire (2015:191) noted when he wrote that: “The existence of many languages and dialects in Zambia imply that there are different ethnic groupings with their beliefs and cultural practices which make Zambia a unique multicultural society”. In addition, the country has over two hundred and eighty-six recognised chief related positions (see table 1) and over eighty recognised and celebrated traditional ceremonies countrywide (see table 2).

This suggests that the Zambian ethnic groups are literary organised and managed by traditional chiefs at tribal or ethnic

group level. The existence of many languages, dialects and cultures in Zambia imply that the state is a multilingual and multicultural society.

This book has a collection of myths and taboos from different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In other words, the myths and taboos were extracted from both multilingual and multicultural settings in Zambia. Multilingualism means that more than two languages and dialects are used in a community or state. Similarly, multiculturalism implies that there are several cultures found in a community or state and this is the case for Zambia. Multilingualism and multiculturalism should never be viewed as a problem in a nation or community but should be treated as an asset as it offers a rich linguistic and cultural diversity that may offer different ways of resolving problems or challenges in a society (Mkandawire, 2017). As a way of showing cultural diversity in Zambia, below is a list of chieftainships that practice different cultures in Zambia.

Table 1: A List of Recognised Traditional Chieftainships in Zambia (Source: Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs)

No.	Chieftainship	Province	District
1	Snr. Chief Mukuni	Central	Chibombo
2	Chief Chamuka	Central	Chibombo
3	Chief Chitanda	Central	Chibombo
4	Chieftainess Mungule	Central	Chibombo
5	Chief Liteta	Central	Chibombo
6	Chief Chipepo	Central	Kapiri- Mposhi
7	Chief Mukubwe	Central	Kapiri- Mposhi
8	Chief Ngabwe	Central	Kapiri- Mposhi
9	Snr. Chief Mboroma	Central	Mkushi
10	Chief Chembe	Central	Mkushi



11	Chief Chikupili	Central	Mkushi
12	Chief Chitina	Central	Mkushi
13	Chief Kanyesha	Central	Mkushi
14	Chief Kaundula	Central	Mkushi
15	Chief Mboshya	Central	Mkushi
16	Chief Mukonchi	Central	Mkushi
17	Chief Mulungwe	Central	Mkushi
18	Chief Nkole	Central	Mkushi
19	Chief Shaibila	Central	Mkushi
20	Snr. Chief Shakumbila	Central	Mumbwa
21	Chief Chibuluma	Central	Mumbwa
22	Chief Kabulwebulwe	Central	Mumbwa
23	Chief Kaindu	Central	Mumbwa
24	Chief Moono	Central	Mumbwa
25	Chief Mulendema	Central	Mumbwa
26	Chief Mumba	Central	Mumbwa
27	Snr. Chief Muchinda	Central	Serenje
28	Chief Chibale	Central	Serenje
29	Chief Chisomo	Central	Serenje
30	Chief Kabamba	Central	Serenje
31	Chief Chitambo	Central	Serenje
32	Chief Mailo	Central	Serenje
33	Chief Muchika	Central	Serenje
34	Chieftainess Serenje	Central	Serenje
35	Chief Chilyabufu	Central	Itezhi-Tezhi
36	Chief Kaingu	Central	Itezhi-Tezhi
37	Chief Musungwa	Central	Itezhi-Tezhi
38	Chief Muwezwa	Central	Itezhi-Tezhi
39	Chief Shimbizhi	Central	Itezhi-Tezhi
40	Chief Fungulwe	Copperbelt	Lufwanyama
41	Chief Lumpuma	Copperbelt	Lufwanyama

42	Chief Mukutuma	Copperbelt	Lufwanyama
43	Chief Nkana	Copperbelt	Kitwe
44	Chief Shibuchinga	Copperbelt	Lufwanyama
45	Chief Shimukunami	Copperbelt	Lufwanyama
46	Snr. Chief Chiwala	Copperbelt	Masaiti
47	Snr. Chief Mushili	Copperbelt	Masaiti
48	Chief Nkambo	Copperbelt	Masaiti
49	Snr. Chief Ndubeni	Copperbelt	Mpongwe
50	Chief Kalunkumya	Copperbelt	Mpongwe
51	Chieftainess Lesa	Copperbelt	Mpongwe
52	Chief Machiya	Copperbelt	Mpongwe
53	Chieftainess Malembeka	Copperbelt	Mpongwe
54	Chief Mwinuna	Copperbelt	Mpongwe
55	Chief Zingalume	Eastern	Chadiza
56	Chief Mlolo	Eastern	Chadiza
57	Chief Pembamoyo	Eastern	Chadiza
58	Chief Mwangala	Eastern	Chadiza
59	Snr. Chief Kambombo	Muchinga	Chama
60	Chief Chibale	Muchinga	Chama
61	Chief Chifunda	Muchinga	Chama
62	Chief Chikwa	Eastern	Chama
63	Chief Tembwe	Eastern	Chama
64	Paramount Chief Mpezeni	Eastern	Chipata
65	Paramount Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi	Eastern	Katete
66	Chief Chikuwe	Eastern	Chipata
67	Chief Chanje	Eastern	Chipata
68	Chief Chinunda	Eastern	Chipata
69	Chief Chinyaku	Eastern	Chipata

70	Chief Kapatamoyo	Eastern	Chipata
71	Chief Madzimawe	Eastern	Chipata
72	Chief Mafuta	Eastern	Chipata
73	Chief Maguya	Eastern	Chipata
74	Chief Mishoro	Eastern	Chipata
75	Chief Nkanda	Eastern	Chipata
76	Chief Mnukwa	Eastern	Chipata
77	Chief Mshawa	Eastern	Chipata
78	Chief Nzamane	Eastern	Chipata
79	Chief Sayiri	Eastern	Chipata
80	Snr. Chief Nsefu	Eastern	Mambwe
81	Chief Jumbe	Eastern	Mambwe
82	Chief Kakumbi	Eastern	Mambwe
83	Chief Malama	Eastern	Mambwe
84	Chief Msoro	Eastern	Mambwe
85	Chief Mnkanya	Eastern	Mambwe
86	Chief Kathumba	Eastern	Katete
87	Chief Kawaza	Eastern	Katete
88	Chief Mbangombe	Eastern	Katete
89	Snr. Chief Magodi	Eastern	Lundazi
90	Snr. Chief Mwase Lundazi	Eastern	Lundazi
91	Chief Chikomeni	Eastern	Lundazi
92	Chief Mwanya	Eastern	Lundazi
93	Chief Mwase Mphangwe	Eastern	Lundazi
94	Chief Phikamalaza	Eastern	Lundazi
95	Chief Zumwanda	Eastern	Lundazi
96	Snr. Chief Luembe	Eastern	Nyimba
97	Chieftainess Mwape	Eastern	Nyimba
98	Chief Nyalungwe	Eastern	Nyimba

99	Chief Ndake	Eastern	Nyimba
100	Snr. Chief Kalindawalo	Eastern	Petauke
101	Chief Mwanjawanthu	Eastern	Petauke
102	Chief Nyampande	Eastern	Petauke
103	Chieftainess Nyanje	Eastern	Petauke
104	Chief Sandwe	Eastern	Petauke
105	Traditional Councillor	Muchinga	Chama
106	Traditional Councillor Chitungulu	Eastern	Lundazi
107	Traditional Councillor	Eastern	Lundazi
108	Traditional Councillor Mulilo	Muchinga	Chama
109	Traditional Councillor Kazembe	Eastern	Lundazi
110	Traditional Councillor Mumbi	Eastern	Petauke
111	Chief Kazembe	Luapula	Mwansabombwe
112	Chief Mushota	Luapula	Kawambwa
113	Chief Chama	Luapula	Kawambwa
114	Chief Munkata	Luapula	Kawambwa
115	Chief Milambo	Luapula	Mansa
116	Chief Chimense	Luapula	Mansa
117	Chief Chisunka	Luapula	Mansa
118	Chief Kalaba	Luapula	Mansa
119	Chief Kalasa Lukangaba	Luapula	Mansa
120	Chief Kasomalwela XIII	Luapula	Mansa
121	Chief Mabumba	Luapula	Mansa
122	Chief Matanda	Luapula	Mansa
123	Chief Mibenge	Luapula	Mansa

124	Chieftainess Sonkotwe	Luapula	Mansa
125	Chief Kashiba	Luapula	Mwense
126	Chief Katuta	Luapula	Mwense
127	Chief Ludunda	Luapula	Mwense
128	Chief Lukwesa	Luapula	Mwense
129	Chief Mulundu	Luapula	Mwense
130	Chieftainess Mwenda	Luapula	Mwense
131	Chief Mutipula	Luapula	Mwense
132	Snr. Chief Mununga	Luapula	Chiengi
133	Snr. Chief Puta	Luapula	Chiengi
134	Chieftainess Lambwe	Luapula	Chiengi
135	Chief Kambwali	Luapula	Nchelenge
136	Chieftainess Kanyembo	Luapula	Nchelenge
137	Chief Nshimba	Luapula	Nchelenge
138	Snr. Chief Kalasa Mukoso	Luapula	Samfya
139	Snr. Chief Kalimakonde	Luapula	Samfya
140	Snr. Chief Mwewa	Luapula	Samfya
141	Chief Bwalya-Mponda	Luapula	Samfya
142	Chief Chitembo	Luapula	Samfya
143	Chief Kasoma Lunga	Luapula	Samfya
144	Chief Kasoma Bangweulu	Luapula	Samfya
145	Chief Mbulu	Luapula	Samfya
146	Chieftainess Mulakwa	Luapula	Samfya
147	Chieftainess Mulongwe	Luapula	Samfya
148	Chief Mwansakombe	Luapula	Samfya
149	Chief Nsamba	Luapula	Samfya

150	Snr Chieftainess Nkomeshya Mukamambo II	Lusaka	Chongwe
151	Chief Mphanshya	Lusaka	Chongwe
152	Chieftainess Shikabeta	Lusaka	Chongwe
153	Chief Bunda Bunda	Lusaka	Chongwe
154	Chieftainess Chiawa	Lusaka	Kafue
155	Snr Chief Mburuma	Lusaka	Luangwa
156	Chief Mpuka	Lusaka	Luangwa
157	Chief Mukwikile	Northern	Shiwan'andu
158	Chief Chibesakunda	Northern	Shiwan'andu
159	Chief Mubanga	Northern	Chinsali
160	Chief Kabanda	Northern	Chinsali
161	Snr. Chief Nkula	Northern	Chinsali
162	Chief Nkweto	Northern	Chinsali
163	Chieftainess Nawaitwika	Muchinga	Nakonde
164	Chief Kafwimbi	Muchinga	Isoka
165	Chief Katyetye	Muchinga	Isoka
166	Chief Muyombe	Muchinga	Isoka
167	Chief Mwenichifungwe	Muchinga	Mafinga
168	Chief Mwenewisi	Muchinga	Mafinga
169	Snr. Chief Nsama	Northern	Kaputa
170	Chief Kaputa	Northern	Kaputa
171	Chief Mukupa Katandula	Northern	Kaputa
172	Snr. Chief Shimumbi	Northern	Luwingu
173	Chief Chabula	Northern	Luwingu
174	Chief Chipalo	Northern	Luwingu
175	Chief Chiwanangala	Northern	Chilubi
176	Chief Katuta	Northern	Luwingu
177	Chief Matipa	Northern	Luwingu

178	Chief Tungati	Northern	Luwingu
179	Snr. Chief Nsokolo	Northern	Mbala
180	Snr. Chief Tafuna	Northern	Mpulungu
181	Chief Chinakila	Northern	Senga Hill
182	Chief Chitimbwa	Northern	Mpulungu
183	Chief Fwambo	Northern	Mbala
184	Chief Mpande	Northern	Senga Hill
185	Chief Mwamba	Northern	Mbala
186	Chief Nondo	Northern	Senga Hill
187	Snr. Chief Kopa	Northern	Mpika
188	Chief Chikwanda	Northern	Mpika
189	Chief Chiundaponda	Muchinga	Mpika
190	Chief Kabinga	Muchinga	Mpika
191	Chief Luchembe	Muchinga	Mpika
192	Chief Mpepo	Muchinga	Mpika
193	Chief Mpumba	Muchinga	Mpika
194	Chief Mukungule	Muchinga	Mpika
195	Chief Nabwalya	Muchinga	Mpika
196	Paramount Chief Chitimukulu	Northern	Mungwi
197	Chief Nkole Mfumu	Northern	Kasama
198	Snr. Chief Mwamba	Northern	Kasama
199	Chief Munkonge	Northern	Kasama
200	Chief Chimbola	Northern	Mungwi
201	Chief Makasa	Northern	Mungwi
202	Chief Chungu	Northern	Luwingu
203	Chief Chitoshi	Northern	Mporokoso
204	Chief Mukupa Kaoma	Northern	Mporokoso
205	Chief Mumporokoso	Northern	Mporokoso
206	Chief Shibwalya- Kapila	Northern	Mporokoso
207	Snr. Chief Sekufela	N/Western	Kabompo

208	Chief Chiyengele	N/Western	Kabompo
209	Chief Kalunga	N/Western	Kabompo
210	Snr. Chief Kasempa	N/Western	Kasempa
211	Chief Ingwe	N/Western	Kasempa
212	Snr. Chief Mushima	N/Western	Mufumbwe
213	Chief Chizera	N/Western	Mufumbwe
214	Snr. Chief Kanongeshasha	N/Western	Mwinilunga
215	Chief Sailunga	N/Western	Mwinilunga
216	Chief Chibwika	N/Western	Mwinilunga
217	Chieftainess Ikelengi	N/Western	Mwinilunga
218	Chief Kanyama	N/Western	Mwinilunga
219	Chief Kakoma	N/Western	Mwinilunga
220	Chief Mwinimilamba	N/Western	Mwinilunga
221	Chief Ntambu	N/Western	Mwinilunga
222	Chief Nyakaseya	N/Western	Mwinilunga
223	Snr. Chief Kalilele	N/Western	Solwezi
224	Chief Mujimanzovu	N/Western	Solwezi
225	Chief Musele	N/Western	Solwezi
226	Chief Chikola	N/Western	Solwezi
227	Chief Kapijipanga	N/Western	Solwezi
228	Chief Matebo	N/Western	Solwezi
229	Chief Mukumbi	N/Western	Solwezi
230	Chief Mulonga	N/Western	Solwezi
231	Chief Mumena	N/Western	Solwezi
232	Chief Musaka	N/Western	Solwezi
233	Snr Chief Ishindi	N/Western	Zambezi
234	Snr. Chief Ndungu	N/Western	Zambezi
235	Chief Chinyama Litapi	N/Western	Zambezi
236	Chief Ishima	N/Western	Zambezi



237	Chief Kucheka	N/Western	Zambezi
238	Chief Mpindi	N/Western	Zambezi
239	Chieftainess Nyakulenga	N/Western	Zambezi
240	Chief Macha	Southern	Choma
241	Chief Mapanza	Southern	Choma
242	Chief Moyo	Southern	Choma
243	Chief Hamaundu	Southern	Choma
244	Chief Singani	Southern	Choma
245	Chief Munyumbwe	Southern	Gwembe
246	Chief Sinadambwe	Southern	Gwembe
247	Chief Chikanta	Southern	Kalomo
248	Chief Siachitema	Southern	Kalomo
249	Chief Simwatachela	Southern	Kalomo
250	Chief Sipatunyana	Southern	Kalomo
251	Chief Sekute	Southern	Kazungula
252	Chief Mukuni	Southern	Kazungula
253	Chief Musokotwane	Southern	Kazunula
254	Chief Nyawa	Southern	Kazungula
255	Chief Moomba	Southern	Kazungula
256	Chief Mwanachingwala	Southern	Mazabuka
257	Chieftainess Mwenda	Southern	Chikankhata
258	Chief Naluama	Southern	Mazabuka
259	Chief Sianjalika	Southern	Mazabuka
260	Chief Chona	Southern	Monze
261	Chief Choongo	Southern	Monze
262	Chief Monze	Southern	Monze
263	Chief Mwanza	Southern	Monze
264	Chief Hamusonde	Southern	Monze
265	Chief Ufwenuka	Southern	Monze
266	Chief Mukobela	Southern	Namwala
267	Chief Muchila	Southern	Namwala

268	Chief Mungaila	Southern	Namwala
269	Chief Nalubamba	Southern	Namwala
271	Chief Chipeco	Southern	Siavonga
272	Chief Sikongo	Southern	Siavonga
273	Chief Simamba	Southern	Siavonga
274	Snr. Chief Mweemba	Southern	Sinazongwe
275	Chief Sinazongwe	Southern	Sinazongwe
276	Chieftainess Mbaon-jikana (Mulena Mukwae)	Western	Kalabo
277	Chief Amukena	Western	Kaoma
278	Chief Kahare	Western	Kaoma
279	Chief Mutondo	Western	Kaoma
280	Chief Imwiko	Western	Lukulu
281	Litunga of Western	Western	Mongu
282	Chief Chiengele	Western	Mongu
283	Chief Kandala	Western	Mongu
284	Litunga-La-Mboela	Western	Senanga
285	Snr. Chief Inyambo	Western	Mwandi
286	Chief Lukama	Western	Shang'ombo

It is important to note that the list stated above in table 1, is not exhaustive as there are other chiefs in Zambia that are not included on the table above. The Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs may have additional list of chiefs recognised in Zambia. The authors are certain that if one visited the ministry stated above, they might find an additional list of chiefs to the existing one reported in this book. This situation is not different from that of ceremonies. The Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, and Ministry of Tourism and Arts of Zambia are also compiling a list of calendrical traditional ceremonies regularly until they have a comprehensive database that can serve as a reference point. It would be important that all intangible cultural heritage is

preserved so that even the minor ceremonies such as Chinamwali and Mukanda are well documented for future reference.

### **Ceremonies and Rituals in Zambia**

A ceremony is an event of social, spiritual, ritual, and religious significance performed on special occasions celebrating or landmarking achievement, anniversary, passage of time, coronation and presidential, atonement and purification, graduation, dedication, oaths of allegiance, initiation, marriage, funeral, birth ceremonies and others.

Like most African countries, Zambia practices both disclosed and undisclosed cultural ceremonies and rituals. Among the disclosed ceremonies and rituals include calendrical or seasonal, contingent, affliction, divination, some initiation and regular or daily ceremonies. Undisclosed ceremonies are those conducted in secrecy which include those practiced by secrete societies such as spiritual groups like Nyau and Makishi dancers, Some initiation ceremonies such as the chisungu or chinamwali teachings, traditional marriage counsellors teachings such as Alangizi or banachimbusa teachings and other private or ethnic practices that are not expected to be known by the public.

Many times, a ceremony is used interchangeably or alongside the term ritual. Turner (1973) noted that a ritual is a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests.

Ceremonies and rituals can be classified into groups based on their characteristics or when they take place. In Zambia and Africa as a whole, there are seven major types of ceremonies and rituals. These are calendrical or seasonal, contingent, affliction, divination, initiation, regular or daily, and undisclosed ceremonies or rituals.

Calendrical or seasonal ceremonies and rituals are those that takes place after a calendar year or season. Calendrical and seasonal rituals are those hallowing a culturally defined moment of change in the climatic cycle or the inauguration of an activity such as planting, harvesting, or moving from winter season to summer pasture. Examples of Celendrical or seasonal ceremonies in Zambia are the sevety seven (77) traditional ceremonies such as those presented on pages 29 to 34.

Contingent ceremonies or rituals are those held in response to an individual or collective crisis. Contingent rituals or ceremonies reflect life-crisis ceremonies, which are performed at birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, death, and so on, to demarcate the passage from one phase to another in the individual's life-cycle. For example, when a husband dies, traditional relatives believe in cleansing rituals of the widow as discussed on page 111. Those rituals are contigent ceremonies.

The affliction rituals or ceremonies, are those that are usually performed to placate or exorcise preternatural beings or forces believed to have afflicted people with misfortune, illnesses, bad luck, troubledness, gynecological troubles, severe physical injuries, and the like.

Divinatory rituals are those performed by religious leaders, spiritual elders and political authorities to ensure the health and fertility of human beings, animals, and crops in their territories.

Initiation ceremonies, are those which orients younger generations or individuals into another phase or life style. These may include ceremonies that introduce girls and boys into adulthood, adults into witchcrafts, cult, priesthoods devoted to certain deities, into religious associations, or into secret societies.

The sixth type refers to regular and daily ceremonies or rituals which are performed regularly and at times, on a daily basis such as accompanying the daily offering of food

and libations to deities or ancestral spirits or both (Turner, 1973). Regular ceremonies may also include those that are carried out frequently to officiate an event such as a football match, a formal, semi-formal and informal function, a conference, seminar, symposium or workshop and others.

The seventh type refers to undisclosed ceremonies and rituals that are performed by private members of a community or secrete societies such as Nyau dancers, Makishi dancers, alangizi women and some traditional marriage counsellors.

Zambia practices all the seven types of ceremonies and rituals stated above. However, the government of the Republic of Zambia seem to stress more on calendrical traditional ceremonies such as Kuomboka, Nc'wala, and Mutomboka more than others. Some important cultural ceremonies such as Chisungu initiation ceremony, Chinamwali Initiation, Mukanda, and Nkolola initiation ceremony among others, are not highly talked about. It is important to note that ceremonies and rituals are partly what defines and distinguishes Zambia from other African countries and the rest of the world.

Human lives are characterised by ceremonies of one kind or the other. Denying to recognise, support and promote people's ceremonies is equivalent to denying life to those people. Therefore, all citizens, governments and other stakeholders must take kin interest in safeguarding these forms of culture. The step taken by the Government of the Republic of Zambia through the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, and Ministry of Tourism and Arts, in documenting a list of chiefs and calendrical traditional ceremonies of Zambia respectively, is a good move in the right direction. Table 2 below shows a list of recognised traditional ceremonies in Zambia.

Table 2: A List of Recognised Traditional Ceremonies in Zambia  
(Source: Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs)

EASTERN PROVINCE					
SN	Ceremony	Chief	Tribe	District	Month
1	Nc'wala Traditional Ceremony	Paramount (Par.) Chief Mpezeni	Ngoni	Chipata	February
2	Kulamba Kubwal	Par. Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi	Chewa	Katete	August
3	Kulonga	Chief Mphamba VI	Tumbuka	Lundazi	August
4	Malaila	Snr. Chief Nsefu	Kunda	Mambwe	October
5	Kwenje	Snr. Chief Kambombo	Tumbuka	Lundazi	October
6	Zengani	Snr. Chief Magodi	Tumbuka	Lundazi	October
7	Tuwimba	Snr. Chief Kalindawalo	Nsenga	Petauke	October
CENTRAL PROVINCE					
8	Ikubi Lya Loongo	Snr. Chief Shakumbila	Sala	Mumbwa	July
9	Ichibwela Mushi	Bisa/Swaka/ Lala Chiefs	Bisa/ Swaka/ Lala	Mkushi	September
10	Musaka / Jikubi	Chiefs Mumba and Kaindu	Kaonde	Mumbwa	September
11	Kulamba Kubwalo	Snr. Chief Mukuni	Lenje	Chibombo	October

12	Ikubi Lya Malumbe-munyama	Chief Chibuluma	Kaonde Ila	Mumbw	October
COPPERBELT PROVINCE					
13	Ukwilimuna	Chieftainess Malembeka	Lamba	Mpongwe	July
14	Chabalankata	Snr. Chief Mushili	Lamba	Masaiti	November
15	Nsengele Kununka	Chief Machiya	Lamba	Mpongwe	November
16	Lesa Nkushe	Chieftainess Lesa	Lufwanyama		
LUAPULA PROVINCE					
17	Mutomboko	Snr. Chief Mwata Kazembe	Lunda	Kawamb-wa	July
18	Builile	Snr. Chief Puta	Bwile	Chienge	September
19	Kwanga	Snr. Chief Mwewa	Ng'umbo	Samfya	October
20	Mabila	Snr. Chief Mununga	Shila	Chienge	October
21	Chishinga Malaila	Snr. Chief Mushota	Chishinga	Kawambwa	October
22	Chabuka	Chief Matanda	Ushi	Mansa	October
LUSAKA PROVINCE					
23	Nkombaly-anga	Chieftainess Shikabeta	Soli	Chongwe	July
24	Dantho	Chief Mphuka	Chikunda	Luangwa	September

25	Chakwela Makumbi	Snr. Chieftainess Nkhomesha Mukamambo II	Soli	Chongwe	September
26	Mbambara	Snr. Chief Mburuma	Nsenga Luzi	Luangwa	November
27	Chibwela Kumushi	Chief Bunda Bunda	Soli	Luangwa	November
28	Kailala	Chieftainess Chiawa	Goba	Kafue	November
29	Chibwela Kumushi	Chief Mumpashya	Soli	Luangwa	November
NORTHERN PROVINCE					
30	Mutomolo	Mambwe/ Lungu Chiefs	Mambwe / Lungu	Mbala	June
31	Ukusefya Pa Ng'wena	Par. Chief Chitimukulu	Bemba	Mungwi	August
32	Mukula Pembe	Snr. Chief Chunga	Bemba	Luwingu	August
33	Chisaka Chalubombo	Chief Chiwanan-gala	Bisa	Chilubi Island	September
34	Walamo	Snr. Chief Tafuna	Lungu	Mpulungu	September
MUCHINGA PROVINCE					
35	Vikankanimba	Snr. Chief Muyombe	Tumbuka	Isoka	September
36	Insonge	Snr. Chief Chibesakunda	Bisa	Chinsali	September
37	Chinamanongo	Snr. Chief Kopa	Bisa	Mpika	September



38	Chambo Chalutanga	Chief Mwenechi-fungwe	Mfungwe	Isoka	September
39	Bisa Malaila	Chief Nabwalya	Bisa	Mpika	September
40	Mulasa	Chieftainess Nawaitwika	Namwanga	Nakonde	September
41	Namulinda	Chief Mulekatembo	Nyika	Isoka	October
42	Ng'ondo	Snr. Chief Kafwimbi	Namwanga	Isoka	November
NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE					
43	Kufikwila	Chief Mukumbi	Kaonde	Solwezi	May
44	Insankwa Ya Ba Kaonde	Kaonde Chief	Kaonde	Solwezi	May
45	Juba Ja Nsomo	Snr. Chief Kasempa	Kaonde	Kasempa	June
46	Ntongo	Chief Chizera	Kaonde	Mufumbwe	June
47	Ukupupa	Snr. Chief Kalilele	Lamba	Solwezi	July
48	Chivweka	Chief Kalunga	Luchazi	Kabompo	July
49	Kunyanta Ntanda	Chief Kapijimpanga	Kaonde	Solwezi	July
50	Likumbi Lya Mize	Snr. Chief Ndungu	Luvale	Zambezi	August
51	Lunda Lubanza	Snr. Chief Ishindi	Lunda	Zambezi	August
52	Lubinda Ntongo	Chief Mumena	Kaonde	Solwezi	August

53	Chisemwa Cha Lunda	Snr. Chief Kanongesha	Lunda	Mwinilun- ga	September
54	Makundu	Chief Mushima	Kaonde	Mufumbwe	September
55	Mbunda Liyoyelo	Chief Chiyengele	Mbunda	Kabompo	September
56	Kuvuluka Kishakulu	Chief Matebo	Kaonde	Solwezi	September
57	Lukwakwa	Snr. Chief Sikufele	Mbunda	Kabompo	October
58	Chidika Cha Mvula	Chief Kanyama	Lunda	Mwililunga	October
59	Lwendela	Chief Ingwe	Kaonde	Kasempa	October
SOUTHERN PROVINCE					
60	Lwiindi Gonde	Chief Monze	Tonga	Monze	July
61	Maliko Malin- di Lwiindi	Chief Sinazongwe	Tonga	Sinazong- we	August
	Musumu Muyumi	Chief Sipatunyana	Tonga	Kalomo	August
62	Shikaumpa	Chief Mukobela	Ila	Namwala	August
63	Lukuni Luzwa Buuka	Chief Musokotwane	Toka Leya	Kalomo	August
64	Kazanga Ma- konda	Chief Moomba	Nkoya	Kazungula	September
65	Guta Bweenza Bwe	Chief Nyawa	Tonga	Kazungula	September
66	Shimunenga	Chief Mungaila	Ila	Namwala	October
67	Chuungu	Chief Chikanta	Tonga	Kalomo	October

68	Maanzi Aabila Lwiindi	Chief Siachitema	Tonga	Kalomo	October
69	Lwiindi Sekute	Chief Sekute	Toka Leya	Kazungula	October
70	Bagande	Chief Simamba	Tonga	Siavonga	November
71	Koombaze Kamakonde	Chief Simatachela	Tonga	Kalomo	November
72	Bene Mukuni	Chief Mukuni	Toka Leya	Kazungula	July & December
WESTERN PROVINCE					
73	Kuomboka	Par. Chief Litunga	Lozi	Mongu	March
74	Kuomboka Nalolo	Litunga Lamboela	Lozi	Senenga	May
75	Kuomboka Libonda	Chieftainess Mboanjikana	Lozi	Kalabo	May
76	Kazanga	Chiefs Mutondo and Kahare	Nkoya	Kaoma	July
77	Lyenya	Chief Mwene Mundu	Mbunda	Kalabo	August

It is important to note that this list of ceremonies has been increasing with time. For instance, Taylor (2006) noted that, in the year 2002, Zambia had about 20 to 57 so-called traditional ceremonies of migration and conquest, offerings to ancestors, and so forth, and this number increases yearly to accomodate more. It is clear that there are more ethnic unrecognised ceremonies than the reported number which focussed on seasonal or yearly events. Among the yearly reported ceremonies, there are some that are more popular than others based on numbers of people that attend such ceremonies, publicity and support. Table 3 below

shows the most popular ceremonies in Zambia. Note that these ceremonies might be popular for a certain period as others are also becoming more and more popular.

Table 3: Most popular ceremonies as of 2019

SN	CEREMONY	PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA
1	Kuomboka	Western
2	Nc’wala	Eastern
3	Likumbi lya mize	North Western
4	Mutomboko	Luapula
5	Lwiindi and Shimunenga	Southern
6	Chibwela Kumushi	Lusaka
7	Ukusefya pa ngw’ena	Northern
8	Kulamba Kubwalo	Central

All traditional ceremonies in Zambia are performed for some reason and some have strict conditions for them to take place while others are flexible. For instance, in order for the Kuomboka ceremony to take place, the following must be in place:

- (i) There should be peace in the royal family. The death of some key member in that family might lead to cancellation of the ceremony for that year.
- (ii) There should be a variety of Lozi culture manifested in different forms such as dressing, singing and dancing, rituals, drinking and eating.
- (iii) The king should be present and should move from the flooded plains to the dry land.
- (iv) There must be enough water in Barotse plains from Zambezi River to compel the Paramount Chief to leave the flood plains to the high land. See Figure 7 below.

While the presence floods in an area may be viewed as a

disaster, it provides an opportunity for the local people to share notes and come together as a community (Sikayomya, 2013).

Figure 7: Sample images of Kuomboka ceremony



Source: (Picture by Royd Sibajene - ZANIS)

Like Kuomboka, the Nc'wala ceremony takes place under similar but different conditions and circumstances. These include the following:

1. The paramount chief must be present to facilitate and complete the ritualistic ceremonies.
2. There must be enough armed defence Ngoni warriors armed to protect and defend the chief and the chieftdom in an event that there is an attack from their enemies. The armed defence force usually have skilled leaders chosen on the basis of their skills in fighting and defending the welfare of the chief and the chieftdom (See Figure 8 below).

Figure 8: Sample Image of Nc'wala



Source: (Field Data, 2018)

3. There must be a bull (cattle) to complete the ceremony as it is used as a basis to demonstrate different cultural aspects during the course of the ceremony.
4. The Ngoni people should be ready and willing to perform or be in a position to showcase a variety of their cultural activities ranging from the native Ngoni dressing, singing and dancing, performance of various rituals, drinking and eating to mention but a few.
5. The period for the Nc'wala ceremony must be slated close to the harvest season.

It is important to note that all ceremonies may be affected when there is an outbreak of a dangerous infectious disease such as Ebola, Marburg and Corona virus diseases.

## **The Importance of Traditional Ceremonies in Safeguarding and Preserving Culture in Zambia**

Traditional ceremonies such as Mukanda, Nkolola, Chisungu kuomboka and Lwiindi are important as they help preserve and safeguard Zambian cultures. The existence of these ceremonies is an indication of people's identity. Among the reasons that are associated with the importance of traditional ceremonies are:

- (i) To remind themselves (people or ethnic group conducting the ceremony) of the historical background of their culture in terms of where they are coming from, where they are and what they might foresee in the future.
- (ii) Traditional ceremonies serve as repositories of indigenous knowledge systems and practices that help local people reflect the different customs and traditions of their past.
- (iii) Ceremonies provide a platform where different manifestations of culture such as food, dances, songs, poetry, rituals are performed. In other words, ceremonies help people showcase and display a rich spiritual, culture, and social customs with some rituals that the people conduct and undergo in their lives or at some point.
- (iv) Ceremonies support and promote the use of local indigenous languages which are a vehicle through which culture and other indigenous knowledges are transmitted.
- (v) To demonstrate their oral and poetic fluency through praise songs, poetry and narratives at the ceremony.
- (vi) To praise and value the existence and services of the royal families as well as the local people towards facilitating peace, oneness, social cohesion.
- (vii) To show the courage, moral, material and religious as-

pects of their cultures.

- (viii) To give thanks to the gods, ancestors and spirits and, to pray for more favours, harvest, and protection in future.
- (ix) To guide and prepare the younger generation for future roles by taking part in ceremonial activities and playing critical roles in them. In other words, ceremonies such as marriage and initiation guide younger generation on the procedures, etiquets, and impart cultural knowledge to understand where they are coming from and which way they should follow in the future.
- (x) To remind each other of the need for cooperation in carrying out different tasks within the community since they are one people.
- (xi) To exhibit different aspects of their culture in terms of the way they dress, the food they eat, the way they communicate and, the way families are raised up. For instance, in most traditional ceremonies that involve a multitude of people, the recommended foods to be eaten are traditional such as nshima made from sorgham, millet, cassava, and maize meal. This is served with traditional local vegetables such as pumpkin leaves, sweetpotato leaves, cassava leaves. Other relish include fish, meats, chicken, caterpillars, mushrooms and other accessible vegetables.
- (xii) To preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage, practices and indigenous knowledge systems such as healing processes, purification, and spiritual life.
- (xiii) Ceremonies provide a sense of belonging, and identity to a particular community.
- (xiv) Ceremonies serve as edutainment events for the local people and international communities as there are several learning points during ceremonies. In other words,



cultural events are fun, entertaining and educative. They allow individuals to integrate physically and mentally. It has been noted at many levels of society that a dynamic cultural sector is a requirement for a well-functioning public sphere with arenas for critical debate and the exchange of ideas.

- (xiv) Ceremonies and celebrating our traditions offers an excellent opportunity for intercultural exchange and understanding. They contribute to an increase in the intellectual potential and build conscious, open and tolerant society.

Indigeneous traditional ceremonies of all kinds celebrated in Zambia help in showcasing the oral history, spiritual life, religious practice, social customs, dances and songs, handicrafts and artworks of different indigenous cultural groups. Therefore, ceremonies helps in safeguarding and preservation of indigeneous Knowledge.

## **The Role of Culture in Development**

Culture plays a significant role in development as it is a focal point of all activities in a community. Since culture is manifested through life styles or way of life, in form of daily routines, practices, ceremonies, rituals, festivals, tourism, art and crafts, entertainment, businesses, and other aspects, they are reference points for development in a community. In other words, people's way of life (Bate, 2009), can play a critical role in development. There are several ways culture contributes to development and these include the following:

- (i) Culture is key to any form of development and sustainability as it provides a sense of belonging and identity where common values, attitudes, preferences, and knowledge

are shared. This practice of sharing knowledge and the togetherness principle can have positive influence on social development in a society (Kimanuka, 2016). For instance, culture facilitates cooperation, unity, togetherness and respect for each other and, these in turn, may lead to improved life style which is the definition of development. In other words, culture provides identity and sense of belonging and, therefore, identity expressed through culture is a necessity for all human development. It creates the fundamental building blocks in our personalities and in the ties that link us to communities and nations.

- (ii) Through ceremonies, culture can better people's lives through aquisition of jobs on short time or permanent basis. For instance, at the 2019 Kulamba ceremony, several business stands were flooded by people that went there to attend the event. The business stands had more new people recruited to work there. This contributed to their individual development (See Figure 9). It is known that short term employment does not have job security, however, it helps the local people and the jobless to gain some income that in the first place, they did not have. All works that are invariably imbued with a sense of calm and serenity, have a lasting developmental effect on the workers.

Figure 9: Kulamba ceremony market place



Source: (Picture by Harrison Daka, 2019)

- (iii) Culture is a source of attraction for tourists who come into the country, spend their money which mostly ends up in government accounts. Tourists also buy Zambian products and access other services where they pay taxes to the government. This money can be used to build hospitals, schools and other necessary infrastructures leading to national development.
- (iv) The government through appropriate agencies such as the National Heritage and Conservation Commission (NHCC) have built structures and access roads and paths to heritage sites. The government and other stake holders have built more structures for conserving and preserving cultural related matters such as museums and cultural arts centers or markets such as Kabwata Cultural Village as shown in Figure 11. This is a form of development associated with culture.

Figure 11: Kabwata Cultural Village



Source: (Ijeni First Class-Kabwata Cultural Village, 2019)

Kabwata cultural village and other related establishments were built to help preserve and safeguard aspects of Zambian culture such as handcrafts, artworks, beads, traditional materials, and chitenge material with its products.

- (v) The existence of laws or legal instruments as discussed in chapter five (5), to support, preserve, and safeguard Zambian cultures and heritage is a form of development. This move supports and promotes cultural heritage and national identity and its absence would mean no heritage.
- (vi) Traditional rituals, ceremonies, and initiation events inculcate traditions, customs, values and ethics that a particular community possesses. Some of these events are a medium through which adult life lessons are passed on to young ones. This knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another through oral tradition and observations. The focus of intergenerational sharing of knowledge is for the preservation of cultural heritage and for peace and

harmony to prevail in the community. Without peace and cooperation, development is difficult to achieve.

Most initiation ceremonies and rituals are intended to help the young generation (boys and girls) to prepare for adulthood. The young generation is prepared in areas such as marriage, parenting and how to live in harmony with other community members. This is a basis of many forms of development since the family and communities are basic building blocks of society.

- (vii) Culture and natural resources can be sources of income for the state. Apart from preserving cultural heritage and national identity, these aspects and ceremonies, including tourism sites can add to domestic earnings. The local and international visitors pay to see some of Zambia's cultural heritage sites and natural resources and their payments contribute to national development.

## **Zambian Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity refers to the inside feeling of belonging to a particular culture, generation, social class, nation, group, ethnic community, religion and others. Zambian cultural identity refers to all aspects of culture that are accredited, accepted and approved by the general populace, representing Zambian way of life. In other words, Zambian cultural identity include the feeling of belonging to Zambia, practicing Zambian traditions, acknowledging heritage sites, speaking Zambian languages, understanding social structures, religion and art. This also includes acknowledging and utilising national symbols such as the use of the Zambian Kwacha as a national currency, the National flag, coat of arms and the Zambian national anthem. It is important to note that “Cultural identities are dynamic as they change overtime and usually they exist within a changing social context” (Lustig, 2013: 133).

## **The Impact of Culture in Education**

Culture is a powerful force in a society, and therefore, it can have positive and negative effects on education. For instance, in a formal education set up, effective teaching demand that a teacher take into account the individual learners' characteristics including their cultural orientations, language backgrounds, beliefs, and value systems. The teaching and learning materials must also reflect learners interest and their cultural aspects. These inferences in education pinpoint the impact that culture has on education.

Cultural beliefs and tendencies may negatively impact on education systems. For instance, families that believe that boys education is more important than girls' education in some rural parts of Zambia tend to marry off girls at a tender age while boys are sent to school to have a better life. The belief is that when boys get educated and have a better life in future, they would come back to marry the girls. Little do such families think that educated boys marry fellow educated girls. Such cultural beliefs may be detrimental to education.

Similarly, some cultural practices such as initiation and spiritual practices may affect children's education negatively. For instance, practices such as the Mukanda, Chinamwali, Nyau and Makishi may have a negative impact on boys and girls' education. During these initiation rituals, the initiates are taught various rules and most of these are centered on threats through myths and taboos of the society. If parents prioritise these practices over education, the consequences may be devastating as some of these promote promiscuity and sexual desires. The processes and contents offered to the initiates during initiation ceremonies are different in each society. Mostly songs, dances, masks, various tests, making tattoos, among others, have been used as verification and a symbol of rituals. Some societies focus on fearlessness and persistence while others focus on spiritual aspects and practical knowledge.

Chinamwali initiation ceremony of several ethnic groups has serious effect on education. In the case of the Chewa people of the Eastern Province of Zambia and Katete district in particular, the ceremony may affect girls education immensely. Among the Chewa people, this ceremony symbolises a graduation of girls from childhood to womanhood. When a girl reaches a certain age, parents hands her over to experienced women called ‘Anamkungwi’ or ‘Aphungu’ who puts her with other girls in a confinement for two to four weeks where life training takes place. The girl stops going to school during the period of confinement and soon after. This absence from school impacts negatively on the girls’ education because the period of confinement is too long. The two to four weeks girls are confined, makes them miss several topics at school. Usually there is no time arranged to ensure the recovery of what the girls lost out during the period of confinement.

Furthermore, after the initiation ceremony was over, girls felt like they were real women thereafter, with capacity to handle whatever their lives brought. They considered themselves wholly because of what they learnt at the initiation and others, cite slogans such as “I am because of what i know i have” (Talakinu, 2018: 107). Such girls were strongly advised not to talk to anyone who had not yet gone through Chinamwali initiation as they were considered uncultured, outsiders and immoral. This is what Matobo, Makatsa, and Obioha (2009) meant when they stated that Chinamwali like other female initiation practices offers a woman respect and acceptance in the community.

The Chinamwali initiation ceremony is climaxed by the ritual carried out by a person or men called Afisi also known as ‘Hyena concept’. Afisi is the chosen man or men to test the sexual skills of young girls after the initiation ceremony. Each man chosen disguises himself when meeting the assigned girl to try out their sexual skills via sexual intercourse. There are other roles that Afisi plays afterwards. However, sexual test, is on



the peak and this, is one of the cultural practices that promotes early marriages in that, a girl child is prompted to have sexual intercourse with other men even more after the initiation ceremony before marriage, hence, this leads to early marriages, teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (Munthali, 2007).

Chinamwali increases the chances of getting married for girls as men believed that, initiated women were more mature, stable and can sustain a home without challenges. The women were advised not to speak in public as it was a sign of immaturity and misconduct. The silence was observed for a period of one month. All these have a bearing on their education in a school milieu. The fact that an initiated pupil would not respond to a question posed by a teacher or fellow pupils in the learning process in class is a problem. Generally, Chinamwali initiation school is centered around respect of cultural values, sex and marriage, women role in society and family set up. Some aspects of Chinamwali have negative impacts on girls' education. This eventually translates to increased numbers of school dropouts among the girls. This negatively affect children's education.

Culture and education complement each other in various ways. For instance, educational curriculum is a reflection of a culture of a society (Mulenga and Kabombwe, 2019). Kapur et al (2018) also noted that education acculturates an individual, on the other hand, it preserves, transmits and develops the culture of society. It can be stated that education and culture are mutually interdependent, complementary and supplementary in all their aspects and activities. Thus, the relationship between education and culture is indissoluble. Educational and cultural aspects are imparted to individuals through their families, communities and the educational institutions. Taking into consideration the significance of culture and the role played by education in the socialisation and the acculturation of an individual in a society, it is meaningful to analyse and understand the impact that culture plays in education (Kapur et al., 2018).



## Chapter 2: Aspects of Zambian Culture and Zambian Cultures

There is a distinction between Zambian culture and Zambian cultures and these are explained in this chapter. It is worth noting that, there are several cultural aspects that constitute Zambian culture partly because, Zambia is a multicultural state with over seventy two ethnic groups that practice different cultural aspects. Mkandawire (2015: 191) contended that:

*Zambia, like many other African countries, is a multilingual and multicultural society. It is multilingual because there are many languages and dialects that are spoken within the borders of the country. For instance, English is the official language and is widely spoken throughout the country mainly for official purposes. The other seven recognised regional official languages are Silozi, Lunda, Luvala, Chitonga, Chinyanja, Ibibemba and Kikongo which are used for trade, semi-official functions, official functions for early grade education on literacy programmes and other general social contexts. The other remaining languages and dialects such as Tumbuka, Nkoya, Lamba, Ila, Mambwe and Lenje are equally used for general communication and other traditional official functions.*

It is also multicultural because there are several ethnic groups which speak different languages and dialects and also lead various lifestyles. These life styles can further be split into two categories; these life styles that are common in all parts of the country (Zambian culture), and those practices, rituals, and life styles that are unique to different ethnic groups within the country (Zambian Cultures). These are discussed further in the next sections.

## Aspects of Zambian Culture

There are practices within the country that constitute Zambian culture which are common in almost every ethnic group. Some of these practices have been discussed by Mkandawire (2015) to include the following among others:

### *National Symbols*

National symbols such as the National Anthem, Flag, Court of Arms and, trading using the Zambian kwacha (see figure 12) are all aspects of Zambian culture as they are among the aspects that distinguish Zambia from other countries. In other words, while some cultural practices may be the same in various countries, the national symbols are never the same. National symbols are considered to be part of the Zambian culture because they constitute the national identity.

Figure 12: Selected National Symbols

### **Selected Zambian National Symbols**



**Flag**



**Court of Arms**



**Kwacha**

Source: National Archives of Zambia 2019

### ***Food***

Foods predominantly eaten in Zambia include; nshima, rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, sweet potato leaves (locally known as *kalembula* (in Bemba)), pumpkin, pumpkin leaves (locally known by different names such as *Chibwabwa*, *Chiwawa*, *Gadabu* and *Mangambwa* (in various language), garden eggs/african egg

plant (impwa), cassava, cassava leaves and okra. Fish, sardines (locally called kapenta), meat and birds (especially chicken and guinea fowls) are among the common foods eaten by Zambians.

### ***Dressing***

There are different dress codes that are prominent in Zambia. These codes are influenced by social circumstances such as work environments, casual outings, traditional events, and social peer events (such as parties and clubs). The dressing can be classified into three categories; customised Zambian dressing, universal dressing, and optative ethnic dress codes.

Customised Zambian dressing refers to those forms of dress codes or outfits that may not have originated in Zambia but, have been adopted, modified and tailored to the cultural needs of the Zambian people. For instance, the wearing of chitenge material and its related outfits by men and women in Zambia has been customised to needs of the local people. See Figure 10 below. While chitenge materials are highly worn and used by Zambian citizens, the material itself is not native to Zambia but it has been adopted by the indigenous people and is used in different cultural contexts.

Figure 10: Chitenge Outfits



Source: Field Data

Women are commonly seen in chitenge wear, dress, skirt and headdress (locally known as *chitambala*). These are usually made from local or regional materials. In the case of men, they wear trousers, shirts, shorts, *Chitenge* tops and hats.

Universal dress code refers to those forms of dressing that are found in all parts of the world. These are the most common in Zambia as they are transmitted from one society to another through media, movies, and technological advancements. In other words, universal or global kind of dressing is associated with modernity and modern culture.

Optative ethnic dress codes refers to forms of dressings associated with specific ethnic groups in a community. For instance, the wearing of siziba, musisi and an ivory bangle in Zambia are ethnic dress codes for the Lozi people. See Figure 11. It is important to note that these forms of dressing are worn on special occasions such as weddings, and traditional ceremonies.

Figure 11: Siziba (Men Dress) and Musisi (Women Dress)



Source: (Sikayomya, 2010:80) and Lozi Picture Day Initiative.

### ***Living in Extended families***

Extended families are those that may constitute father, mother, children, uncles, aunties, in-laws, grand father and mother, and other relatives. These members of this family normally live in the same households or compounds. Almost all Zambian families embrace extended families and partly rely on communal wellbeing where each member of the community counts on the other for security and social wellbeing.

### ***Celebrations/solidarity***

Zambians are social beings that celebrate happy moments/occasions, as well as observe solemn moments together. Happy moments such as weddings, christmas/new year's day, birthdays and occasions such as traditional and graduation ceremonies to mention but a few, are celebrated across the country. Conversely, sad and solemn moments or events such as sicknesses, deaths and memorial services are observed in solidarity. All these events define and make up the Zambian culture.

### ***Sports and Games***

Sports and games are common social aspects of the Zambian culture(s) that brings people together for learning, development of skills, fun and joyous moments. Sports and games in Zambia include but not limited to football, athletics, netball, volleyball and indigenous games such as nsolo, chiyenga, waida, hide and seek, walyako, and sojo. These are some of the international and indigenous games that support socialisation. All these sports and games are part of the Zambian culture(s). Most games such as Nsolo (see Fig. 12), Chiyenga, Draft, and other games require two players or more in some cases. The fact that the games are played by more than one person makes them social and edutainment events. The history of some of these games is as old as Zambians themselves. However, Zambia started taking part in popular global sports and games mainly in 1964 summer olympics.



Figure 12: Nsolo game



Source: (Prudence Phiri, Global Press Journals Zambia).

### ***Art and Entertainment***

Art and Entertainment partly constitute Zambian culture. Common practices include spiritual dances such as *Vimbuza*, *Mashabe*, *Kutukuka* and some initiation ceremonies such as Nkolola, Mukanda and Chisungu. Music, poetry, drama and other performances are highly practiced.

### ***Drinking and Clubbing***

Clubbing and drinking are a way of socialising where people gather and spend time together. It is a lifestyle that involves people going out for drinking, dancing, and socialising in designated places such as taverns, pubs, shabeens, bars and beer halls, during the day and/or at night. Clubbing and drinking takes place everyday of the week in some places while in others, it is prominent over the weekends. Whereas clubbing and drinking take place throughout the week as already mentioned, these activities are at their peak on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Clubbing and liquor/beer drinking is common in both rural and

urban communities. While clubbing might not be common in rural areas, beer drinking is common in every ethnic group in Zambia.

### ***Agriculture***

The agriculture sector in Zambia mainly comprises crops, livestock, and fisheries in the order of prominence. Crops are classified under farming which is further sub categorized into small-scale, medium, and large-scale farming. Small-scale farmers are generally subsistence producers of staple foods with occasional marketable surplus and these are the majority in Zambia. In other words, all ethnic groupings in Zambia engage in small scale farming to produce enough food for their consumption. There are also farmers that produce cash crops such as cotton, maize, rice, and others for sale and these are called medium scale farmers. Large-scale farmers also exist in Zambia and these produce crops for both local and international markets. Generally, common crops grown in Zambia include maize, rice, potatoes, millet, groundnuts, cassava, sorghum, sugar, beans, wheat, coffee, and cotton. Livestock and domesticated birds that are prominent in Zambia include cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, pigeons, chickens, ducks and guinea fowls. Zambia has different species of fish that fisher men and women look for in the local water. However, the most common fish that most farmers prefer to keep are breams.

### ***Communication***

Communication refer to the process by which information, ideas and messages are transmitted from one point (sender) to another (receiver). Note that communication is only complete if the intended audience receives the intended information or ideas and the status has probably been known by the sender. This book does not discuss the technical processes of communication but focusses on the means by which people send information from one point to another. Communication channels or ways can be split into traditional and modern ways of communication.

## Traditional Communication

Traditional ways of communication are those that were used before the advancements of modern technology. In the past, information was passed from one point to another through a number of ways. Much of the communication processes was one way assuming that the receivers would get the information and work on it. Certain forms of communication served as warning so that the receivers of that information would act accordingly. The following were common ways of communicating:

- (i) Assembly of community members
- (ii) Use of messengers
- (iii) Door to door campaign with agents
- (iv) Using a written letter or note
- (v) Drumming or blowing a huge bell
- (vi) Use of smoke
- (vii) Use of blood
- (viii) Use of tree or road marks
- (ix) Ingraving or use of symbols such as a cross, skeleton and arrows
- (x) Use of flag or some cloth
- (xi) Use of dance type
- (xii) Use of Songs and riddles
- (xiii) Community snow bawling
- (xiv) Use of tree leaves or logs
- (xv) Use of body marks or modification or symbols

Assembling or gathering of community members was common in traditional set ups to receive information from their leaders or authorities. The practice has continued in some places such as primary and secondary schools where pupils still



gather to receive information from school authorities. The use of assemblies was very common especially when the information involved everyone in the community. In the past, communication to the whole community demanded a call for an assembly on several occasions.

Use of messengers to deliver information was very common in the past and was the main way of delivering information from one person or place to another. The practice has continued up to date in certain parts of society such as work places and rural communities. A messenger/mail runner is a person who is employed or sent to deliver a message from one point to another.

Door to Door delivery agents worked like messengers but at times there would be more than one person delivering the message to the intended audience for security reasons. At times, a group of people would be tasked to carry out door by door deliveries of information to specific community members.

Letters or notes were equally common modes of communication in the past. Messages were sent through letters to various audiences conveying information from one point to another. Letters as a communication tool became more prominent as many people begun to read and write.

Drumming, blowing a trumpet and ringing a bell were other means through which communication was done in the past. Drumming and bell ringing were other traditional ways of calling or inviting people to a meeting or gathering. Traditionally, if one community member heard a rhythm of a drum beat, they would tell what type of message was being conveyed. For instance, among the Sengas and Tumbukas in Zambia, there are different drum rhythms for a funeral, a general meeting, spiritual and entertainment. The funeral rhythm beat came from one huge, heavy drum which was sounded repeatedly at regular intervals. For instance, a rhythm beat calling for a general community

meeting was usually fast with a consistent high pitch rhythm while entertainment drum beats comprised of two to five drums well coordinated to compel listeners to go to the entertainment zone. In other words, there are several drums playing for entertainment with different rhythms, yet contributing to the beauty of the entertainment. Similarly, different sounds of bells and trumpets made of animal horns rung to signal different messages. Some of these drum beats are still active today in some communities in Zambia.

The use of smoke was another way communication was done in the past. Smoke was an important factor in conveying information especially when one was in distress. If one got lost in the jungle or bush and they saw a smoke, they would definitely rush there to seek help. In modern day, smoke also suggest that there is fire and that fire is caused by people. It would also mean that there is something wrong such as a house is on fire which needs to be stopped. In some areas, smoke can be used to send distress calls to whoever can help.

Another way communication was done was through the use of blood. What would you do if you were in the bush or jungle and you saw a trail of blood heading in a certain direction? Would you follow the trail or not? If you decide to follow, what do you expect to see at the end of that bloody trail? Under normal circumstances, you would realise that a blood trail was a signal of something wrong happening somewhere. If one were to see a trail of blood today, a curious or inquisitive person would definitely follow the trail to see where the blood is coming from or where it is heading. In an event that one is in an area that calls for concern such as a thick forest for instance, a trail of blood would be a signal of danger as the blood might be from a wounded and dangerous animal such as a lion or buffalo that might cause harm or loss of life. So, the blood trail would be some kind of communication that one should only go beyond this point at their

own risk. Blood conveys several forms of information even in modern day life.

Tree marks were also used for communication among some community members such as hunters, clan members or a secret society. The use of tree marks was common in the olden days as means of communication among hunters in the bush as they carried out their hunting escapades. A tree mark would for instance suggest which trail one should take especially when there were dangerous animals in that part of the bush. Some clans would also use tree marks to restrict some members from accessing certain areas. Tree marks were used in communicating directions and routes in case hunters lost their way or they were facing danger during hunting trips.

In the past, information was also communicated through the use of symbols. Different symbols such as a cross, skeleton of a head and arrows were used to communicate different information in the past. These and many other symbols or pictograms are still in use today especially where safety signage and hazards are concerned. In the past, the communication varied depending on the type of symbol or symbols that were used and the type of messages that were embedded in them.

Use of a flag or a piece of cloth on a pole was another mode through which communication was done. In Zambia and other countries around the world, a flag or a piece of cloth was used in human communities to convey or communicate certain messages. Flags are still used as national symbols around the world in the present day. They are also used by some organised groups of people such as political parties as a form of identity. In the past, flags were also used among secret societies and communities to notify people of their presence. For instance, in Zambia, secret societies such as the Nyau dancers, the Mukanda ritual crew and the guardians of the shrines, used a piece of cloth

on a pole to notify community members about their presence and restrictions in those places. Many times, these societies were considered as custodians of several secrets that were only shared with their members but never divulged to outsiders.

Secret societies communicated their presence and location with community members through the use of flags. For instance, in places where these societies established a base or camp, there would be flags or, in the case of the Nyau dancers, a red cloth was hanged within a camp as a way of informing the community that the area was strictly out of bounds to the rest of the community members. Therefore, they should not cross or pass through that area. In an instance where community members or outsiders trespassed knowingly or unknowingly, they would be severely punished usually by beating. Another example of where a cloth was used as a communication tool was in the case of the Lozi people of the Western province of Zambia. During initiation ceremonies for girls as they became of age, the custom was to keep them indoors for a given period of time after which they were paraded to the whole community notifying the members that the girls in question graduated to adulthood. They would add in their announcement that the girls were also ready for marriage. On the last day of their initiation, a chitenge material was raised up on a pole as a way of notifying the community that the girl was ready for adulthood and this also implied that the day would end with a feast.

Dancing was another way of communication. Certain types of dances communicated different forms of information. They would suggest royalty, war, sex, spiritual and others. These dance types were carried out in different circumstances. Sometimes, they were done when a group of people with similar interest meets for some reason such as entertainment and or to celebrate

or perform certain ritualistic ceremonies.

Songs and riddles in some cases were used to communicate messages in different contexts. In the past, married women and girls in relationships used songs several times to make requests, show displeasure, and express various emotions to their men about something they wanted their men to address. Songs were used because women were culturally not allowed to complain, have unnecessary talks, send or make requests to their men. They composed songs to convey various messages under different circumstances. Songs and riddles were also used in royal palaces such as kingdoms and chiefdoms. For instance, traditionally, in most African communities and Zambia in particular, if a chief made a mistake, any community member would not go to advise the chief on the ills noted as this would be considered a gross misconduct liable for punishment. Instead, a certain person was tasked to compose a song or riddle to convey the mistake that the chief made and this was conveyed when there was an edutainment event. The chief would learn the mistake through the song or riddle at a certain function and act accordingly. In this way, songs were used for communication purposes. Similarly, riddles, proverbs and myths were used in a certain way to convey certain pieces of information.

One other common way of conveying information in the past was through Community Snow bawling. Community snow bawling refers to passage of information from one community member to another. This information may be factual, conceptual or an invitation to some meeting. Community snow bawling many times distorts information into rumours and lies and as such may not be a reliable way of communication.

## Modern Communication

Modern communication involves the use of modern technologies to convey messages across space. With the advancement of technology, ways of communication have immensely improved in comparison to the traditional modes. In other words, communication strategies have drastically changed from the traditional to modern ones. Information is now passed from one point to another through a number of ways. These include telephones, emails, social media, posts, telegrams, radio, television, telex, fax, pagers/websites/blogs, cinema, newspapers and others.

- (i) Telephones include the use of mobile and landline phones. The use of telephones has proven to be one of the fastest ways of communication as information is passed within the shortest period of time.
- (ii) Emails and social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn are other effective ways of conveying information from one point to another within a shortest time.
- (iii) Fax and Telex are modes of modern communication that use machinery to deliver printed messages from one point to another. They are commonly used in work places, the military and defence wings.
- (iv) Radio messages also include mobile radios, pagers and mass media stationary broadcasters. Radios transmit information through waves. Use of radio messages are equally working well and the same message can reach a huge number of recipients at the same time.
- (v) There are other new ways of communicating ideas which came with changes in technology. Some ways are

restricted intelligence and military agencies while others are open to the public.

- (vi) Websites/blogs are online platforms where information can be disseminated. Information is put on these platforms to allow people to have access to it.

Apart from traditional and modern ways of communication discussed, there are other ways in which people communicate in a particular cultural setup. These may include body language or non verbal communication, use of poetry and performances on certain occasions such as health and environmental campaigns and traditional ceremonies. Certain individuals cite different praise poems informing the people where that particular tribe or clan has come from, the battles they have fought and informing the community on how to address the chief. Others perform different shows depicting different historical events. All these are ways of communicating.

Communication channels in Zambia exist in different forms and at various levels. Traditional communication was carried out using messengers, drums, trumpets, bells, symbols and others. Modern communication is carried out by the use of telephones, emails, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. Other modes of communication and disseminating information include the use of radio, television, mobile radio messages and websites.

### ***Conservation and Cultural Heritage Sites***

There are several conservation and cultural Heritage sites in Zambia and these include:

- (a) Waterfalls such as Victoria Falls in Livingstone, the Chishimba Falls in Kasama and Nkundalila Falls in Serenje.

- (b) National Parks and Reserves such as Chaminuka Game Reserve, Kalimba Reptile Park (Lusaka), Kafue National Park, South Luangwa National Park and Musi-o-tunya National Park;
- (c) Arts and Crafts such as the Livingstone Art Gallery, Mukuni park curio market, Kabwata cultural site, and selected weekend markets.
- (d) Museums such as Motomoto in Mbala, Lusaka Museum, Railway Museum in Livingstone and others in different provinces.
- (e) Dams and lakes such as Kariba Dam and Lake Kariba are other important cultural aspects.
- (f) Rivers and plains such as Zambezi River, Barotse and Kafue floodplains, Luangwa River and others; and
- (g) Kasanka bat migration in Northern province in October where most bats in Southern African region migrate to Zambia.

## **Customs and Traditions**

Custom is a synonym of tradition as they refer to same entities in a society. Customs and traditions are laws which traditionally govern our societies. They are not written but have been practiced for a very long time and they are passed on from one generation to another through the word of mouth. Customary and traditional laws still apply in modern Zambia and are region or culture specific. The interpretations of customs and traditions are usually done by adults from specific ethnic groups who are believed to be the custodians of traditions and knowledge. For example, it is a custom or tradition for a man who is marrying a woman to pay dowery to the lady's family. This custom is done to compensate the parents for raising a daughter who is going to live with another family.



## Marriage

Marriage, also known as matrimony or wedlock, is a culturally or legally recognised union of two people in an interpersonal relationship where sexual matters are usually acknowledged and sanctioned. Haviland, Prins, McBride, and Walrath (2011) noted that marriage is a culturally recognised union between people, called spouses, that establishes rights and obligations between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws.

Zambia and most African countries recognises three types of marriages namely; customary law or traditional marriage, common law marriage and Statutory Law marriage (Marriage Act).

*Customary Marriage or traditional marriage* is a type of marriage conducted under customary or traditional law where its validity is affirmed by rigidly or partly passing through acceptable and accredited traditional rites by custom and there is room for polygamy. For example, for marriage to be valid, the groom should have met certain requirements such as payment of dowry either in part or in full to the family of a woman (Chondoka, 1998).

*The Common Law Marriage also known as Informal Marriage or cohabiting*, is a type of marriage where a consenting couple live or stay together for a period of time and take themselves as being married without going through a formal ceremony or getting a marriage certificate. Such a couple, present itself as being married to friends, family and the community. Common law marriage requirements include:

- (a) a couple should live together for a period of time
- (b) they must be of legal age, sound mind and have capacity to marry.
- (c) show willingness or intention to marry.
- (d) hold yourselves out to friends and family as being married by sharing the same last name, addressing each other as spouse, husband or wife, holding joint bank

accounts or cards and other aspects (<https://family.findlaw.com/marriage/common-law-marriage.html>).

In other words, a consenting couple of acceptable legal age is considered married for cohabiting or living together for a period of time, without having formally registered their relationship with the state as a civil or religious marriage (Himonga, 1998). The Common law marriage may be recognised by courts but cannot be celebrated within Zambia due to its nature and validity

*Statutory Law (Marriage under the Marriage Act)* is a type of marriage where two consenting adults can engage into a marriage contract and have it proclaimed by the registrar of marriages or, by a pastor or priest and these are monogamous. It must however be noted that what is generally acceptable in Zambia is a marriage between two consenting adults of the opposite sex.

Bilateral marriages also exist in Zambia. They are contracted under both customary law and statutory law. In other words, bilateral marriages are valid in both Customary Law and Statutory Law. Some men prefer to marry under bilateral marriages so that in the event of divorce or death, one of the laws may be applied.

There are some traditional rites across all ethnic groups in Zambia that have to be observed for a marriage to take place. These processes include finding a marriage partner, informing relatives, payment of dowry and other related charges, going through counselling sessions with either traditional marriage counsellors and or modern ones (religious leaders in this case). In certain instances, traditional marriage rites include but not limited to the following; introducing the man to the woman's family's cuisine (locally known as Chilanga Mulilo Ceremony), kitchen party ceremony also known as a bridal shower and finally, the actual marriage ceremony which is the wedding ceremony in its various forms. It is worth noting that it is not all the marriage rites listed in this book that are observed by

all the ethnic groupings across the country. While some ethnic groups may observe only a few of the traditional marriage rites, some ethnic groups might even observe more than what has been presented. As much as the traditional marriage rites may be similar in most instances, there are remarkable differences across ethnic groups in Zambia. For instance, Chilanga Mulilo is a traditional marriage rite that is observed when the bride and groom both hail from the Northern part of the country or when a bride hails from the Northern part of the country. When the couple is from the Southern or Western parts of the country, the Chilanga Mulilo Ceremony will be unheard of in their marriage arrangements. In some ethnic groups, there are other ceremonies that take place just after the marriage ceremony while other traditional marriage rites take place years into the marriage. A good example is that of a ceremony that is done years later into marriage as a way of appreciating a husband for having taken good care of his wife, a ceremony locally known as Matebeto.

The processes of initiating a marriage process as discussed in this book are also applied in different African countries especially among the Bantu speaking people. However, with dynamism in cultural practices, some communities no longer follow rigid traditional marriage rites in marrying off their children. In modern Zambia, some traditional marriage rites are omitted while others are now mixed with modern society marriage rites that have been borrowed from different ethnic groups across the world.

### **Finding a Marriage Partner in Zambia**

Marriages in Zambia are based on either the patrilineal or matrilineal systems. In matrilineal societies, the expectation is for a man to leave his family, to join his bride's family for some time or the entire period of the marriage. This is done in order for the man to prove to a woman's family, that he has the capacity to

sustain his own family in good and bad times. Among the ethnic groups in Zambia where men move to live with the wife's family include the Lala, Nsenga, Bemba, and Chewa speaking people. Patrilineal societies, on the other hand, include the Tumbuka, Ngoni and Lozi. In patrilineal societies, it is a woman that moves to join her husband's homestead. It is important to note that some ethnic groups have been modernised and they now mix practices where either a man or woman can move to stay or live at the partner's residence. The most common practice especially in the urban and peri-urban areas of the country, is where the two people getting married establish their own home independent of their own parents, .

### **Ways of marrying in Zambia**

Marriage is traditionally defined as a harmonious relationship between a man and a woman who move away from their respective families to form a new family. While the Marriage Act of Zambia does not explicitly specify the gender of the people getting married, what is culturally acceptable as a normal marriage in Zambia is a union between two people of the opposite sex. As much as the definition and actual marriage may and does involve same sex agreements in some parts of the world, homosexuality and lesbianism are not allowed in Zambia and some African countries. In an event that a same sex marriage is discovered and reported to the relevant authorities, homosexuality may lead to severe punishment or even imprisonment. Therefore, marriage in Zambia is traditionally confined to opposite genders coming together to form a family. The following are the most common ways of finding a spouse or marriage in Zambia, Africa, and probably all over the world. As we may all be aware, any marriage starts with finding or identifying a possible marriage partner. In Zambia, finding a marriage partner is done in a number of ways such as the ones outlined below:

### *(a) Arranged Marriages*

This practice is still very common especially in rural parts of Zambia where parents to a man arrange for a bride for their son to marry. This practice is done in various ways. For instance, both families can agree to a future marriage of their children while the children are still young and they are not told about the prior arrangement until they become of age.

In some cases, parents agree that their grown up children should marry and the children are then informed of their parents' decision. From thereon, the two children start treating each other as partners and their respective partners' parents as in-laws. The partners are then advised to avoid contact with their parents in-law as much as possible till they are officially married. In some instances, the lady is advised to avoid unarranged contact with the husband to be until they are married. This is more common among the Lunda and the Luvale speaking people.

The other way of arranging marriages is where both parents agree to a marriage for their children but the children are not told. Instead, the parents arrange for some blind dates where normally, the children are sent on errands where they would inevitably bump into each other as if it was a coincidence. The whole arrangement would only be revealed later on when all would have fallen into place, as if naturally.

### *(b) A man and a lady meet anywhere*

This is a common practice in the modernised world. Most people especially in urban areas use this method to get their life partners. In a modern world, it is believed that a woman or man, should marry someone whom they love and have chosen for themselves. It is also believed that the best places to meet a life partner for marriage are in religious places such as the church, public or social institutions such as schools, colleges,

universities or work places. Other neutral public places such as business parks, shopping malls, town centers and on public transportation. Generally, any place where people relax and have fun can be a right place for initiating marriage relationships. Certain areas such as drinking places and illicit streets where unpleasant activities such as prostitution, drug smoking and drug dealings take place are dispised. However, people find marriage partners even in such places. In other words, marriage partners can be found anywhere provided there are people interacting.

*(c) Lady gets pregnant before marriage*

This is some form of forced marriage. When a lady gets pregnant before marriage, she is taken to the man's family against her will and without the man's consent to ensure that he takes care of the woman and the pregnancy and, as a way of punishing him for not following the right procedure. Later, families come together to discuss marriage arrangements.

*(d) Elopement*

Elopement refers to a marriage conducted in a secretive manner without the consent of parents or following the acceptable marriage rites in their societies. Many times, a woman leaves their residence to go and live with the Man's family. In some cases, both the man and the woman leave their residences to go and live at a neutral place of their choice.

In almost all Zambian communities, this practice is still in existence especially in the rural parts where a man after discussing with a lady elope with her from her parents' home. When this happens, the man's family usually leaves a token or some mark in form of money or something else left at the doorstep or entrance to the parents' house to show that their daughter has been taken. Other communities notify the grandmother to the lady that she

has been taken by this family in the night so that they do not search for her or file a complaint to the headman or police. What follows later are penalty charges and discussions for marriage.

**(e) *Man caught in a sexual act with a woman***

This practice happens in a few communities. When a single woman is caught having sexual intercourse with a man, the man is supposed to marry her. It is believed that it is a taboo to have sexual intercourse with someone when you are not married to them and if this happens and they are caught, it is marriage automatically.

**(f) *Spouse inheritance***

This type of marriage happens when a spouse dies and the surviving spouse can be inherited by a living relative such as a brother or sister, nephew or niece and uncle or aunt. This practice is still happening in some communities and usually, there are no charges given as it is from the same family that the spouse is remarrying. However, with the coming of HIV and AIDS, such marriage arrangements are slowly phasing out.

***Expression of Marriage Intentions to a Lady's Family***

When marriage is initiated using any of the six ways discussed above, the two marrying families have to meet to discuss preliminary matters towards the intended marriage. Not every family member is to be present at this point but just a few key people such as the father, mother and uncles who actually represent the whole family. In the absence of parents, elder brothers or close family friends can also act as parents and family representatives. In some communities or ethnic groups, other siblings go for the first introduction leaving out parents for later roles. This first official meeting is where interest in marriage is declared by the man's family (note that, in some ethnic groups,

there is usually a foreman before a bigger family could come in for introductions). Declaration of interest in marriage is done in a dramatic and figurative way. The following conversation depicts one of the proposals witnessed by authors expressing interest in marriage. In this dialogue, 'Man' represents speakers from a man's family while 'Woman' represents speakers from a lady's family. The conversation takes place in real physical time.

### *The Family Marriage Proposal*

The marriage proposal scene presented in this section depicts a real life experience and narrated as it unfolded with minor language modifications.

*Scene [A man's family enters into a home of the woman's family. They are welcomed, greeted and names are stated in both families. The man's family requests for two small plates of equal size - some families come with such plates in which they put a small amount of money (any amount) and cover the plates. They put the covered plates on the floor and the woman's family take the covered plates. This is followed by a discussion where the man's family expresses the purpose of their visit in a figurative way. The groom at this point is present while the bride is around the premises but not in the actual meeting].*

**Man's family:** We have come to pay your family a visit because we are looking for something.

**Woman's family:** Thank you very much for the visit. How exactly can we help you?

**Man's family:** We have come here because we have seen a Hen in your family that could be suitable for our Rooster and our family is interested'. *(smiles)*

**Woman's family:** *[A moment of silence is seen as they*



*whisper to one another probably consulting on how to respond. Later, they decide to be ignorant in their response as they said;].*

We no longer stock Chickens in our compound but we have garden produce if you are interested.

**Man's family:** *[seen consulting one another and then responds].*

*[changes the phrase]. It is actually a beautiful flower in your garden that we are looking for and our son is interested in plucking it'. (smiles)*

**Woman's family:** *[They invite all the girls in that house to the meeting and make them sit on the floor. They respond to the question]. We have many flowers in our garden, so which one in particular?*

**Man's family:** *[they make consultations among themselves and asks the groom to point at the right girl. When she is identified, they describe the lady in phrases such as;]. The one wearing a pink top named Maya.*

**Woman's family:** *[asks Maya to acknowledge or deny] Maya do you know any of these men seated in here? [Maya nods and says Yes or No].*

**Woman's family:** *[If Maya confirms, they go further to know more about the family marrying and they may utter sentences such as;] We need to know the name of the family that is talking.*

**Man's family:** The Hara family...

*[The two families proceed to appointments and marriage charges with minor variations depending on ethnic groups].*

There are other traditions done before conversation starts such as putting money in closed plates (a conversation starter known by different terms in local languages as *Chibamuna Mulumo* in Tonga, *Chivulamulomo* in Senga/Tumbuka) by the man's family and the lady's family meant to open up conversation. In all of these deliberations, there is the use of a middle man (known as *ba Shibukombe* in Bemba) who speaks on behalf of the grooms' family. Usually, this middleman is an uncle to the groom or a seasoned traditional marriage counselor. The middle man plays a critical role in this process who is known by different names in different Zambian languages.

### ***Marriage Charges***

Marriage charges are costs or payments that are made to the bride's family by the groom's family at different times and for various reasons. The charges may include; (i) Notification charges also known as 'Chikhole' among Tumbukas and Sengas - an official notification from the groom to a bride's family member of his intentions to marry from that family. (ii) 'Permission to talk' charges also known as *Mwivwi* among the Luvale, *Chibamuna mulomo* among the Tongas, *Cisula kanwa* among the Bembas, *Chivulamulomo* among the Sengas and Tumbukas, *Kupumamulomo* in Lozi, and this is to officially allow the grooms family to begin dowry discussions. (iii) Money paid asking for a dowry charge. (iv) Appreciation charges (given to the mother for having given birth and raised the daughter). (v) Dowry (final marriage charge to show appreciation, commitment and secure the woman after any amount is paid towards the dowry).

In the past, marriage charges or costs were made using domestic animals or birds, farming equipments, and other materials such as blankets, as the means of payment. However, due to the changing times and the intermarriages

between different tribes across geographical boundaries, it is not always possible to pay marriage charges using the means listed above. Nowadays, most marriage charges or costs are assigned a monetary value equivalent. In instances where the bride was pregnant before the introductions and charges were done, all the marriage charges will come at this stage.

### ***Food Orientation***

Once some payments have been made, some ethnic groups orient the man to the food of the woman's family. The woman's family prepare different foods that they eat in their home or family and take it to the man's family on a date agreed upon by the two families. This ceremony is also done to notify the man that when he goes to visit the lady's family, he should be free to eat whatever food he is given there as he is now a member of that family.

### ***Marriage Ceremonies***

When dowry payments are made either fully or partially, the two families proceed to arrange for marriage ceremonies. Other ethnic groups or individuals may start with a kitchen party followed by a wedding ceremony, while others may decide to do either a kitchen party only and proceed to marriage vows or have a wedding only.

Different people including friends and family are invited to these ceremonies and they usually come with gifts to help the new couple settle in their new home. Note that some families decide to traditionally proceed with the marriage even when payments are not completed yet. Most modern families demand that all the payments be made in full before the marriage takes place.

### ***Common Marriage Ceremony Procedures***

There are different procedures followed for marriage ceremonies among various ethnic groups in Zambia. Among the common steps taken include the following;

- (i) A couple decides to go to a marriage institution such as Civic Center with a few witnesses and in the presence of the registrar of marriages, they exchange their vows and are pronounced man and wife followed by signing of certificates. They may then decide to go for another ceremony such as a luncheon, kitchen party or a wedding reception. Others may begin with a kitchen party and then later go for marriage vows.
- (ii) Some couples start with the religious ceremony, where they are asked to share their vows and are pronounced man and wife by an officiating Pastor or Priest, upon signing of marriage certificate. They may then wish to proceed for another ceremony such as a luncheon, kitchen party and/or a wedding reception where families come together to celebrate. The choice is entirely to the couple and their families.
- (iii) The third one is the traditional one which is done in different ways by different ethnic groups. Usually the lady is taken to the man's family in the evening. Some rituals are done that evening and the following day morning, celebrations of eating and drinking may take place. In some ethnic groups, counselling sessions are carried out in the morning where the man and the woman are made to sit in front of the house for counselling.

### **Child Marriages and the Legal Position in Zambia**

Child marriage refers to a formal or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child (UNICEF, 2019). However, the legal age limit of who a child is varies across states. In the case of Zambia, there are statutory instruments that guide the nation on this subject matter as discussed later in this section. Child marriages in Zambia are common in the rural parts of the country and they happen for various reasons such as economic hardships, low value for

education, peer pressure, parental influence and societal threats. Early marriages also take place in Zambia due to lack of strong legislative frameworks that supports the ending of child marriages. For instance, chapter fifty (50) of the Laws of Zambia known as ‘The Marriage Act’, section seventeen (17), recommends that the legal marriage age where a marrying person does not need consent is twenty-one (21) years. However, when parents, or guardians, or a court judge give consent, marriage can be instituted even at a young age as implied in the following extract:

*If either party to an intended marriage, not being a widower or widow, is under twenty-one years of age, the written consent of the father, or if he be dead or of unsound mind or absent from Zambia, of the mother, or if both be dead or of unsound mind or absent from Zambia, of the guardian of such party shall be produced and shall be annexed to the affidavit required under sections ten and twelve and, save as is otherwise provided in section nineteen, no special licence shall be granted or certificate issued without the production of such consent (The Marriage Act, Section 17).*

There is still a lacuna in this law because a father or purported parent or guardian may give a written consent to an underage child to marry. In other words, while, the Marriage Act provide for the solemnisation of marriages, to provide for the validation of marriages already solemnised, and to provide for matters incidental to or connected with the foregoing, it is not very strong on baring child marriages. Section thirty-three (33) stipulates that both parties must be at least 16 years old to constitute a marriage, otherwise the marriage would be void. This act was enacted on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1918. From 1918 to 1994, the Act was amended fourteen times. In all those times, the issue of child marriages were not strongly addressed. Section 19, of the Marriage Act,

says a court judge may authorise marriage if the parent refuses to authorise that marriage and again, it does not state the age limit.

Chapter fifty-three (53) of the Laws of Zambia known as ‘The Juveniles Act’, section number twenty-two (22), subsection one (1), states that:

*The person to whose care a juvenile is committed by any such order as aforesaid shall, while the order is in force, have the same rights and powers and be subject to the same liabilities in respect of his maintenance as if he were the parent of the juvenile, and the juvenile so committed shall continue in his care notwithstanding any claim by a parent or any other person: Provided that the authority and control shall not include power to give consent to the marriage of the juvenile or to deal with the property of the juvenile.*

In this Act, child marriages are not tolerated. The difference here is that, the age limit is given. Section two (2), subsection one (1), of the Juveniles Act defined a child as “ a person who has not attained the age of sixteen years”. This implies that, a sixteen year old person and above can be married.

The National Strategy on Ending Child Marriages in Zambia 2016 – 2021 (2015:11) reported that the National Gender Policy defines ‘Child Marriage’ as marriage of children younger than eighteen (18) years and this age range is consistent with UNICEF (2019). According to the Penal Code (Amendment) Act No. 1 of 2012, defilement or sex with anyone younger than sixteen (16) years is prohibited, and this legislation was expected to act as a major deterrent to child marriage. Similarly, the Education Act (part IV, section 18) provides for offences against any person who marries a student, or takes a child out of school to be married. The Act further enables everyone with the right to go to school, regardless of marital status. These provisions may

however be circumvented due to the constitutional exceptions given to customary marriage. That the legal framework remains open to interpretation is an ongoing concern for efforts to end child marriage (Ministry of Gender, 2015:11).

The marriage age of eighteen (18) as reported in the National Gender policy was in conflict or contravention with existing legal age of sixteen for marriages as outlined in the Marriage and Juveniles Act. While sixteen is the legal age for marriage, this age is not rigidly respected in the customary law as children below the age of 16 get married.

Other legal frameworks highlighting on issues of marriage include, the Adoption (Amendment) Act, No. 24 of 1997, the Penal Code (Amendment) Act, No. 1 of 2012, the Matrimonial Causes Act, No. 20 of 2007, the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act, No. 1 of 2011, Education Act, No.23 of 2011 and the Local Courts (Amendment) Act, No. 18 of 2003.

It is important to note that, marriages in Zambia can take place in accordance with customary law, common law or statutory laws as mentioned earlier. The only age limit provided that may restrict marriage is sixteen as provided in the Juveniles and Marriage Act.

## **Marriage and Life Long Learning**

Marriage is a life long learning experience where couples continuously acquire new experiences from their families, neighbours, their environment, counsellors, their own experiences and most importantly, their survival skills in the home. Many times the learning comes in form of their daily experiences, and counselling sessions on a problem of common interest, training on entrepreneurial skills for survival and other every day experiences in a home or society.

## **Spirituality and Religiosity**

Spirituality is the belief in something more powerful

than our mere existence and some people express this in religion. Murray and Zentner (1989:259) refer to spirituality as:

*a quality that goes beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God. The spiritual dimension tries to be in harmony with the universe, strives for answers about the infinite, and comes essentially into focus in times of emotional stress, physical (and mental) illness, loss, bereavement and death.*

It is that inner conviction or feeling that goes beyond religion. Kaiser (2000) stated that spirituality refers to a broad set of principles that transcend all religions. It is about the relationship between ourselves and something bigger than us. That something can be the good of the community or the people who are served by an agency, school or with energies greater than ourselves. Spirituality means being in the right relationship with all that is. It is a stance of harmlessness towards all living things and an understanding of their mutual interdependence. In this case, most Zambian communities are generally spiritual in nature.

Religion on the other hand is a set of beliefs, practices, and language that characterises a community that is searching for transcendent meaning in a particular way, generally based upon belief in a deity (Astrow et al., 2001). This view is further expanded by Davies, Brenner, Orloff, Sumner, and Worden (2002) who contended that religion is usually formed within the context of practices and rituals shared by a group to provide a framework for connectedness to God and usually practiced in a group. In other words, religion is an outward practice of a spiritual system of beliefs, values, codes of conduct, and rituals in a particular group that share common beliefs (Carson, 1989). Universally,



religion and spirituality are exhibited in different ways as people tend to operate and believe in various things. Religion include those that have reached at no conclusion on whether or not God exists. This state is known as agnosticism. People that are in this state at first glance, they may have been investigating the entire concept of “God”. When they do this investigation for the first time, they might conclude that all of the diverse deities of the universe are purely human creations. That is to say that, God did not create humanity but that humanity created gods.

Religion may also be a belief that all entities have a life force, a mind and a soul and this is known as animism. For example, a belief that nature such as rocks, trees, soil, grass and mountains have an awareness of their surroundings is a typical case of animism.

Atheism is also a form of religion which rejects the possibility that God exists. Deism is a belief that God exists, but is remote, unknowable and uninvolved. It is believed that God created the universe, set it going, left, but has not taken an active interest in it since. Other terms associated with religion include duotheism, henotheism, monism, pantheism and polytheism.

Duotheism (Bitheism) is the belief in a dual divinity (e.g. one good and another evil or one female and another male). Henotheism is the belief in many deities of which only one is the supreme deity. Monism is the belief that what people perceive as deity, humanity and the rest of the universe is in fact all of one substance - that divisions among the body, mind, flesh, spirit, material, physical are not real. All are simply aspects of one being. A similar concept is monotheism, a belief in a single God. Examples include Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism. Within Christianity as a religion, most denominations consider themselves to be monotheistic, even though they teach the existence of three separate persons in the Trinity. Some believe that religiously inspired violence is often found among monotheists

Panentheism is the belief that the entire universe that include substances, forces and laws is actually God. These people believe that the universe is God's body. A similar concept is pantheism, a belief that every existing entity (humans, animals, birds, trees etc.) together, is a part of God. They do not see God as having a personality, the ability to make decisions, etc. Rather, God is the very spiritual essence of the entire universe. While these religious beliefs are universal, some of them are prominent in Zambia. In this case, Zambia would be considered a multireligious nation because there are several religions practiced within the country. These include Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Bahai Faith and Sikhism. Taylor (2006:25) noted that;

*Zambia is a religiously plural environment that includes both world religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, as well as traditional practices. The vast majority of its population, however, practices various denominations of Christianity.*

However, the Consitution of Zambia as amended in 1996 declared the country as a Christian nation. This was further stressed in the recent Constitution of Zambia Act number 2 of 2016 amendment on page 1 preamble section which states as follows:

*Acknowledge the supremacy of God almighty; declare the Republic a Christian Nation while upholding a person's right to freedom of conscience, belief or religion.*

With the arrival of missionaries in the 1800s, Zambia became predominantly a religious state and predominantly a Christian state, cerebrating major days such as Easter and Christmas holidays. Zambians are generally spiritual than religious as they believe that nothing happens without something. This explains why many Zambians still believe in the traditions and customs of their background.

It is important to note that spirituality and religion are many times used interchangeably despite their differences in meanings. Some people see religion as the manifestation of one's spirituality, yet a person can be spiritual without being religious. A person can also be outwardly religious in performing certain actions, and yet not focus on the underlying principles of spirituality. Generally, spirituality is a broader term which includes religion but at times, spirituality can be on its own without attachment to a particular faith group.

### ***Examples of Spirituality and Religion in Zambia***

In some rural parts of Zambia and Africa in general, there are some beliefs related to spirits and religion. For instance, in a typical rural setting, when a person gets sick, traditional medicines or herbs are administered with the expectation that they will heal the patient. When this does not happen, the sickness is attributed to some spirits or witchcraft. Furthermore, there is no death which is natural as all deaths are attributed to some witchcraft of some sort. In some ethnic groups such as the Tumbukas, Tongas and Lozis, there is a belief that persistent illnesses can be treated by appeasing the spirits through dances known as *Vimbuza*, *Mashabe* and *Kutukuka* respectively. These dances involve community members drumming and singing songs that are believed to invoke spirits that bring about healing. Most patients get well hence the continuity of these practices every time there is a similar problem. We must mention however that this healing is more psychological than anything else.

During these dances, some patients scream in the process of getting rid of the spirits, others hit the ground while others groan and collapse on the ground. While this is a form of spirituality, it also brings about entertainment to some community members.

In the case of religion, it is important to note that it is an institution established by people for various reasons. Among these include the idea of exerting control, instilling morality, stroking egos and, sustaining spirituality. It is not always linked to God even if it is organised, structured and well pronounced. Religion involves people in organised groups meeting regularly to sing songs and pray or worship at regular intervals or on designated days mostly Saturdays and Sundays.

Astrow, Pulchalski and Sulmasy (2001), noted that someone can observe all of these activities without necessarily being in harmony or connection with God. In other words, being religious does not entail being spiritual as this is something that is found deep within oneself. It is one's way of loving, accepting and relating to the world and the people around them. Spirituality cannot be found in a religious or worship house such as a church or mosque. Spirituality is believed to be inborn in any person and this develops with time. It may be started by a religion, or a revelation. Spirituality extends to all facets of a person's life (Canda and Furman, 1999). Spirituality is chosen while religion is often times forced. Being spiritual is more important and better than being religious because religion can be anything that the person practicing it desires (Hodge, 2006, Puchalski and Larson, 1998, Blanch, 2007).

## **Aspects of Zambian Cultures**

While Zambian culture refers to practices and life style that is applicable to all or most Zambians as stated in the previous section, Zambian cultures refers to ways of life that are unique to individuals or specific ethnic groups within the borders of the country. In other words, practices that are done by the Nkoya, Ngoni, Illa, Senga, Lunda and other ethnic groups are said to be part of Zambian cultures. This means that Zambian cultures may differ from one ethnic group or province to another due to the variations in lifestyles, historical background and topography.

## *Examples of Zambian Cultures*

There are several examples that were already cited in the previous section which are associated with Zambian cultures. This section provides more examples on this subject matter.

There are food stuffs that are eaten in specific regions of Zambia that are not found in other places. For instance, nshima prepared from millet and sorghum meal is eaten among some Tumbuka and Senga people of Eastern and Muchinga Provinces while cassava nshima is eaten by some Bembas in Northern, Luapula and Copperbelt Provinces. The eating and drinking of sour milk is common among the Tonga and Nsenga people. The eating of mice and monkey meats are common among Easterners and Bembas respectively.

There are some traditional forms of dressing that are seen especially when there are traditional ceremonies in each ethnic group. These include traditional bangles and necklaces that are associated with Zambian cultures. For instance, the Lozi people of Western Province among other tribes, wear white bangles as a symbol of their cultural identity. Lozis also wear Siziba for men and Musisi for women. Similarly, the Ngoni people of Eastern Province wear animal skins as part of their historical and cultural dressing.

Initiation ceremonies such as Mukanda, Chinamwali and Chisungu are pronounced in specific ethnic groups within Zambia. Similarly, caledrical ceremonies such as Likumbi Lya Mize, Kuomboka, Kwenje, Chikwela Makumbi as presented on pages 28 to 34 of this book, are part of the Zambian cultures as they are unique to specific ethnic groups.

Social behaviour and mannerism are equally distinguishable from one ethnic group to another. For instance, when greeting elderly people and visitors in the society, the Lozi people show more body language than other ethnic groups. Many more examples can be cited associated with practices unique to individual ethnic groups.

## Traditional Marriage Processes in Selected Cases

Traditional marriage processes differ across ethnic groups. Some have similar stages while others have distinct ones that are unique to them. Marriage practices from five ethnic groups were used as examples to present this topic, namely: The Lunda, Ngoni, Tonga, Lozi and Bemba ethnic groups.

### *The Lunda Marriage process*

The Lunda people of North Western and Northern Provinces of Zambia are part of a larger Lunda Empire of the Bantu Speaking people. They are found in various regional groups that include the following: the Lunda of Musokantanda in Congo, Kazembe, Shinje, Kanongesha, Ndembu, Luvale (Luena, Balovale), Chokwe, Luchazi, Songo, and Mbunda (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lunda-people>).

Traditionally, the Lunda people had preferences when it came to marriage. They preferred cross cousin marriages (cross-cousin is from a parent's opposite-sex sibling) to intra-tribal and inter-marriages. In rural areas, this practice is still in existence. Those found in urban areas have adopted common marriage styles (*Ref. to ways of marrying in Zambia*).

Traditionally, when parents realise that a young man is ready for marriage, they engage into conversations about finding a suitable bride for him. Normally, these conversations take place in a reception house called “*Nza'ngu*”. Following these discussions, the parents begin to study the behaviour of girls in their village and the surrounding areas. After much consideration, one girl is chosen then monitored secretly without her consent or that of her parents. Investigations and consultations are done by the man's family where neighbours to the girl are secretly engaged for vouching. If the man's parents are impressed by the character reports, they then approach the girl's parents for a hand

in marriage. A response is given after a period of time such as days or weeks. The time lapse allowed the girl's family to meet and agree before they could give feedback to the man's family.

In an instance where the response by the girl's family was positive, a meeting for both families is arranged. It is during the two families' meeting that the girl is brought in the center of the audience to affirm that she is willing to get married to the man in question. As part of the agreement, the girl would do something that communicated to the audience about her decision such as drawing or digging with a stick on the ground. Please note that the communication by the girl was no-verbal as she is required not to talk in the presence of elders as a sign of respect. After this, the man's family pays an engagement token (in form of bangles, shells, bracelets or money) to the girl's family called *Ijikamuchisu*. The *Ijikamuchisu* symbolised that the girl was then taken or earmarked for marriage. After the *Ijikamuchisu* was paid, the man with some family members are free to help the in-laws in various activities such as agricultural tasks or constructions.

A week after the engagement, the man is informed of the bride price which is called *Insewu or Nyivu*. In the past, payments were in form of arrows, axes, hoes, spears, ivory, clothes, blankets, plates, dishes or money. After the payment was made, the girl was told to avoid seeing the husband until wedding day. When they accidentally meet, the girl was urged to run away. It is important to note that, *Insewu* is refundable should there be a divorce.

After the bride price is paid, a messenger from the man's family is sent to inform the lady's family about the day they would come for their wife. On the actual day of marriage, the man's family arrives at the girl's village in the evening. In other words, the bride reaches the grooms village at night. Before the bride is picked up by the man's family, her parents and relatives would

have given her some advice on marriage life. For the bride to move from her mother's home, the man's family must give a present called *Kazundu* signifying that she was no longer her mother's responsibility but that of the husband. The bride leaves the village accompanied by her own messenger, and a young girl of about six to eight years and in some cases with a grandmother. Along their move, there should be presents given to the bride at every junction.

When they reach the groom's village, there is dancing, eating and drinking. They celebrate and feast over the marriage as a way of welcoming the new couple. The bride is usually well dressed in a new traditional attire painted with red stuff called *Mukundu* on her head symbolising virginity.

When the bride reaches the groom's house, she only enters the house upon presentation of a gift. She is then expected to sit on a mat and weep silently with excitement in the bedroom. Another present is given by the groom for her to be undressed. Before she is deflowered, another present is given. On their first meeting, she is expected to consummate the marriage. Among the dances she is expected to exhibit during the consummation of the marriage is called *Musheta*, a stimulating dance that was believed to be the source of beautiful children in the future.

The following day, the man puts presents under the bed, which are picked up by the lady's elder sister or cousin. The presents normally depend on the bride's *musheta* performance during the marriage consummation. In the morning, the couple is given water to wash their bodies. Thereafter, the new wife prepares food in a dignified traditional style. A chicken is most important because it entails that the husband was very strong and deflowered the wife satisfactorily. When eating the meal, the man is not allowed to break bones of a chicken. If a bone is broken, the local people believe that the first born child of the new couple will die. After



eating, the bones were taken by the bride's relative and these take them to a special tree called *Mwindi*, where the bride once received medication during her initiation period as she was being prepared into adulthood.

This was done for fear of evil people taking the bones for sorcery and magical tricks causing the bride to be barren. After some days a big ceremony called *Chiteleka*, is organised by the new wife's family with a lot of food and drinks appreciating the marriage of their daughter.

### ***The Ngoni Marriage Process***

Ngoni is one of the largest tribes in the Eastern Province of Zambia and its paramount chief is Mpezeni. The ethnic group migrated from South Africa and some of them settled in Eastern province, while others proceeded to Malawi. In relation to marriage, the Ngoni are very strict about marrying at the right age as determined by custom or law. Once two people agree to marry, they inform their respective relatives about their intention. This is to let them start marriage procedures that culminate into their legal union.

The man informs certain members of the family preferably a grandfather or mother, aunties, uncles or cousins or close family friends. By tradition, the son could not directly tell his parents about his intention of marrying as it was considered disrespectful. The grandfather or any other person that is informed first, tells the man's immediate parents (father and mother) about his plan to marry. When the father learns about this, he calls for a meeting with other family members to discuss and plan the way forward. In this meeting, a family representative called *Nkhoswe* was chosen to be the intermediary between the two families. This was a person who represented the man's family in discussions with the lady's family. A *Nkhoswe* was a man who was highly respected in the community and had experience in marriage

matters among the Ngoni people and related ethnic groups.

The intermediary goes to the lady's family to inform them about the man's intentions. He carries some money (any amount) and puts it in small covered plates which he presents to the lady's family. This is important as the money serves as notification and authorising the two families to start marriage talks locally known as *Chivulamulomo* (literally means something used to open lips or mouth). Without this money or token, talks about marriage cannot start. The intermediary waits until the plates are collected, symbolising that permission is granted for him to start talking with them on the marriage issue.

After a brief discussion, the lady's parents tell the *Nkhoswe* to go back on a specific day for a response. He then reports to the man's family and waits. On the agreed date, the intermediary goes back to the lady's family for the feedback which is further transmitted to the man's family. If both families agree to the marriage proposal, an engagement token, called *Chikole* is given to the lady's family as an assurance of the man's commitment to the marriage. In the event that the lady got pregnant before the wedding, the man is charged a fee known as *Chidumo*. This has to be paid before marriage talks and agreements can start. What follows *Chidumo* and *Chikole* is the engament cerebration. The father to the man sends a gift (*Mufuko*), in form of an animal usually cattle, to the bride's family for the engagement celebration night. It is the same animal that is slaughtered for the engagement feast held at the lady's village. At the end of the betrothal ceremony, the lady's parents and some elderly people of the village, say "We have snuffed", conveying an engagement celebration.

When the engagement ceremony has passed, the two families sit to discuss final marriage charges. The man's family is given two marriage charges namely; *Kacheka* and *Chimalo*. *Kacheka* is a payment or token made to the lady's family as appreciation for

giving birth and raising the lady. Kacheka is normally given to the mother of the lady. *Chimalo* (dowery) is an official marriage charge given to the woman's family. Since the Ngoni people are matrilineal, some families also charge for the man's custody of the children and this payment is called *Malowolo/Nthakula*.

After part of the payment towards the marriage charge is made, the lady's family is expected to set a day on which they will introduce the man to the food eaten at the lady's family. This activity or ceremony is called *Chiphiko/Viphiko*. In this celebration, the lady's family prepares a variety of food and alcohol/beers and takes it to the man's family. The feast is hosted by the man's family where singing, dancing, ululating, and an explanation for each dish is exhibited. The plates and the dishes are left there at the man's family. After this event is completed, the man's family is expected to take the plates back to the lady's family. When the man's family returns the plates and pots to the lady's family, the plates will contain some goods put there by the man's family in appreciation.

After this celebration, the bride is taken to some secluded place for a special series of lessons on marriage. These lessons are mostly conducted by experienced elderly women or experienced married women called *Alangizi*. The bride undergoing lessons for marriage is referred to as *Mulowokazi*. The whole idea behind the training is to make sure that the bride's family are sending a well instructed wife to the husband. During the marriage lessons, the bride's maternal auntie or grandmother, is expected to empathise with the bride to the point of crying should the need be as a sign of moral support for her niece or granddaughter.

At the time of going to her groom's village, the bride or *Mulowokazi* is dressed in freshly prepared animal skins. In the modern world however, animal skins have slowly been replaced with clothes. The bride is normally adorned in

readiness to meet her groom and his family. The bride carries with her a present for the groom's family known as Mkando (Mtyando) which she presents upon the two families' meeting.

*Mupekisa Mulobokazi* is the final ceremony performed after the marriage has taken place where the bride, for the first time in her new house cooks food for her husband. The mother-in-law or any female relative to the groom makes the fire for the bride as a way of informing her that she is now free to cook and feed her groom.

In as much as some of the traditional practices are found across ethnic groupings in Zambia, the Ngoni have got some traditions and marriage payments or costs that are unique to them and this is what sets them apart from the other Zambian ethnic groupings. Across all ethnic groupings in Zambia, there are marriage costs or payments that are non refundable. In the case of the *Ngonis*, marriage payments like *Kacheke*, *Chidumo* and *Maloolo* are not refundable in case of a divorce (Yizenge, 2001).

### ***The Lozi Marriage Process***

The Lozi people are concentrated around the Zambezi river plains of Western Province of Zambia. They consist of over 38 interrelated ethnic groups located along the same area of Barotse land. The term "Lozi" is interpreted in two ways as used in the Western Province of Zambia. First, the term "Lozi" refers to the Lozi proper as an ethnic group, and the second refers to interrelated ethnic groups that have been assimilated into the Lozi proper. These assimilated groups include but not limited to the following; Kwangwa, Mafwe, Totela, Mbukushu, Subiya, Imilangu, Tokaleya, Kwamashi, Mbunda, Koma-koma (Makomakoma), Mbowe (Mambowe), Mishulundu, Muenyi (Mwenyi), Humbe, Kwamulonga, Ndundulu, Nyengo, Shanjo, Nkoya, and Simaa (<https://unpo.org/members/16714>). These ethnic groups were politically assimilated into the Barotse Kingdom. The kindom

also incorporated a number of other ethnic groups through war such as the Tonga, Lukolwe and Subia, but these groups have remained somewhat distinct in language and customs.

Marriage in the Lozi culture plays an important role of “*KuKutisa, Mukowa*” meaning reinforcing and renewing family relationships in the community.

When a young man (*Muchaha*) is ready to marry and has identified an initiated young lady (*Mwalanjo*), the young man goes with either an uncle or a cousin to the lady’s family to express their willingness or interest in a particular lady. The starting point for a formal traditional marriage was that the man and his uncle or cousin were expected to meet the grandmother or any elderly person first (but not a direct parent to the lady), to share with them his interest in the particular lady. As they go to the lady’s village, they would carry a small gift known as *Libato*. This gift was presented to the person with whom they had shared the news of their interest in the named lady. The man was not authorised to meet the lady directly to propose marriage as it was traditionally considered uncultured. When the grandmother or uncle/aunt to the girl authorises the man to meet the lady, they would also present a gift to her. The gift was in form of *Chitenge* material, a bracelet/bangles, or beads. This was an official sign that the gentleman had proposed to the lady. This was not an engagement, but a sign that she has been approached by a young man with the intention to marry. If the lady accepted the gift from the man, it was a sign that she agreed to the marriage proposal. Following this proposal, any subsequent visits by the man to this lady’s family would be through the same grandmother or aunt/uncle who initially authorised them to meet. Once the lady agrees to the marriage proposal, the man prepares for a formal marriage engagement locally known as *Tumelano* through the lady’s grandmother or other relative. The meeting takes place

at the grandmother's house. It is at this point that both partners formally inform their respective families about their decision to get married. During the formal unceremonious engagement meeting with both families present, the lady was given a gift, as a sign of commitment locally known as *Bwitamo* in Lozi.

After the engagement meeting, the man's family prepares to go to the lady's family to begin negotiations on marriage charges (*Lionda/sionda*). They decide on the date to approach the lady's parents and who is going to escort the man. On the lady's side, parents also decide on how much the marriage charges (*Lionda/sionda*) would be. On a set date, the man's relatives together with him go to the village of the lady and are cordially received.

At the appropriate time, the man's side breaks the news by saying "We have come to ask for fire". The lady's side knows that this means they are asking for their daughter's hand in marriage. Even when they were aware of the engagement of the two young people, the lady's relatives would not answer until a small amount of money known as *Sibulamulomo* or *Sikwalula/Sipunya Mulomo* (literally meaning mouth opener) was paid. After that, the lady's family gets ready to talk. The lady was summoned and asked if she knew the man asking for her hand in marriage and she is also asked to explain how she knows him. This was done to reaffirm that the lady still stood by the position they had on the engagement day and also to be sure that she is not forced into that marriage. If she responds positively, both parties are happy and will continue with the talks, but in her absence. However if the answer is negative, the talks end there and the engagement is nullified. When the lady agrees to the marriage, the two families proceed to marriage charges.

The lady's family tells the man's family the amount of dowry locally known as *Sionda* or *Malobolo*. The man's family is free to negotiate or bargain the charge given until the two families reach a

consensus. During this time of negotiations, there is so much debate about what the final bride price should be between the two families. This can take several hours especially when the two families do not want to compromise. Payment was usually in form of animals particularly cattle which is translated into cash in modern families.

Charges varied depending on the state of the lady or woman at the time of negotiations when the marriage was to be constituted. For instance, a lady who had never been married before or one who was a virgin at the time of negotiations for marriage, charges were higher than one who was married before or with a child. The dowry or *Sionda* was returnable if marriage broke within one year as a result of weakness on the part of the woman. Common men marrying from the royal family paid a much higher bride price dowry or *Sionda* than those marrying from regular families.

Dowry (*Sionda*), traditionally provided legal status to the marriage. Among some ethnic groups of the Lozi people, there is an extra amount (any amount) paid as an agreement to the dowry charge called *Lukusi*, which the man's family pays to show that they are satisfied by the dowry charge. *Lukusi* is also a way of thanking the girl's parents for agreeing to marry off their daughter to the man's family. After some payments are made towards the dowry, the groom sets a day when they would get the bride from her parents' home. This is done through preparation of food and beer. The wedding starts after sunset, men and women go to the girl's village to get her and during this ceremony, a hide and seek game is played for fun.

At the point of getting the bride, the bride and groom both receive the last advice from elderly people. After the counselling sessions, a certain amount of money called *Mukatu/Sikatu*, was paid by the man's family to the lady's family denoting the pain the mother felt when giving birth and for raising the lady. Another payment called *Sinanulo* was paid to indicate the beginning of



the journey. It was a common trend for the bride to be stopped at junctions and pretend that she lost way, in order for the man's family to pay something and to add fun to the art of the marriage ceremony. This payment was called *Munyembu* and it was upon payment of this that the lady continued to move. Ululations in the groom's village announced the arrival of the team that went to get the bride and women in the village ran and met them on the way.

On that first night, the bride and groom, now husband and wife, would sleep in a room near to the lady's grandmother. This was done in order for the grandmother to monitor the consummation of the marriage during that first night. The following day, early in the morning, the grandmother to the lady, would visit the room where the bride and groom slept. There was a ritual of putting gifts on the door or on the bed, by the groom and bride respectively implying that they were sexually satisfied during the night. If she found money at the feet of the bed, put there by the man, then she would know that the man was satisfied. Also there were some agreements that the lady and her grandmother would agree upon to indicate whether she was also satisfied or not.

After the inspection by the grandmother, the bride was bathed by the female escorts while the grooms female relatives watched and dressed the bride in her *Mikabo*, which were the bride's special clothing sent to her by the groom. Around mid-morning, Nshima was prepared with meat and not with chicken as there was a belief that this would bring bad luck to her future as chickens scratched the ground for food.

A small amount of food was placed on a stone called "*Kaminangwena*". She ate the food from this stone to symbolise strength, endurance and permanence for the marriage. A day later she was introduced to the village by the elderly village women. After a week or so, the woman is taken back to her village by the husband, this is called *Kukutisa Mahutu* meaning to trace ones



footsteps in order to show gratitude to the lady's parents and to collect any items that she could have left. This marked the end of the traditional marriage procedures among the Lozi people.

In modern society especially in urban communities, some procedures are omitted or avoided during the marriages process due to globalisation and cross cultural marriages. For example, rituals that take place the following morning of the first night of marriage are avoided by modern couples by running away soon after their marriage.

### ***The Tonga Marriage Process***

The Tonga people are found in the Southern Province of Zambia. They are geographically and linguistically categorised into two groups based on the variety of the Tonga language spoken. These two groups are the Valley and Plateau Tonga. The Valley tonga are mostly found along the low altitude lying areas such as Gwembe, Lusitu and Siavonga while the Plateau Tonga are found on the higher altitude areas such as those in Mazabuka and Monze. Among the differences between the Plateau and Valley Tonga is the way in which they write and pronounce certain words. For instance, the Plateau Tonga use much of a 'Z/S' in some words, while the valley Tonga use 'H' in words and phrases such as the following greetings:

**Plateau Tonga:** *Mwalibizya buti?* 'how are you this afternoon?'

**Valley Tonga:** *Mwalibihya buti?* 'how are you this afternoon?'

According to the Tonga tradition, there were two common ways under which a marriage was constituted. There was a practice where parents would find a family in which their family would marry, and the second, was elopement. The next section, discusses a type of marriage where parents find a family where to marry from. Elopement is already discussed under common ways of marrying in Zambia.

Traditionally, parents literally facilitated everything pertaining to marriage, from identification of a spouse to the final union of the husband and the wife. Under this custom, a man's family identifies a family in which they would want their son to marry from. The parents proceed to ask for a lady's hand in marriage on behalf of their son. When the lady's family accept the marriage proposal, they proceed to the next step where charges including the bride price (dowry) is charged, discussed, and negotiated. Many times, the bride and groom at this stage were not told that they were getting married. In other words, both the bride and the groom would not be aware of the arrangements until the wedding day or a few days before the marriage.

In instances where the bride price was not available, the groom's family would request for the marriage to go ahead and the dowry would be paid whilst the marriage was in effect or on course. This was because the Tonga people valued marriage more than charges. The emphasis was on families marrying into families which they considered to be decent and hardworking as the couple had no say in all the arrangements. Much of the time, they were tricked into marriage where they were told to adorn themselves in new shoes and a wrapper after which they would be told that they were getting married and the groom's family were on their way to come and pick her up to her new home.

While the major events discussed above are traditional with some omissions of some stages, modern marriages take a different approach where the man marrying is the one to identify a lady and if they agree to marry, they notify their relatives. This is followed by family discussions.

Culturally, the discussion starts with the groom's family giving an amount of money to the bride's family commonly known as *Chibbamuna Mulomo* or *Chijalula Mulomo* depending on the Tongas you are dealing with. In other words, the

groom's representatives are not expected to utter any word to the bride's family without payment of a token in form of cash, which symbolises permission to talk. Before any discussion can commence or indeed any discussion about asking for the bride's hand in marriage, the groom's representatives put a certain amount of cash called *Chibbamuna Mulomo* or *Chijalula Mulomo* in a pair of covered plates to ask for permission to talk.

The bride price was and is ideally paid in form of cattle especially in the rural areas. Today however, due to modernisation and intermarriages, dowry animals are converted into cash and the cash equivalent is paid instead of animals. A groom who has not paid dowry cannot have any claim over the children that he may have with his wife, therefore; children who are born without the settlement of dowry belong to the wife and not the man.

### ***The Bemba Marriage Process***

Traditionally, Bemba men begun their marriages by first engaging young girls below the age of puberty. The engagement or betrothal is called *ukukobekela*. The young girl was usually not consulted at all with regard to her betrothal arrangements. If a man was old enough to marry, he was encouraged by his elder brothers, his uncle or his friends to look around for a girl to marry or to engage. Once he found a girl to marry or to engage, from a good family, he told some close members of his family: uncle, brothers, grandparents and aunts. If his family agreed or accepted his choice, an intermediary or a go-between called *Shibukombe* was chosen to represent the family in the marriage arrangements.

The *Shibukombe* was in many cases a man who was chosen due to their experience in marriage issues and trust in the community. He did not belong to either of the families involved in marriage. He came from an independent family, and it was a great honour to be chosen by a family to perform the duties

of a *Shibukombe*. It was a duty performed with great care, skill and diplomacy and raised one's status among the people in the neighbourhood. It was also a position that required the services of a person who knew the traditions of the area.

After securing the services of a *Shibukombe*, the man's family organised a betrothal or engagement present called *Insalamu* to the father of the lady. It consisted of a small amount of money or a copper wire bracelet known as *Ulusambo*. Beads (*Ubulungu*) and other valuables were also accepted as *Insalamu*. The *Shibukombe* carried the *Insalamu* traditionally to the father of the girl. It was put in a basket made from reeds, called *icipe*. The journey to the girl's parents was always at dusk.

In the village of the girl's family, the *Shibukombe* was expected to know the house of the parents to the girl, and present himself there. In the house, he used the accepted language when presenting his case. He spoke as if he was the one intending to marry the daughter of the host family.

After the warm welcome by the parents of the lady, the *Shibukombe* slowly unfolded the news, saying, "*Ndefwaya ukukobekela*", meaning, "I have come to engage your daughter". He went on explaining his intentions to marry the girl. Having said this, the *Shibukombe* handed over the *Insalamu* present to the father of the girl who accepted it. The go-between was told to come for the answer on a later date. The girl's family had to meet and decide on the answer before the go-between came back.

The *Insalamu* was not very binding. It was only an assurance that the man was serious and committed to marrying the girl. It was an official claim over the girl and it avoided other men from proposing marriage to her. However, if the engagement was broken, the *Insalamu* presents were not refunded, and it was not a serious matter to involve local courts.

The *Shibukombe*, as was advised by the parents of the girl, he

called back on them after some few days and was warmly received by the parents of the girl. At that time, there was humour and many jokes involved, as they talked to each other. At an appropriate time, the *Shibukombe* was told of the good news: the girl's family had agreed to let the man he was representing engage their daughter. The go-between reported the good news to the family of the man.

Once the man's family confirmed the acceptance of the betrothal, the man started behaving like son-in-law to the parents and family of the girl. The same was true for the girl to the parents of the man. Social policing on the two people, girl and man, began and therefore, they had to behave like husband and wife to be in the community. They were from that moment being controlled by the social behaviour of the society on upholding cultural values on marriage etiquettes.

When *Insalamu* was paid, the girl or lady was allowed by her parents to be going to her future husband's house, sometimes alone, but in most cases with her friend or a young girl. On her first trip to the groom's house whether with her friends or not, she did not talk to him or entered his house without small presents given to her by the groom. Once this was done the bride began talking to him, and did a lot of work for him. She swept the house, drew water for him, cleaned the house, white-washed the house, prepared warm water for him to bath every morning, washed his clothes, and so on. These tasks were performed whenever the bride thought it was necessary and at any time she went to the groom's house. She did what she thought was good for the future husband. She was at this time showing him that she would be a good wife once marriage procedures were finalised. This was a mock-marriage. In fact, she was also occasionally allowed to spend nights at his house. It was a period of courtship locally known as *Ukwishisha* or *Ukwisha*.

The family of the girl was responsible for the man's daily food

requirements from the time of accepting the *Insalamu*. The groom built his house within the village of his parents-in-law, that is, if he was not living in the same village. Note that every man before he got married had to build his own house in the village he was living.

The first *nshima* (*Ubwali*) with chicken, a traditional dignified relish, from the mother-in-law was not eaten by the son-in-law. Instead, he called his elderly female relatives to come and collect the food that came from his mother-in-law. They gave it to another family which ate the food. The very family that ate the food prepared some *nshima* for the son-in-law (groom). Thereafter, the food from the girl's family would be prepared by the girl's grandmother or elder sister. But it was part of the tradition for the groom to ask the source of the food that was brought to him. This was done for each *nshima* that was brought to him.

For the service given to him by the girl and her family, the man had to work for her family. Through the *Shibukombe* the man asked his parents-in-law where their field was. On an arranged day, the *Shibukombe* showed him to the field. On the first day, the man was allowed to invite two or three of his relatives alongside the *Shibukombe*, to go and work in the field of his in-laws (parent of the bride). They never knocked off without being given gifts by the parents of the girl on that first day. However, on subsequent days, the groom went alone and knocked off alone without being given gifts.

When it was noticed by her parents that she was about to experience her first menstruation, that is, nearing her puberty period, she was stopped from visiting or staying at her future husband's house for fear of becoming pregnant before legal marriage. If it happened, where the girl became pregnant, it brought shame and serious problems to both parties. Her withdrawal from the groom's house was one way of warning the groom that the future wife was about to have her first menstruation.

When she attended her first menstruation, she became known as *Nacisungu the nubile* bride, and that marked the beginning of an initiation ceremony called *Cisungu*, during which she underwent a number of activities. The man was informed about this development and from that time he was called *Lumbwe the husband of the nubile girl*. They had these names, *Nacisungu* and *Lumbwe* until the initiation ceremony was over.

On the last day of the initiation ceremony, the groom was invited by the bride into the house where the ceremony was taking place. He carried a bundle of firewood, salt and meat as per custom. He was accompanied by his sister or any other female relative. The bundle of firewood was put down in the initiation house and untied while some elderly women danced to the honour of the groom's sister. The *Nakalamba* (assistant mistress to the *Nacimbusa* who also invites guests to the initiation ceremony), handed two undressed chickens for dressing to *Nacimbusa* (a woman who gives marriage lessons to the bride) and the bride. The two women pluck feathers of the two chickens until they were ready for cooking.

While this was taking place, the groom went out of the house to invite his other relatives to come and witness the ceremony he was about to perform in the initiation house. The ceremony was known as *Ukulasa Imbusa*, where the groom was to shoot at an *Imbusa* (a symbol of marriage made with a mixture of clay and charcoal) using a bow and arrow. His relatives gave him a bow and an arrow and accompanied him to the initiation house. They sang as they approached the house. When they entered the house, the groom stood in the middle of the house with the outstretched arrow. While on the spot, he was required by the audience to strike a special imbusa fixed on the wall above the place where the bride was seated. Striking the special imbusa meant that he was a worthy husband. He was praised by all present, and thereafter, went on striking all other *Imbusas* as the custom required him to do.



After successfully completing all the *Imbusas*, the bride jumped over one *mbusa*. For this action, the audience shouted words of praise and encouragement to her. If the groom failed to strike the special *Imbusa* and other *Imbusas*, he was subjected to a storm of abuse. He was however subjected to other fresh tests later on.

From the time of *Insalamu* up to this stage, the traditions did not allow the groom to eat food prepared by the bride's mother. He was still keeping the food taboos. However, time was now ripe for him to begin eating food prepared by his mother-in-law. A food offering ceremony was organised for the groom. It was called *Ukutebeta*. The *Shibukombe* went to the bride's parents and announced that, "the stranger's child (the groom) is wasting with hunger", (*umwana wabene aleonda kunsala*). With these words, preparations commenced. Note that it took a long time before this ceremony was done. This was to make sure that the man was proved fit to be their son-in-law and that he had been found to be a hardworking person. For this reason it was not unusual for this ceremony to take place six months after accepting *Insalamu* or after the bride's initiation ceremony.

Plenty of different types of food were prepared by the bride's family. This was either at the house of the mother-in-law or at the house of the bride's aunt. The food types prepared by the bride's family were those that were common and eaten by their members of the family. For the Bemba, chickens were prepared as dignified relish. Each chicken that was prepared had to be with a gizzard (*Inondo*), failure to which it was not offered as relish for such a ceremony. Meat was common but pork was never offered for a ceremony. Other foods included, fish, *Ubwali*, *pupwe culu*, *katubi* or *katata beer* and so on. Each of these foods was presented ceremoniously by putting a gift on top of the plate or lid covering it. The gifts consisted of either small valuables or money. This was known as *Ukushikula Ubwali*. The



foods with their respective gifts were taken to the man's house.

The *Shibukombe* was there to receive the foods and to welcome the invited relatives of the man. An elderly woman from the bride's family went into the house where there was food for their son-in-law, invited relatives of the man and other close friends of their son-in-law. They explained to the groom the significance of each food. Such explanations were full of humour and jokes. If there was any food that the man did not eat, he pointed it out, and told them that he did not eat that food. That way, they knew the foods their son-in-law did not eat. The activity was accompanied with plenty of ululations.

After the woman explained the significance of each food, they left the house. The elderly people distributed the food and they all started eating. Whatever gifts that were brought at the ceremony, they were collected by the *Shibukombe* and those presents were given to the new family later. However, the plates or whatever container that came in the house with food or beer had to leave the house with double the amount of gifts brought in with it.

From that day, the groom did not ask where the food sent to his house came from. He had already been ritualised. This was a very important ceremony for him before the wedding. After the food offering ceremony, the next important stage was the wedding ceremony. It took place a year or two after the bride's initiation ceremony or *Insalamu*. That was also a way of confirming that he was a hardworking son-in-law. Before, the wedding, the groom asked the *Shibukombe* to go and find out from the bride's family the amount of *Impango*, the main marriage payment, and to inform them that the groom wanted his bride to join him. That was also a way of telling the bride's family to decide on a wedding day after the groom paid the *Impango*.

The *Impango* was very important because it legalised the marriage, and it was only refundable on special circumstances.

It consisted of two to three barkcloths (*ifilundu*). Sometimes other valuables (*ifyuma*) could be paid instead of barkcloths. These included hoes, beads, blankets, salt, and so on. No animals were exchanged in the Bemba marriage.

Once the Shibukombe was told how much *Impango* the groom was supposed to pay, he reported this to the groom's family and the amount was organised. In many cases, before the wedding could take place, more than half the *Impango* was supposed to be paid. This meant that he would pay the rest after the wedding. The groom told the *Shibukombe* to tell the parents-in-law, "*Bankakefye iminwe, bansheko amolu*", literally meaning, 'They should just tie my hands but let me use my legs to go and look for the remaining money while seeing the lady'. Once this was accepted, the lady's family decided the day for the wedding, which took place in the village of the lady's family.

Before the wedding day, both families did many preparations for it. They prepared traditional beer, traditional wine, and many different foods. If the man's family lived very far from girls village, they came and camped in the girl's village, usually at the relatives or the friend's house. The wedding ceremony began in the evening. The first procedure was the consummation of marriage *ukumutwala kuli wiba* followed by wedding (*ubwinga*).

Early in the evening on the day of the wedding, the bride was taken to the house of her paternal aunt (*Nasenge or Nyinasenge*) by the *Nacimbusa*. At the aunty's place, she was taught the rituals of family life and her aunt was involved in giving her the last titbits on marriage life. While this was happening to her, simultaneously, the groom was being taught the secrets of the marriage life by his elderly male relatives, in his house. It was also the time when people began drinking beer, beating drums and dancing. Many people from neighbouring villages came to participate in these activities.

At the house of the paternal aunt, the bride was stripped and

taught what to do where she was about to be taken. Note that from childhood a girl wore a girdle amulets (*Impimpi*) and beads around her waist. Around midnight, after the instructions on marriage life, she was carried nude on the paternal aunt's back covered with cloth to a special house where the groom was waiting for her arrival. The cloth used to carry the bride was supposed to be bought or prepared by the groom and sent in advance to the *Nasenge* for this ritual. In the house where the groom was waiting for her arrival, the bride was put on the bed or mat. The groom gave both the bride and *Nasenge* a gift each. *Nasenge* told the groom to sleep with the bride to consummate the marriage, and she left the house and stood outside not very far from the house.

Note that the trip made by the *Nasenge* with the naked bride on her back covered with cloth was very important and attracted people's attention. It is also true to say that some people did not know what was happening as they also got involved in dancing and drinking. There were ululations as the *Nasenge* carrying the bride went to the house where the groom was waiting for her. Some elderly women accompanying her sang a wedding song, known as *Nsense Tubatwalile*, meaning that, "We are bringing a virgin, what happens to her after we have handed her over to you is your own affair".

In the house, if the groom successfully deflowered the lady or consummated the marriage, he tossed some hot embers outside the door. The *Nasenge* and all the people waiting outside become happy and many ululations followed. This meant that the man was strong. It was, in fact, a test of virility of the man rather than of the virginity of the girl. The following morning, the girl was questioned as to how many times they had made love. Four times was regarded as the yardstick for a real man. The ritual also publicly confirmed the couple's marriage alliance. It also

marked the beginning of the wedding celebrations (*ubwinga*) in the village till the following day. Many chickens were slaughtered for the occasion. However, if he failed to perform as expected, the girl rushed out of the house. That marked the end of the marriage. The *Nasenge* took the girl to her mother. The live chickens which were collected to be slaughtered for the feast were freed and people who came for the festival dispersed. It brought great shame to the groom and his entire family.

If the performance by the groom was good, the celebration went on until the following day, while the bride and the groom slept. Early the following morning at dawn, the couple led by an elderly woman from the bride's family, went to the stream or river to bath. The process was called *Ukowa*. From the stream, they found the house where they slept cleaned and the spot where they slept white washed. The old fire was cleared out of the house. Three old men made new fire using fire sticks.

The same morning after day break, the *nasenge* prepared breakfast for the couple, using the marriage pot (*Akalongo*). When the meal was ready, the *Nasenge* took a small ball of it (*Ulutoshi*) and put it into the mouth of the husband and another into the mouth of the wife. She did this until the *ubwali* was finished and this was followed by the 'chicken liver and gizzards' ritual. Using the liver from the hen given to them by the bride's family and the gizzard from the cock given to them by the groom's family; the *Nasenge* ritually touched them to the lips of the bridal pair and then uttered some words. Meanwhile, the people in the village were still dancing, eating, drinking and singing. The families of the couple exchanged different types of food as a way of celebrating.

The little marriage pot remained on the hearth until the fire went out. To have the little pot taken away by *Nasenge* the couple had to give her a piece of bark-cloth. That done, the aunt put another small pot in its place; that was the mystical pot for use

by the young couple in their marriage life. After that, a small *ubwali* was rubbed over the man's body and another over the woman's body by the *Nasenge* and thereafter, she anointed them with castor oil. After this scene was concluded, the couple was brought outside, dressed in clean beautiful clothes. They had to sit on a mat in readiness for the ceremony called *Ukushikula*. At this ceremony, the couple received last minute advice on married life from parents, relatives, friends and well-wishers. Whoever gave such advice put a small gift on the mat where the couple was seated. Such gifts were for the couple. The father of the girl was the first to give advice, followed by her mother and other close relatives. Then the parents of the man, and the relatives followed. After members of the two families presented their gifts, the father of the bride gave the groom an arrow and bow and advised by saying the following words; "*This arrow and bow I give you. If a man steals or seduces your wife, shoot and kill him with this arrow*". In the absence of an arrow and a bow, a spear was given. Other people also gave symbolic gifts with specific meanings. They included axes for Chitemene system of agriculture as the Bemba people were and still are the major ethnic group practicing this type of farming in Zambia; hoes, fishing nets, spears and knobkerrie. The ceremony marked the beginning of marriage life for the couple. The chitemene system symbolised *icupo* (marriage) for many Bembas.

The following night after the *Ukushikula* ceremony, another ritual known as *Ukuteka Akalongo* was performed. It was mainly to allow the bride to start cooking on her own and feed her husband and those who visited her family. Not many people witnessed the ceremony. It was in fact a ritual of handing over the marriage pot called *Akalongo*. The paternal came in the house where the bride and groom were seated carrying the marriage pot and gourd of castor oil. She made a new fire near the foot of the bed or mat.

She also installed three little anthill-shaped pot supporters locally called *Amafvesa* around the fire, on which the little marriage pots with water in it, would be put or balanced while heating. Once that was done, the wife, husband and *Aunt or Nasenga* took the little marriage pot filled with water holding it with two fingers (thumb and first finger) on the brim and put it on the fire. When the water was warm, the aunt put a little in a basin and poured it on the fingers of the husband and the wife. That was washing their hands, purifying them. If the ritual was not done, the spouses would die of consumption (*ukukowela*) as it was believed.

After the couple had two or three children, another ceremony, the final one, was held. It was called *Ukwingisha Shifyala*, allowing the son-in-law to physically enter the house of his parents-in-law. Before this ceremony, the groom could not physically enter his parents-in-law's house. But at this ceremony, he was allowed to inspect every room in the house and even to inspect their granary. It was a right which marked complete incorporation of the son-in-law in the bride's family. Remember that the Bembas are a matrilineal society. The ceremony meant that the bride's family had great trust for the groom. As a result, he could now take his wife to his own village if he wished. The groom gave smoke gifts to the bride's parents for their kind gesture extended to him from the time he joined their family. Such payments were given for respect, *umucinshi*, not as an obligation on the part of the groom (Yizenge 2001).

## **Chapter 3: Myths**

### **Context**

There were several myths noted being practiced in Zambia. It was observed that myths were part of the Zambian cultures and they varied from one region to another. It is important to note that, not all myths and taboos practised in Zambia are discussed in this book. The text is compilation of selected ones and some of them were common while others were region specific. In other words, some myths and taboos represent Zambian culture while others represent Zambian cultures as they are unique to ethnic groups.

### **What is a Myth?**

A myth is a story or saying generated by a particular community and it is widely held as truth but it's a false belief or idea and many times, it is hard to prove its assertion. Myths vary from one region to another due to the different cultural orientations and backgrounds. Different traditions and customs which further include norms, values and attitudes which regulate the behaviour of people in the society is another cause for myth variations from one region to another. The physical location of people also causes variations in myths. Different regions may be associated with certain forms of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours which might make them unique in some way.

### **The social status of myths**

Myths are not as serious as taboos in terms of social consequences should one defy them. They carry messages that teach on issues such as hygien, respect, moral codes, living in peace with others, following traditions and customs. Myths are more common than taboos as they are easily created whenever there is a teaching point for the younger generation. The myths discussed below

are among the thousands found in Zambia. The sampled myths show the structure in terms of application, moral or lesson, and possible interpretation. Most of them are an improved version of those discussed in (Mkandawire, Simooya-Mudenda, & Mondecheelo, 2017).

### **A List of Selected Myths with their Interpretations**

#### ***1. When a husband dies, his wife must be cleansed in the following ways:***

- (a) The widow must have sexual intercourse with the younger or elder brother or relative to the deceased as a way of cleansing from the spirit of the dead husband so that she is set free;
- (b) The day after the burial, the grandparents or other elderly relatives to the deceased start off very early in the morning with the widow walking to a place where a road branches into two and at that point, the relatives of the deceased ask the woman to undress so that they bathe her with water mixed with traditional medicine which they carried in a special calabash or bucket for cleansing. Her clothes are confiscated and taken away by the person who was bathing her to either bury or give them to the grandmother. The bathed widow is given other clothes to wear.
- (c) Immediately after the burial of the deceased at the graveyard, the widow was made to retreat and move backwards while facing the grave up to a certain point where she turns giving her back to the grave and runs very fast heading home. When she reaches home, some final rituals are conducted on her, for the deceased spirit to leave her as she was considered a free woman.
- (d) The surviving spouse is asked to go to grave side with



the deceased's relative usually of the opposite sex and the two are asked to undress in front of each other just to see each other's nakedness without having sexual intercourse for fear of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs). This was considered a modern practice in most communities.

- (e) The hair to the surviving spouse must be cut on the second or the third day after the burial of the spouse as part of the cleansing requirements.
- (f) There were cultural practices that forbade a surviving spouse from witnessing the burial of the deceased for some cultural reasons. In other communities, it was reported that the widow or widower was not allowed to the burial site if they practised oral sex, witchcraft and other cultural reasons.

### **Application**

This myth was applied in most Zambian communities and it was believed that if the surviving spouse was not cleansed in some way, he or she would become mad and may behave abnormally. Furthermore, any man that would marry her before being cleansed, would also become mad and eventually would die. It was also believed that, if a woman was not cleansed, she would be hearing voices of her deceased husband. The cleansing of the woman had to do with getting rid of the magic that the husband might have done on her. Some aspects of this myth still exist in most societies in Zambia. The sexual cleansing aspect of the myth is rarely or no longer practised in most communities due to the existence of Sexually Transmitted Infections such as HIV and AIDS.

## ***Moral***

It is considered morally right by many communities for the surviving spouse to be cleansed so that they are set free to re-marry or do anything they pleased in their lives. In some cities, it was considered immoral to subject a spouse to some cleansing practices.

## **Interpretation**

There is no direct connection between being cleansed and getting mad or acting abnormally. One would wonder how the lack of cleansing would keep one sane or insane. This is difficult to establish and it is merely a psychological belief for the victims involved.

### **2. *A woman was not allowed to add salt and/or cook when:***

- (a) She was menstruating
- (b) She was in the first three months after giving birth
- (c) She was in the first three months after a miscarriage

It was believed that if that happened, people that would eat that food would develop an untreatable persistent cough. It was also believed that all the teeth in the mouth for those eating the food would be out.

## **Application**

This myth was existed in most Zambian communities and a few communities are still practising the same especially in rural areas. This is because in urban areas, most people have learnt the different ways of maintaining hygiene during such times.

## ***Moral***

This was basically a way of preserving hygiene. It is a way of ensuring that any woman with an issue of blood avoided contact with food that was eaten by many people. It also gave parents an assurance that their daughter was not pregnant as they observed her as she refused to add salt to the relish when cooking.

### **Interpretation**

This is a typical myth that has no connection with eating the food prepared by a woman who is in her menstrual period and developing an untreatable persistent cough or having teeth fall off from the mouth. However, it is important that, when a woman is menstruating, they should observe high levels of hygiene.

### **3. *A pregnant woman is not allowed to eat eggs because the child would be born without hair***

#### **Application**

This myth exists in most Zambian communities especially in the rural areas and it is believed that a pregnant woman who eats eggs will give birth to a bold-headed baby. In most urban areas, people have come to understand the need to eat what the body craves during pregnancy, including eggs, especially when they are well cooked to kill bacteria in them.

#### **Moral**

Owing to the fact that cravings are common in pregnancy, and that at times they can go on for the whole period of the pregnancy, pregnant women were not allowed to eat eggs basically as a way to conserve eggs or else there would be no more chickens.

## Interpretation

There is no link or connection between eating eggs and bearing a child without hair. In other words, a pregnant woman can eat well cooked eggs and still give birth to a healthy baby with normal hair. It is, however, not encouraged to eat too much of eggs that are not well cooked because it is not healthy. A study by Djousse and Gaziano (2008) indicated that eggs carry salmonella bacteria. If the eggs are not well-cooked to kill the bacteria and are taken during pregnancy, one may experience some illnesses caused by salmonella poisoning. This bacteria may not directly harm the baby but it can be unpleasant to the mother as it could cause abdominal pain, diarrhoea, vomiting, high temperature and headache.

Other health research studies such as those by Hu, Stampfer and Rimm (1999) and Fernandez (2006) indicated that eating eggs, especially raw eggs or soft boiled eggs is associated with heart disease risk in both men and women especially those with diabetes and who eat one or more eggs per day.

4. *A pregnant woman should not stand or sit in the doorway of the house because the baby will stall or get stuck during delivery time*

## Application

This belief is practised in most parts of the country. The argument is that, if a pregnant woman sits in the doorway, she will experience difficulties during child delivery because it is assumed the baby will be stuck at the cervix. It is also believed that sometimes wizards

use the door as the place for setting traps for witchcraft practices. So to protect the pregnant woman from such misfortunes, people taught pregnant women not to sit in the doorway.

### **Moral**

In a house where there are many people, it is wrong for anyone to sit in the doorway because this blocks other people from using the entrance. The myth basically tried to instil good manners and practices on the part of pregnant women because when they are seated, it is not easy for them to move.

Furthermore, people generally do not like disturbing a pregnant woman as they sympathise with her condition. It was also another way of avoiding the inconveniences that can be caused by a pregnant woman seated in the doorway because usually, a doorway is a busy place as people enter the house. Avoiding to sit on the door way was also for the safty of the pregnant woman.

### **Interpretation**

It's a myth that has absolutely no correlation between sitting on the door way of the house and the baby getting stuck in the cervix during child birth. It is supported because morals are still vital for every household. Furthermore, in houses or homes where there are so many people living together, it does no show respect and consideration for the others by standing or sitting on the entrace to the house.

**5. *Children should not see the nakedness of their parents or other elders because they will become blind***

**Application**

The myth is common in many communities in Zambia and other parts of the world. The myth explains that if a child sees the nakedness of an elderly person, the child automatically becomes blind and loses their sight forever.

**Moral**

The myth seeks to teach good manners to children so that they do not think of or want to see the nakedness of the elderly people. This instils fear in children. It teaches and helps children to keep away from adults whenever they are not dressed, are bathing or dressing up. The myth also seeks to avoid traumatising children in an event that they saw the nakedness of an elderly person.

**Interpretation**

There is no connection between seeing the nakedness of the adults or parents and the child becoming blind. This justifies this myth because its physical confirmation cannot be proved. However, this myth is more applicable in Zambia and some conservative communities in the world.

**6. *Married men should not have sexual intercourse with other women when their wives are pregnant because their wives would have difficult and pro-longed labour.***

**Application**

This myth is practised in the whole country in both

rural and urban areas. This is because society has for sometime believed that a man cannot avoid sex for a period hence the justification for sleeping with other women when the wife is pregnant. In an event that the wife went through difficulties when delivering, it is believed that drinking the water in which the husband's belt was soaked or some traditional medicine would alleviate the complications. Another remedy is for the husband to undress for some seconds and then dress up and then the wife delivers. In some cases, elders would call a man to interrogate him about possibilities of involving other women during that period and then after provide some traditional medicine for smooth delivery.

### **Moral**

The myth is there to teach husbands to be faithful to their wives at all times even during pregnancy. The other fear was that if a man went out for other women, they could acquire sexually transmitted diseases. These diseases would, in turn be transmitted to the pregnant wife which could compromise her health and that of the baby. The myth indirectly teaches men to be available and supportive to their wives throughout the pregnancy period because women equally need their emotional support.

### **Interpretation**

That a married man should not have sexual intercourse with other women when their wives are pregnant is a myth because there is no connection between having sexual intercourse with other women and the prolonged or having difficulties in giving birth. However, this myth can be used to perpetuate good morals in the society.

7. *Do not move around in the night because you will meet ghosts. In other parts of the country, they say ‘Do not travel at night because the chief in form of an animal is surveying the village’.*

### **Application**

This myth is practised in some selected parts of the country especially in rural areas. The assertion is that if one moved in the night, they would meet ghosts. In other communities, they say the protectors of the village in form of an animal with many legs and hands are surveying the residential area to protect its people. In certain areas, people are taught that the chief moved around in the night in different forms and no one was supposed to see the chief in that state.

### **Moral**

The myth existed and still exists for the sole purpose of teaching people to avoid moving about aimlessly in the night. The myth also seeks to encourage people to rest so that they can be as productive as possible during the day. Besides, there are many dangerous animals and creatures that move about at night, so it is also a way of ensuring that people keep safe from dangerous creatures such as snakes and other evil forces which are believed to be more active at night.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because it is hard to prove or verify that a chief can turn into an animal. In the actual sense, this can be taken as a mere piece of advice to members of the community. There is no harm in moving or operating at night other than the terror and evil that might not be seen at night for one to defend oneself.



8. *A young boy or girl should not have sexual intercourse with adults because they will be burnt or their back will be broken*

### **Application**

This myth is practised in many parts of the country. It is still believed in many parts of the country especially in rural areas and the argument is that young people that have sexual relations with elderly persons will develop a perpetual backache that comes with a burning sensation. Since no one wanted to have such a condition, young people stayed away from having sex with adults or elderly people. Others were told that there was fire in an adult's bosom and that they would be burnt if they involved themselves with adults.

### **Moral**

The myth is a way of making sure that only appropriate sexual relations are allowed in any given community. It is a way of making sure that there is morality where sexual relations are concerned. The myth also taught young children that sex was not to be indulged in anyhow but with an appropriate person of the same age group. The myth also teaches young people that the possibility of an adult having sexually transmitted diseases was high considering the fact that they would have had a number of sexual relations. Consequently, young people that involved themselves in sexual relations with such adults, risked acquiring these sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Interpretation**

There is no connection between having a sexual relationship with adults and getting burnt or suffering

from a perpetual backache. Many young people have had sexual relations with adults without necessarily experiencing either the burning sensations or a perpetual backache as alleged in the myth. However, it is still morally wrong for young people to engage in sexual relations with elderly people and vice-versa. This is due to a number of reasons such as hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases to mention but a few.

9. *A man is not allowed to sit on the pounding mortar because they will become impotent. The other alternative to this myth was that ‘A man or woman should not willingly ‘puff’ on the mortar as they would become impotent or barren’.*

### **Application**

This myth is practised in many parts of the country especially in rural areas where the use of a mortar is still common. Considering the fact that only women used the mortar, it was considered bad luck for a man to sit on the mortar. Sitting on a mortar for a man was a sure way of becoming impotent and losing the ability to make a woman pregnant. The alternative myth, however applies to both men and women as it is believed that puffing on the mortar brings impotence in men and barrenness in women.

### **Moral**

This myth was meant to teach men and women basic manners with regard to sitting on materials or utensils used for food preparation. Firstly, the emphasis in the myth was on maintaining hygiene which cannot be over

emphasised even today. Secondly, the emphasis was on safety because a mortar is not well balanced and would easily make someone fall. It was a way of avoiding accidents that could be caused by falling from the mortar and the consequent embarrassment of falling.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because there is no connection between puffing on a pounding mortar and becoming barren or impotent. It is difficult to prove the linkage or its real physical existence. It is, however, not encouraged to sit or play with utensils meant for processing food.

- 10. *Do not urinate on fire because you will start urinating blood. The alternative to this myth is; do not urinate in water as you would acquire illnesses such as bilharzia***

### **Application**

This myth is applied in many parts of the country and it is still being applied in rural areas especially where the use of fire is still common. It was widely believed that urinating on fire would automatically give one a disease that would make them urinate blood instead of urine hence people kept away from urinating on fire or in water.

### **Moral**

The myth was a way of teaching some good manners to people in a community. It was just a way of teaching good morals because practices such as this one were associated with bad manners. A fireplace is a reserved area for preparing food and at times also used for social activities in the evening and where stories and

narratives are shared. Urinating there leaves a bad smell that should not be associated with food production or which affects spending quality family time chatting and telling stories in the evening.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because there is no link or connection between urinating on fire or in water and developing a disease where one would urinate blood. The myth is told for moral reasons and hygiene. It is not true that urinating on fire or in water can make one start urinating blood.

11. *A child should not stand when adults are seated because the elders will drain their blood and they will collapse and die later. Same as “You should not stand as a child among adults because you will drink their blood which is contaminated and die.”*

### **Application**

This myth is applied in many Zambian communities around the country. Children get to believe that standing when adults are seated may involve draining of blood and death. Furthermore, it is believed that standing as a child when elders are seated would mean draining their blood and eventually collapsing. In an event that you are unfortunate, you would die immediately.

### **Moral**

The myth is meant to teach good manners to children as they are growing up. It is considered rude and immoral for a child to stand while the elders are seated. So, in order to instil good manners, children are taught that

they would drain elder's blood which would lead to their collapsing or dying if they were standing while elderly people were seated. This instilled fear which actually saw children being obedient believing that a contrary action would spell doom for them either by collapsing or indeed dying.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because there is no connection between standing before adults and the drinking or draining of their blood. In other words, a child can actually stand before elders without any effect. In an event that a child collapsed, that would just be coincidence and a number of factors such as tiredness or anaemia could be at play.

12. *A man should not eat from the pot because he will grow breasts. The equivalent is when a man likes cooking, he will grow breasts.*

### **Application**

This myth is practised in most parts of the country and is still very active especially in rural areas where they still believe that a woman's place is in the kitchen. For those men who love eating from the pots and also cooking, they had to be discouraged as it was believed that they would be bullied by the community in doing chores meant for their wives, sisters or mothers. The belief was that such a man would eventually grow breasts hence become a woman since only women have breasts.

### **Moral**

The myth is used to share duties and responsibilities in a home. Women's duties and responsibilities revolve

around the home while men were expected to be out there fending for the family.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because there is no connection between eating from a pot and growing breasts. A man can actually cook or eat from the pot without any new growth of any other body parts on him. In an event that a man developed breasts, this could allude to other factors such as hormonal influences.

The myth resolutely indoctrinated women to be confined to the kitchen at all times while men carried out other duties such as hunting and food gathering. The myth also discouraged women from reaching for their full potential since they spent most of their time confined to the kitchen.

## ***13. Having sexual intercourse with a child cures AIDS***

### **Application**

This myth was believed and practised in a number of communities. The belief was that having sexual intercourse with a virgin or juvenile would cure one from the HIV infection. In some rural areas of the country and rarely in shanty compounds of urban areas, this practice still exists. There are some illiterates who believe that the innocence of a child would get rid of their disease.

### **Moral**

It is morally wrong and it is a taboo to involve a child in sexual activities.

## **Interpretation**

This is a typical myth because there is no connection between having sexual intercourse with the child and healing from the infection. There is no one who heals from HIV and AIDS by having sexual intercourse with the child. This practise is just abusing, traumatising and infecting the poor child with the virus and it should be discouraged by all means necessary. When one is caught in such an act, they might spend the rest of their lives in prison or something worse as enshrined in the laws of Zambia. Such practices have reduced in the recent years due to massive sensitisation and the consequent laws that have been put in place so as to punish adults that engage in such practices.

### ***14. Do not jump where the child lies because the child will never grow up***

#### **Application**

The myth is applied and believed in many parts of the country. The belief is that if one jumps over a child who is lying down or sleeping, that child would be stunted. Many communities believe this myth and usually, nobody jumps over a child who is lying down.

#### **Moral**

The myth is practised to teach good manners to members of a household not to jump over a sleeping child or where the child lies as they might hurt that child. It is a way of avoiding accidents or causing harm or injury to a baby. It is possible for one to trip onto the baby or for the baby or child to wake up from their lying position

whilst one is jumping over them. This may harm or hurt the baby in the process. So, as a way of avoiding that, people were taught not to jump over a lying or sleeping child or baby.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because there is no connection between jumping over a child and growing up. A child can still grow even if it is jumped over several times and all the body parts would still be very intact. If a child that has been jumped over several times ends up stunted, it will just be a coincidence and a number of other issues such as genetics and nutrition could be at play.

## ***15. Do not point your finger at the graveyard because your finger will remain pointing in that position***

### **Application**

This myth is applied in most parts of the country and it is still very active in most communities especially in rural parts of Zambia where some people still have strong beliefs in myths. The belief is that graveyards are sacred and respected places and they should not be pointed at anyhow. It was believed that one's fingers would remain in the pointing position long after pointing in the direction of the graveyard.

### **Moral**

The myth was intended to teach people that the graveyard was not to be disturbed considering that it was a final resting place for loved ones that had passed away and also in the same communities it is believed



the ancestors dwell there. The idea was to teach people to respect the graveyard and the dead. After all, we say that the dead must rest in peace, so, if the graveyard is not given the due respect as is the scenario in modern day urban areas, we may not expect the dead to rest in peace.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because there is no connection between pointing at the graveyard and a finger remaining in that position. Many people have pointed fingers at the graveyard many times and nothing of that nature has happened to them.

## ***16. It is not normal for a baby to grow their first teeth on the upper gum and not the lower gum***

### **Application**

This myth is widely applied in some rural parts of the country. The understanding or belief is that a child whose teeth started growing from the upper jaw was not normal and that child was a curse to the parents or family. Most parents got concerned when they saw that happening and others went out to see traditional healers for help and protection against bad omen in the family.

### **Moral**

It was believed that children whose teeth started developing from the upper jaw behaved in a strange manner compared to those who started with the lower jaw. So, first teeth growing on the upper jaw was an anomaly that could not be explained traditionally as all

children are expected to develop initially in the same way.

### **Interpretation**

It is just a myth as it is not true that children whose teeth start developing from the upper jaw do not grow up or behave abnormally. Back then, a ‘normal child’ developed their first teeth from the lower jaw. Apparently, it is being accepted today even in rural areas and it has been proved by science (**supply reference**) that it is normal and healthy for a baby to grow their first teeth even from their upper jaw. Whether a child starts developing teeth from the lower or upper teeth, has got nothing to do with their overall development and subsequent behaviour.

### ***17. If someone sweeps your feet with a broom, you will become barren or impotent***

#### **Application**

This myth is widely applied in many parts of the country especially in the rural areas where people are still illiterate. The belief is that, if one sweep through your feet, they would be sweeping away your ability to conceive or make a woman pregnant.

#### **Moral**

The myth was only meant to teach people good practices or manners. It is actually bad manners to sweep over someone’s feet regardless of whether they are standing or sitting where you are sweeping. Additionally, it is inconveniencing to the person sweeping. So, as a way of avoiding such bad behaviour or manners, people were

made to believe that sweeping someone's feet would make them unable to have children.

### **Interpretation**

It is a myth as there is no connection between sweeping someone's feet with becoming barren or impotent in life. Of all the reasons that can be given for impotency or barrenness, being swept over your feet by a broom is not one of them. So, the myth is there merely to teach good manners to the community.

- 18. *A young woman was not allowed to sew or knit on the garment (clothes) they were wearing as they would be tying their fertility***

### **Application**

This myth was applied and it is still active in most parts of the country especially in the rural areas. The belief was that as one was sewing their garment, they were also sewing their fertility in the process. Consequently, they would be unable to have children in future.

### **Moral**

The myth was meant to teach young women that it was not safe to sew or knit a garment that one is wearing or putting on as they would easily injure themselves. So in order to avoid accidents, young women were not allowed to sew on their bodies. Also, it would not be a good job in terms of neatness if one did the sewing whilst they were wearing the garment. In order to make sure that a young woman did a thorough job in sewing or mending a garment, they needed to take off garment and not sew it while it was on their body.

## **Interpretation**

This is a myth as there is absolutely no connection between sewing a garment that one is wearing or putting on and becoming barren. The myth just taught women not to mend their clothes whilst wearing them for safety reasons. Therefore, it is just a myth as it is not true in any way.

### ***19. If you whistle at night you are calling snakes and or wizards to come to you***

## **Application**

The myth is very common in the rural parts of the country and is widely applied in some communities. The belief was that in the night, whistles were a language used to attract snakes and also used by some wizards to communicate with others. So whistling at night was automatically associated with communicating either with snakes and/or wizards.

## **Moral**

This myth is meant to teach people to avoid whistling at night as it is a bad practice. A long time ago especially in villages, houses were close to each other. So whistling would disturb the peace of the other villagers. Therefore, to maintain peace and quietness, people were made to believe that whistling at night would invite snakes, witches and wizards.

## **Interpretation**

It is not true that whistling at night would invite or communicate with wizards and snakes. It is a myth

and it is not true that whistling is a language used to call wizards and there is no connection at all. However, some communities believe that whistling is somewhat similar with the hissing sounds made by some snakes.

**20. *Beating a child with a cooking stick or a broom would make them barren or impotent***

**Application**

The myth was widely applied in most parts of the country especially in the rural areas. The belief was that beating a child with a cooking stick would take away their ability to have children in their adulthood. It is alleged that a cooking stick possesses certain abilities and when it is used to beat someone, it takes away the victim's ability to have children in future.

**Moral**

This myth was meant to teach adults to manage their anger and to beat children with appropriate beating weapons such as a stick. Many times, a cooking stick is big and hard and can harm a child, which is more harmful than the intended purpose of instilling discipline. So, in order to avoid beating a child badly with a cooking stick or instilling discipline in children. A broom should equally not be used to beat a child because it is not safe.

**Interpretation**

It is just a myth as there is no link between beating a child with a cooking stick or a broom and the ability to have children later in life. Many children in different parts of the world have been beaten by cooking sticks several times but they have gone on to have children.

It is important to note that a cooking stick is something used when preparing food while a broom is used for cleaning dirty. The myth was also meant for hygiene purposes.

**21. *Children should not go to the graveyard because they will be seeing ghosts***

**Application**

The myth was widely practised in the country especially in the past. Children were not allowed to go to the graveyard whether there was a burial procession or not. It was believed that if children went to the graveyards they would see ghosts.

**Moral**

It was also believed that graveyards had different forms of spirits from the dead people which can easily go to the children with weak souls. To stop such vices from taking place, children were told not to go to the grave yards as they would see ghosts which would torment their lives followed by sickness and death. This kept many children away from going to the graveyards.

**Interpretation**

It was just a myth and it is not true that children would see or meet ghosts which would torment their lives till they die. This was done to help children keep away from graveyards which are respected places. In other words, the myth was there to prevent children from going through the trauma of seeing graves and horror stories that came with such places.

## **22. *When you eat stolen food, a woman will develop goitre while a man will develop a hump***

### **Application**

This myth was applied in many parts of the country especially in the rural parts of Zambia. It is still active and the belief was that stolen food was not to be eaten by anyone. In the case of a woman eating stolen food, they would develop goitre and men would develop a hump.

### **Moral**

The myth was there to warn and teach people not to steal or eat stolen food. Both men and women were taught not to steal. They were made to believe that eating stolen food would result in the development of either goitre or a hump. Since no one wanted to develop a goitre or a hump, people stayed away from other people's foods such as crops in the fields.

### **Interpretation**

Many people have eaten stolen food before and they have neither developed goitres nor humps as a result. In other words, it is just a myth and it is not true that one would develop a hump or goitre after eating stolen foods. The myth indirectly teaches that stealing was bad and worse still eating stolen food. Goitres and humps are diseases that result from certain conditions such as lack of iodine in the body in case of goitre.

**23. *When you see the nakedness of adults, you will develop sore eyes or swelling on the eyelid***

**Application**

This myth was believed and applied in the whole country but it is more prominent in most rural areas nowadays. The belief here is that, seeing the nakedness of adults has consequences and in this case, it develops sore eyes or swelling in one of the eye lids. This is called by different names in local languages such as *Kasokela* (Nsenga), *Sonkela* (Icibemba), *Sokela* (Silozi) or *Insokela* (Citonga) to mention but a few.

**Moral**

The moral of the myth is that it discourages children or young people from seeing the nakedness of their elders regardless of the circumstances. It also in a way teaches children some good manners. In trying to avoid getting sore eyes or a swelling on the eyelids, children keep away from seeing the nakedness of their elders.

**Interpretation**

There is no connection between developing a swelling on the eyelid and seeing the nakedness of elders. It is just a myth and it is not true that children will develop sore eyes or a swelling on the eyelid. Eyes get swollen due to a number of reasons such as infections. One can also develop a style otherwise medically known as a peridium (swollen eyelid) due to the accumulation of fluid or irritation of tissues inside the eyelid. The condition may be due to the accumulation of excess fluids or inflammation of the tissues which surround



the eye (<http://www.localhealth.com/article/eyelid-swelling>).

**24. *When a woman dreams of snakes or lizards then she is or will be pregnant***

**Application**

This myth was applied in many parts of the country both in rural and urban communities. The belief was that dreaming about snakes or lizards was not a normal thing as it was considered strange. So, for a woman to dream of snakes or lizards, it automatically meant that she was pregnant or would be pregnant sooner or later.

In other societies, a snake was linked to the penis of a man and for a woman to dream of a snake they would as well dream about sex with a man. This usually came as a result of thinking too much about a man on the part of a woman. It also meant that the woman who dreamed of snakes and lizards might have been visited by a man in form of magic at night. There are men in other communities that have sexual intercourse with women through magic.

**Moral**

The myth was used as a sign of pregnancy or an upcoming pregnancy for the woman dreaming of snakes or lizards. Morally, it is considered wrong and rare for a person to dream of snakes or lizards.

**Interpretation**

There is no connection between dreaming of snakes or lizards and becoming pregnant. Women become pregnant as a result of sex and consequent fertilisation

of the male and female sex cells. It is, therefore, just a pure coincidence for a pregnant woman to dream about snakes or lizards.

25. *At the University of Zambia, when a student touches the Graduation Statue or takes a photo from there before graduating, they will never graduate*

### **Application**

This myth was common with a number of students at the institution although it is rarely believed nowadays. The belief was that touching or indeed taking photos with the graduation statue was a bad omen and bad luck that would see one not graduating on time or indeed not graduating at all. Some undergraduate students still believe in this myth.

### **Moral**

The myth was meant to serve as an encouragement to students whilst they were studying. The myth encouraged students to work very hard and push harder towards their graduation so that they could one day pose for photos with the statue.

### **Interpretation**

It is just a myth and it is not true that taking a photo or pictures on the Graduation Statue would make an undergraduate to fail in any way.

**26. *A child who wets the bed must drink the water used to clean rice or have a live frog tied to their waist so that they can stop wetting on the bed***

**Application**

Many communities especially those in the rural parts of the country believe that wetting the bed for grown up children is a mental illness. The belief was that the water used to clean rice for cooking had a way of stopping bed-wetting. In some instances, a live frog was tied to the waist of a child who wetted the bed with a view that the moment the child wetted the bed, the frog would bite. The frog was tied to the waist of the child by an adult member of the family when they fell asleep.

**Moral**

The myth still exists for the sole purpose of training children not to wet the bed. Drinking rice water or having a frog tied around one's waist was not an option that a child would opt for. The two conditions, therefore, made boys and girls avoid urinating on the bed. In many cases, the myth worked.

**Interpretation**

There is no link between wetting the bed at night and stopping the vice by drinking water used to clean rice or having a live frog tied around the waist of a child. Even if this was done, wetting continued as it had to do with the mental developmental levels of the child.

**27. *Do not pass in between two people who are standing because you will inherit their curses***

**Application**

The myth has been in existence in many Zambian communities for a long time and, it is still very active in some parts of the country. The belief was that passing in between two people would automatically made one to get the curses carried by the two people. So people were taught to never pass in between two people at any cost.

**Moral**

The myth taught people to respect other people's privacy especially those that could be chatting or informing each other on certain issues. Passing in between them would disturb their flow of information and would be considered disrespectful. Even today, it is not morally acceptable to society for someone to pass in-between people who are standing as it is deemed to be very rude and inconsiderate.

**Interpretation**

There is absolutely no connection between passing in between two people that are standing chatting or telling stories, with acquiring the curses those people are carrying unless they are wizards who practice magic and they have done something in those lines.

**28. *When albinos die, they disappear***

**Application**

The myth was applied in many parts of the country and some communities still believe in it. The belief was that

albinos were not normal people like the rest of us who are black or white. Albinos were believed to be semi-human-semi-ghosts and so as half-ghosts, they would disappear when they die.

### **Moral**

It is morally wrong to think of albinos in such a manner because they are humans just like anybody else. The information disseminated on albinos was purely negative propaganda as it taught people discrimination of their fellow human beings and imparted some fear and negative attitude in some members of the community. People used to discriminate albinos on the basis of their skin colour and generated a number of negative stories surrounding them. This perception on albinos has been changing for the better as people are now aware that albinism is not a matter of choice but a genetic disorder.

### **Interpretation**

When albinos die they do not disappear as they are buried just like any other human being. The people that came up with the disappearing stories lacked information because they did not realise that people that give birth to albinos had no control over the whole process but it just happened. There is no way that a human body can disappear when they die unless something was done to that body.

29. *When a girl has sex before marriage, her fingers will grow thin and longer than normal and she will eventually die*

### **Application**

The myth was applied in many parts of the country and it is still very active especially in rural areas. The belief was that if a girl had sexual intercourse before marriage, she would grow long fingers than normal and she would eventually die from that abnormality.

### **Moral**

The myth was there to teach good morals and manners to young women. They were kept away from engaging in pre-marital sex and consequently, stayed away from vices such as unwanted pregnancies and or babies and sexually transmitted infections or diseases. The myth taught young ladies not to engage in sexual intercourse before marriage due to the negative outcomes associated with it.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth as there is no correlation between having sexual intercourse before marriage and becoming thin and eventually, dying

30. *When someone dies, it is never a natural death, someone bewitched and killed them*

### **Application**

This myth was widely believed across the country and some communities still believe it even today. The belief was that people did not just die, someone must have

bewitched them using magic or evil spirits/forces. Even when one dies in a road traffic accident, for example, some family members will not just accept. The belief is that someone must be responsible for the accident that has resulted in the loss of that particular life.

## **Moral**

In Zambia and other African societies, some people believed and still believe that death is caused by evil forces especially if the dead person had differences, quarrels or fights with others. Other people go to the extent of telling their opponents that ‘you will not see the sun tomorrow’ or ‘you will see as you are too young for me’. When this person who was being threatened dies even from other illnesses, people will point fingers at the one who was threatening. People were urged not to threaten anyone in the community as it was considered morally wrong. People avoided this in order to have a peaceful community.

## **Interpretation**

When someone is born, what follows next is death. The belief that there is no natural death is a mere fallacy as people do die when their time comes. Such deaths may or may not be caused by someone.

### ***31. If you talk with food in your mouth, you will develop a goitre***

#### ***Application***

This myth was widely applied in many communities of the country. The belief was that talking with food in your mouth leads one to develop a goitre. As a result,

people avoided talking whilst eating or chewing for fear of developing a goitre.

### **Moral**

The myth existed for the purpose of teaching people and society as a whole, some good table manners. It is still considered as bad manners to talk with food in the mouth. As a way of avoiding growing a goitre, people managed to keep quite at meal times hence learnt good table manners subconsciously.

### **Interpretation**

There is no link or connection between talking with food in the mouth and developing a goitre. In other words, developing a goitre is an illness or medical condition which indicates an iron deficiency and must be treated by medical experts as early as possible once detected.

## **32. *Do not walk backwards because someone will die in your family***

### **Application**

The myth was applied in some communities in Zambia and in some selected parts of Africa. The belief was that walking backwards was a sure way of cursing your family members and one would end up dying in the process.

### **Moral**

The myth was there to instil good morals and behaviour in members of those communities. Their belief was that walking backwards could result in several bad things happening such as hitting or bumping into objects or



people or falling into some ditch or drainage where one would injure themselves. So, to discourage people from having accidents and bumping into objects or other people, this myth was applied.

### **Interpretation**

It is a myth because there is no connection between walking backwards and cursing the family members to the extent of causing death. Time and again, many people have walked backwards but no one has ever died in their families.

33. *When you are bitten by a lizard or frog, you should have sexual intercourse with your sister or brother on top of the roof of the house for you to heal*

### **Application**

The myth was common in some Zambian and African communities. There are still some communities that believe in this myth. The belief was that a lizard or frog bite was poisonous and as a way of getting rid of the poison, one needed to have sexual intercourse with the brother or sister on top of the roof to be healed or cured.

### **Moral**

The moral was that the community was not encouraged to play around with creatures that did not do harm to people such as a frog and a lizard because they can easily turn against you if they are highly provoked.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth because there is no connection between having sexual intercourse with a sister or brother and

healing from a frog or lizard bite. Moreover, in many cultures world over, engaging in sexual intercourse with a brother or sister is considered a taboo and is commonly referred to as incest. Therefore, people would avoid tampering with such creatures.

### ***34. Do not sweep your house at night because you are sweeping out wealth***

#### **Application**

The myth was applied in almost all Zambian communities as well as in some selected African states. The belief was that as one sweeps their house at night, they would also be sweeping away their wealth at the same.

#### **Moral**

The myth taught members of the community to do certain things at the right time. For example, sweeping is expected to be done during the day so that you can see all the dirt that you are sweeping out because if you do it at night, you might even sweep out something that is very important. The other thing is that sweeping at night would leave dust in the house which is not conducive to health. It is a bad practice to sweep a house at night as the house may not thoroughly be aired in readiness for sleep. Therefore, as a way of teaching people good practices on home hygiene, they were taught that sweeping at night would entail sweeping their wealth.

#### **Interpretation**

It is a myth because there is no connection between sweeping at night and getting rid of your wealth. Many

times, when sweeping is done at night, some people have swept important tools and documents including money thinking it's all part of trash.

**35. *If you laugh at a disabled person, you will become lame or you will bear a disabled child***

***Application***

The myth was widely practised across the country and in some selected parts of Africa and it is still very active in several communities both rural and urban. The belief was that laughing at a disabled or lame person would make one equally become lame or eventually bear a lame or disabled child.

**Moral**

The myth was there to instil good morals in people and society. It was considered immoral to laugh at someone who was physically challenged as they did not chose to be in that state. The myth was there as a way of teaching empathy to people. Even today, teaching people that they will have a lame child or become lame helps them to respect the disabled and some are asked to put themselves in the shoes of the lame or disabled persons and imagine how they would feel.

**Interpretation**

It is a myth because there is no connection between laughing at someone and becoming lame or indeed bearing a lame child.

**36. *If your palms or part of your body itches or keeps shaking involuntarily, you will receive a gift or money***

**Application**

Many Zambians still believe in this myth both in rural and urban areas. The belief is that if your palms are itching, that is a sign of good luck and that one will sooner or later receive something very good such as money, clothes or other valuable objects.

**Moral**

The myth taught people not to worry much when certain parts of the body such as eyelids, lips, hands and palms started itching or shaking as those were a signs of good luck. It also taught people not to fear that they had been bewitched or something else they might have thought as a result.

**Interpretation**

This myth still exists even today and it is widely believed in both rural and urban areas. Practically, there is no connection between itching of any body part such as in the palm with the receiving of a gift or money. It is a long-standing belief that people have.

**37. *If you urinate in a cup that you use to drink water from, you will have twins***

**Application**

The myth was applied in some communities in Zambia especially in the rural areas. The belief was that urinating in a cup used for drinking water made one to have twins at some point in their lives.

## **Moral**

In the past, having twins in some communities was a sign of bad luck in the family. In worst case scenarios, some communities usually asked parents to kill one of the babies or punish both the mother and father for having twins because it was a sign of bad luck for the whole village. In such a community, it was a taboo for any woman to have twins. Therefore, to encourage hygiene, members of such a community were told that urinating in a cup used to drink water from would make them have twins. People avoided this practice for fear of having twins and thereby maintained hygiene in the society.

## **Interpretation**

It is a myth because there is no connection between urinating in a cup and having twins. Other than for hygiene reasons, urinating in a cup used for drinking water has got no influence on the biological processes.

### **38. *You do not eat raw mangoes because you will have tonsils or develop a goitre***

## **Application**

The myth was applied in many parts of the country and it is still being applied in some rural areas. The belief was that eating raw mangoes would make one have tonsils or develop a goitre. In an event that one ate raw mango(s) they had to rub the white mango seed on their throat to avoid developing a goitre or tonsillitis.

## **Moral**

The myth sought to teach people to have patience in life and to also keep them away from eating small raw mangoes until they were ripe. Keeping away from raw mangoes helped people to let the mangoes mature and eventually ripen so that everyone could enjoy the ripe mangoes.

## **Interpretation**

There is absolutely no connection between eating raw mangoes and developing a goitre and tonsils. In other words, tonsils or goitres do not come as a result of eating raw mangoes but due to lack of certain food nutrients such as iodine in the case of goitre while tonsils are caused by a cold environment or a viral infection.

- 39. *A pregnant woman should not have sex with the husband a few days before they deliver as the baby will be born with slippery, boiled okra like stuff***

## **Application**

The myth was applied in several parts of the country and it is still believed in some rural and urban communities. The belief was that the wife should not have sexual intercourse with the husband a few days before the wife delivers as the baby would be born covered in whitish stuff that is slippery like boiled okra. This would make health workers disgusted hence midwives would not want to attend to the woman or the baby thereby disadvantaging the mother and the baby at the same time.

## **Moral**

The myth taught pregnant women to stay away from sexual intercourse a month or weeks before delivery. Scientists argue that sperms stay in women for some days and during child delivery, many midwives were disgusted by the sight of semen and most of them rebuked women for that. Unfortunately, this only disadvantaged the pregnant women because their vaginal muscles would relax prior to child delivery when they have sexual intercourse. Scientifically, it is a proven fact that if couples continue having sex up to delivery time, it helps to relax the vaginal muscles of a woman in readiness for labour and delivery. At ante-natal classes nowadays, medical personnel do actually teach women that there is absolutely nothing wrong with having sexual intercourse with their spouses right up to the labour ward. They encourage pregnant women to continue having sex until the onset of labour unless they are really uncomfortable with it.

## **Interpretation**

This is not a typical myth per say but an issue of midwives being disgusted with the sperms during the delivery process. So, as a way to avoid seeing and handling sperms during the delivery process, this myth was coined.

**40. *Girls are not allowed to sweep dog faeces because they will develop sore breasts***

**Application**

The myth was widely applied in many parts of the country and it is still believed in some rural areas. The belief was that dog faeces were not to be touched, cleaned or played around with by girls. In the event that a girl sweeps or cleaned dogs' faeces, they would develop sore breasts.

**Moral**

The myth was coined in order to encourage boys to take part in some of the domestic chores such as cleaning dog faeces and others since girls had too many home chores to do while their counterparts just played. The moral of the myth was to teach the community the importance of division of labour and responsibility. The myth encouraged girls and boys to stick to their specific duties and roles around a home. Unlike in the modern era where chores can be shared equally between boys and girls in a home, a long time ago, chores around the home were a preserve of girls. That is, most household duties and responsibilities were mostly for girls while boys were sent off to school, to herd animals or to play. At least the scenario is changing nowadays.

**Interpretation**

This is a myth as there is no connection between cleaning dog faeces and having sore breasts. Girls and boys can both clean dog faeces without having any effects at all. As mentioned above, it was just a subtle way of getting boys involved in home chores.



**41. *A boy who breaks the virginity of a girl before marriage will become very slim and then later die***

**Application**

This myth was more prominent in many rural parts of the country and the belief was that any boy that slept with a girl or broke a girl's virginity before marriage would start losing weight slowly and eventually become so slim and later die. In the process of losing weight, society would then be able to tell what actually transpired and what caused it.

**Moral**

The myth was there to discourage boys from engaging in pre-marital sexual intercourse with girls or virgins. The myth basically taught boys not to engage in pre-marital sexual relationships thereby preserving themselves and the girls for marriage. So, boys were taught to be self-controlled with regard to engaging in illicit sexual activities bearing in mind that ideally, it is the boys who asked girls to go out and not the other way round as may be the case today.

**Interpretation**

There is no direct link or connection between having pre-marital sexual intercourse with a girl or a virgin and losing weight unless that virgin already had an illness that would make the boy slim or lose weight. People lose weight due to a number of reasons that are not in any way connected to having pre-marital sex.

**42. *When a child is playing and is putting stuff on their head, it means that there are visitors coming home***

**Application**

The myth was applied in some parts of the country and it is still believed in some parts of the country especially in the rural areas. The belief was that if a child was busy playing and putting things on their head, it was a sign that visitors were on their way. It was believed that it was not normal for a child to be put things on their head whilst playing and as such, it was considered as a sign of visitors coming.

**Moral**

Culturally, some things that people or family members do in the home setting are an indication of what might follow in the near future. At times people ignore many signs that signal something that is about to happen. In this case, kids putting stuff on their heads whilst playing simply meant that they were mimicking visitors on their way to visit that home, more or less like a telepath.

**Interpretation**

This is a premonition myth as it may or may not help predict what just happened or might happen in the future. Many times there is no direct connection between what members of the family do with what might happen in future.

**43. *When you sit on shoes, the person who will wear them will have their feet swell***

**Application**

This myth was applied and it is still believed in some communities especially in the rural areas. The belief is that if someone sat on a pair of shoes, the next person that would wear or put them on those shoes would end up with swollen feet.

**Moral**

The myth was there to teach basic mannerisms. It is bad manners to sit on a pair of shoes as that might damage the shoes and they may end up losing shape eventually. Moreover, shoes are not even comfortable if they are sat on. Since people did not want to end up with swollen feet, they stayed away from sitting on shoes, subconsciously, learning good manners in the process.

**Interpretation**

This is a myth as there is no connection at all between sitting on the shoe and having a swollen feet by the person wearing it. Many people have sat on the shoes before and worn them thereafter without having their feet swollen. Swollen feet are as a result of different causes such as lack of physical activity for a lengthy period of time or wearing an incorrect shoe size among others.

- 44. *Do not hit or beat a child with a broom because you will be hitting away their luck. (Do not beat a child with a cooking stick or a broom as you will be beating away their ability to have children later on in adulthood)***

### **Application**

This myth was widely applied in many parts of the country and is still being applied in some parts of the country. The belief was that hitting a child with a broom or cooking stick was tantamount to sweeping or beating away their luck or ability to have children later in life. That child's life would be characterised by series of bad luck in everything they would do and everywhere they would go or not being able to have children later on in life.

### **Moral**

The myth was there to teach people basic manners as well as hygiene around the home. It is common knowledge that a broom is not the cleanest of home tools around the home while a cooking stick is used for food preparation and therefore, should not be used for beating children because that would be compromising hygiene and its suitability as a cooking utensil. Beating a child with a broom or cooking stick would entail spreading some dirt to the child or to the cooking stick used for food preparation.

### **Interpretation**

There is absolutely no connection between hitting someone with a broom or cooking stick and taking away their luck or their ability to have children later on in life. One's inability to have children could be due to,

for instance, medical reasons while bad luck can just be a coincidence with unfortunate events or activities in ones life.

**45. *Do not pick broken mirror pieces to use as you will have bad luck***

**Application**

The myth was widely applied in many parts of the country and it is still applicable in some areas where people are still illiterate. The belief was that the broken mirror pieces were a sort of bad omen that would bring bad luck to anyone that picked them to use.

**Moral**

The myth was there as a way to discourage people from using broken mirror pieces thereby avoided minor accidents such as physical cuts or similar accidents that would come with the use of broken glass. So, this myth kept people away from using broken mirror pieces.

**Interpretation**

This is a myth and there is no connection whatsoever between using a broken piece of mirror and bad luck in life.

**46. *Do not look into the mirror at night because you will see a ghost***

**Application**

The myth was applied in many parts of the country and it is still applicable in some communities. The belief is that looking into the mirror at night was not good

because the mirror reflected a ghost and not the actual person.

### **Moral**

In the past, most homes had no electricity and were using kerosene lamps and handheld mirrors, it was not a good idea to use the mirror at night because the images were not so clear. As a result, people associated their unclear reflections in the mirror to ghosts. Besides, mirrors are delicate and should be handled with care, using a handheld mirror at night came with the risk of breaking the mirror in the process of using it. So, as a way to keep mirrors safe, this myth was used.

### **Interpretation**

It is a myth as there are no ghosts that appear in mirrors at night. The only thing is that, at night images in the mirror do not appear clear especially where there is inadequate lighting as was the case in the past. Otherwise, one can look into the mirror at night as many times as possible and no ghosts of any kind would be seen other than their own image reflection.

- 47. *A child must not be called by their names at night because the ghost might hear their names***

### **Application**

This myth was applied in some parts of the country and it is still believed to be so especially in the rural areas. The belief was that at night, there were ghosts looming about everywhere and therefore, calling a child's name at that time would make ghosts hear the child's name and work some magic on them. In order to protect

children from ghosts, children were not called by their names at night.

### **Moral**

The myth was there to teach good manners. It is bad manners and also a disturbance of peace for one to be calling out people's names in the night. It is also not safe to call out names in case someone or a wizard wants to harm that child through magic.

### **Interpretation**

This is a myth as there is no connection between calling names at night and the ghosts picking up those names for harm or magic.

## **48. *Wearing red or making noise when it is raining will attract lightening***

### **Application**

This myth is applied in many Zambian communities and there are still many societies that still believe in it. The belief was that the colour red or making noise whilst it was raining with thunder and lightning would cause lightning to strike the person wearing red or one who was making noise.

### **Moral**

This myth was meant to teach people not to make noise in an already rainy environment that was noisy. Similarly, wearing red was discouraged when it was raining as the people noted that most people that were struck by lightning were those who wore red clothes more than other colours. To help keep people safe, this myth was

generated. Making noise, on the other hand, was just a way of getting people to keep quiet in an event that one was busy whilst it was raining and they needed the silence to focus well.

### **Interpretation**

It is totally a myth because there is no connection between making noise and attracting lightning by wearing red clothes. Wearing red clothes is also not directly proven to be associated with lightning.

## **49. *Women are not supposed to eat fish gills as they will develop gills on their womanhood***

### **Application**

The myth was applied in many parts of the country and some communities still believe in it. The belief is that eating fish gills was a sure way to develop gills on a woman's private parts. So women were told not to eat fish gills unless they wanted to develop gills too.

### **Moral**

This myth was just a measure of hygiene. Fish gills contain so much dirt and if they are not thoroughly cleaned, one would end up eating the dirt contained therein which might affect people's health especially women.

### **Interpretation**

It is not true that eating fish gills would make one develop some gills on their private parts. In other words, there is no link or connection between eating fish gills and developing gills like stuff on one's private parts.



**50. *If you impregnate your sister or any relative, she will give birth to an albino***

**Application**

This myth was applied in some communities in Zambia and Africa in general. This belief is still very active in some communities, especially among rural societies. The belief has been that, having sexual intercourse with a sibling is a taboo and worse still, if she became pregnant, the child to be born would be an albino. (Note that in many societies, albinos were and are regarded as not being fully human). In these communities, there were many theories surrounding albinos and others perceived them as curses or a sign of bad omen. Therefore, families were forbidden to engage in sexual relations within the family.

**Moral**

This myth was meant to teach the ills of incest where sexual behaviour was concerned. It was a way of preventing incest in communities. In other words, it is considered legally wrong to involve or engage a relative into sexual relations of whatever kind.

**Interpretation**

There is no link or connection between having an albino child and having a pregnancy from relatives. In other words, an albino is not born from related family couples. Scientifically, it is not proven that children born out of incest are not 100 per cent normal. The myth was generated as a way to avoid family sexual desires within a society.

**51. *Upon reaching puberty, girls should stay away from boys because boys bite***

**Application**

This myth was applied in some communities and it is still believed especially in the rural areas. The young girls in these communities were led to believe that boys bite if they played with them especially when they were left on their own in a solitary place hence the emphasis for the girls to stay away from boys.

**Moral**

This myth sought to teach girls good morals regarding sexuality and sexual behaviour. Boys do not bite in reality just that they can impregnate girls or even infect them with sexually transmitted infections such as syphilis and diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Either way, girls would come out as losers, that is, teen mothers or sick teens without proper education and employment in the future. It was ultimately a way of keeping girls away from engaging in sexual activities with boys before marriage.

**Interpretation**

This is a myth because boys never bite girls in any context. In other words, there is no direct connection between girls playing with boys and biting. Elders and parents just use this myth to stop girls and boys from engaging in sexual relations before marriage.

- 52. *A pregnant woman or a woman who has just given birth should not ask for things from people because the child will become a thief***

### **Application**

The myth was widely applied in many parts of the country. The belief was that a pregnant woman or a woman who had just given birth was not supposed to ask for things from other people otherwise the child would become a thief.

### **Moral**

The myth was there to teach pregnant women or new mothers some basic manners. Instead of being all over the place asking for things, a pregnant woman or a new mother was supposed to concentrate on their health and that of the child and not on other things. In the case of a new mother, there was also need for one to concentrate on their recovery instead of being all over the place.

### **Interpretation**

There is no connection between the mother asking for help or things from other people and a child becoming a thief. It is a myth because children steal not because the mother during her pregnancy or after giving birth asked for things from other people but due to a number of reasons such as the decision by the child to steal.

- 53. *When a person who was married but had no child dies***  
(a) *For a woman, they were inserted with charcoal or cone cob in the vagina or they were strapped with the same on their back.*

(b) *For a man, the cone cob was inserted in the anus.*

### **Application**

The myth was widely applied and it is still believed in many Zambian and African communities especially in the rural areas. This is more prominent in many parts of the country where people are still not civilised. The belief held that the deceased person would come back as a lonely ghost to look for a child to keep them company hence children of their close relatives would die one after the other. In order to keep the deceased's ghost away from killing children, they would insert in them the cone cob or charcoal the day of burial.

### **Moral**

In communities that are still practising this myth, it is considered morally right to stop the dead from tampering with the living. The myth, unfortunately, did not teach anything positive for those communities that did not believe in the spirits of the dead. They considered this myth as discriminatory against members of the community without children. In such communities, this myth is considered as a very bad practice that should not be encouraged. The argument purported is that the dead cannot rise again and are supposed to be treated and buried with respect.

### **Interpretation**

It is a myth because the dead cannot rise again to bother the lives of the living. Barrenness is as a result of a number of reasons such as health problems or genetic factors. The myth is there to encourage everyone to

marry and have children for themselves which should keep their communities running.

**54. *Do not throw salt on fire because it would not rain that year***

**Application**

There are a few communities that believed in this myth and in the rural parts, some communities still actively believe in it. The belief is that if you put salt on fire, it would not rain that year.

**Moral**

This myth was used by adults especially grandmothers to stop children from wasting salt on fire especially when they were cooking or roasting some relish where they were expected to add salt.

**Interpretation**

There is no connection between throwing salt on fire and not raining that year. It is a myth because the rain falling is not determined by the salt that people play around with at any level such as throwing in the fire. The falling of the rain is determined by the prevailing weather patterns at any given rain season.

**55. *Do not throw back the water in the well because you might never have a child***

**Application**

The myth was applied in a few communities especially in those societies where dug out wells were the main

source of water. The belief was that water fetched from the well should not be returned as it was associated with giving one's fertility to the well.

### **Moral**

People were not encouraged to pour water back into the well as it would stir the water in the well ultimately making it dirty. The myth sought to teach people especially women to keep the water clean considering that no woman by default wanted to be barren. In many societies, especially in the African context, children are a symbol of pride.

### **Interpretation**

There is no connection between throwing water back into the well and not being able to bear a child. Fertility matters are not associated with social behaviour unless it directly affected the health system in the body. It is just a myth.

## **Chapter 4: Taboo**

### **Context**

Unlike myths which were several and used on social, cultural, political, economic and ethical education, taboos were noted in small numbers but used on more serious issues that had legal implications. Taboos were equally part of the Zambian cultures and they varied from one region to another. Most myths noted in Zambia were applicable to all ethnic groups except for a few.

### **What is a Taboo?**

A taboo is a practice or activity that is prohibited or restricted legally, socially and culturally due to beliefs and moral reasons. Infringement on taboos have severe consequences than myths. Some taboos apply to the world as a whole while others are culture specific. In other words, what may be a taboo in one culture may not be in another society.

### **The Social Status of Taboos in a Society**

Taboos are more serious than myths and in some cases, they are equivalent to laws of nations. The penal code part of the law outlines offences and the nature of punishment that should be inflicted on an offender. This is the same with taboos, as communities educate their members on what is forbidden or restricted and outlines the nature of punishment that should be expected should one disobey. The taboos discussed in this book below are a tip of an iceberg because there are several in different communities.

### **A List of Selected Taboos with their Interpretations**

The taboos provided below are just a sample, there are many more taboos in Zambia and Africa as a whole.

## ***1. A human being cannot eat human flesh***

### **Application**

This taboo is a universal one as every part of the world does not allow any person to eat human flesh in any situation or context. This taboo still exists in all parts of the world as a very serious one with fatal legal, social and cultural consequences. Everywhere the world over, people are not allowed to eat human flesh.

### **Moral**

It is morally, socially, religiously, culturally and ethically wrong to think, dream and eat human flesh. While there may be no health effects associated with eating human flesh, all communities of the world forbid it and, therefore, it is culturally and legally wrong hence a taboo.

## ***2. Eating with your father or mother-in-law in the early years of your marriage is a taboo***

### **Application**

This taboo is culture specific as other parts of the world accept this as part of their normal way of life. In certain communities, it is strictly forbidden especially in the early years of marriage. There are many communities in Africa that still believe in this taboo. However, it is worth noting that this taboo is slowly fading out in most urban areas due to globalisation.

### **Moral**

There are two main reasons that can explain this taboo in the Zambian and African context. The first reason is that it is considered disrespectful for a young couple to see



how the father and mother-in-law eats and vice-versa. The second reason is that the newly married person is somehow considered to be a stranger to the parents until such a time when they prove themselves.

3. *A human being having sexual intercourse with birds or animals (Bestiality or Zoophilia) is a taboo*

**Application**

People are not allowed to have sexual intercourse with birds, animals or other entities that are non-human everywhere in the world. It is a taboo in any way to have sexual intercourse with non-human living beings or entities. This taboo still exists in the world as people are not allowed at all cost to think or dream of acts of having sexual relations with non-humans.

**Moral**

It is morally wrong to have sexual intercourse with non-humans for a number of reasons. One prominent reason for this is health reasons such as transmission of diseases from birds or animals to humans. Additionally, some of the diseases may be hard to treat once they are in humans or vice-versa.

4. *Incest where relatives have sexual intercourse with each other such as a father or mother with the daughter or son respectively*

**Application**

This is a taboo everywhere in the world because relatives are not allowed to have sexual intercourse with each other.

This taboo still exists everywhere with the exception of a

few communities in some parts of the world where people may have sexual relations with their immediate family members and try to justify it. More often than not, such people have been admitted to psychiatric institutions for counselling and psychiatric evaluations. In Zambia, however, such people are taken to the courts of law where they are charged with incest and probably sent to prison.

### **Moral**

It is considered immoral by almost all societies in the world to have sexual relations with family members. It is also a taboo because it helps to expand relations and avoid violence and hatred between and among families and communities.

5. *A woman or man cannot have sexual intercourse with a fellow woman or man respectively (Lesbianism and homosexuality)*

### **Application**

Same gender sexual intercourse is a taboo in most societies in the world. It is also a taboo to marry or have any sexual affair with a person of the same sex. Note that in some morally corrupt societies, this practice is now normal as it has widely been accepted. It exists and has now been legalised in a few countries in the world.

### **Moral**

It is morally, socially, spiritually and mentally wrong to think or practice same sex relationships. Since time immemorial, sexual relations have always been between two people of the opposite sex. Even in nature, opposite poles attract each other for pleasure and reproduction.

Same sex relationships, on the other hand, do not ensure and promote continuity of life.

**6. *Having sexual intercourse between people that are not married is a taboo***

**Application**

In traditional societies, this taboo was upheld because it kept boys and girls away from sexual relations. Most communities ignore this taboo because young people are free to have sexual intercourse outside marriage. However, Christian communities still uphold this taboo and anyone that commits such an offence is suspended, excommunicated or disfellowshipped from the church.

**Moral**

Sexual intercourse between unmarried persons was restricted for fear of diseases or unplanned pregnancies which resulted into the birth of bastards.

**7. *It is a taboo for someone to have sex with a dead person (necrophilia)***

**Application**

This taboo is applicable everywhere in the world. It is not allowed to have sexual intercourse with a corpse.

**Moral**

It is wrong to have sexual intercourse with a dead person for ethical, hygienic and moral reasons. Sex is supposed to be carried out between two consenting adults. This simply means that the two adults have to be in their right frame of mind or indeed alive. Sex with a dead person

entails violating the rights of another person even in their death.

8. *It is a taboo for a married person to engage in sexual intercourse with another person other than their marriage partner(s)*

### **Application**

This taboo is applicable in almost all communities of the world. Adultery is forbidden as it has devastating effects on marriages such as sexually transmitted infections and children born out of wedlock.

### **Moral**

It is wrong to cheat on your spouse regardless of the reasons advanced. A number of married couples in many communities, however, have been ignoring this taboo as they practice adultery in secret. If and when the adultery is discovered, many spouses have ended up in the courts of law where they are either fined or in the worst case scenario, divorced.

9. *Having sexual intercourse with a minor (Child) in any community is a taboo*

### **Application**

This taboo is applicable everywhere in the world. Adults are not expected to involve children in sexual matters at any level. In some communities, even a mere discussion of sexually related matters is a taboo until such children have become of age.

## **Moral**

It is considered morally and biologically wrong for an adult to have sexual intercourse with a child as children's bodies are not yet ready for sexual intercourse. As we may all be aware, sex is supposed to take place between two consenting adults, meaning that they are people who are ready to engage in sexual intercourse biologically, mentally and emotionally. Paedophilia has got lasting impacts on minors such as trauma, sexually transmitted infections and lack of interest in sex and or marriage when they have become of age. In other words, paedophilia is not acceptable at any cost.

### ***10. Showing restricted body parts for sexual excitement is not allowed***

## **Application**

This taboo is culture specific as some other parts of the world accept pornography as legal and is part of their way of life. In certain communities, it is strictly forbidden for any person to show or act in pornography as it corrupts the morals of the community. There are many communities in Africa and the world that still believe in this taboo. However, it is slowly fading out in most urban areas especially in some developed countries due to moral corruption and excessive emphasis on human rights.

## **Moral**

In most communities around the world, it is considered disrespectful for adults to expose nudity to the public. Most communities do not allow pornography because they do not want to corrupt the morals and other treasured

aspects of their societies. These communities believe that it is better to restrict certain practices and body parts to the bedrooms of married couples or even single people.

### ***11. Talking about issues of menstruation, defecation and sex in public or with immediate parents is forbidden***

#### **Application**

This taboo is applicable in many parts of the African continent and in many areas of Zambia especially the rural parts. The belief is that such themes are not expected to be discussed openly in public or even with one's biological parents. In some communities, it is strictly forbidden to discuss issues to do with menstruation, defecation and sex.

#### **Moral**

It is considered morally and culturally wrong to talk about such themes in public or with one's biological parents. Most societies consider discussions of such nature a taboo since these issues border on insults of private body parts which are usually hidden. Mentioning such parts constitute an insult especially in the Zambian context and in most African communities. However, the trend has been changing slowly. Thanks to modernisation and education which have placed emphasis on the need for parents and the public to discuss such issues. This has also been necessitated in part by practices such as teen parenthood and the emergence of life threatening diseases such as STIs and HIV and AIDS among others.

## ***12. A woman marrying more than one man is a taboo***

### **Application**

Polyandry is a term used to describe a scenario where a woman gets married to more than one man. This taboo is culture specific as some parts of the world do not believe in this practice. What is more acceptable in most parts of the world is polygamy where a man marries more than one woman. In most African countries, Zambia inclusive, it is a normal practice in most ethnic groups for a man to marry more than one wife.

### **Moral**

In the Zambian context, it is immoral and unheard of for a woman to marry more than one man.

## ***13. A child quarrelling, beating or killing his or her own parents for any reason is a taboo***

### **Application**

This taboo is culture specific because other parts of the world accept this as part of their normal way of life. In certain communities, it is strictly forbidden for a child to quarrel or argue with parents in any way as it is unacceptable and such a child is considered uncultured.

### **Moral**

Such a child would be considered immoral by the community and members of the wider society. Many times in communities where children argue or quarrel with parents, they are considered immoral communities as they did not educate their children well enough to respect their parents or elders.

#### ***14. Abortion or killing of a child or any person for any reason is a taboo***

##### **Application**

Killing people for any reason anywhere in the world is a taboo. However, abortion as a taboo is culture specific as some parts of the world accept this as part of their way of life. This taboo is still applicable in Zambia and generally most parts of the world.

##### **Moral**

It is not allowed to kill a person regardless of what they may have done wrong as it is considered barbaric and inhuman. It is equally not allowed for any woman to abort their pregnancy. Although some people believe and think that killing people who are involved in war is neither a taboo nor a criminal offence, it is strictly forbidden to kill anyone in all Zambian communities. It is morally wrong or unacceptable to take away a life through killing. In fact, these acts are punishable by the Zambian law.

#### ***15. Taking your own life or suicide is a taboo***

##### **Application**

This taboo is applicable to all parts of the country. In fact, in some communities, they go to the extent of not burying the body. There are many communities in the world that still believe in this taboo. It is still very prominent everywhere in Zambia.

##### **Moral**

It is considered morally wrong to commit suicide or take one's own life in all Zambian communities. To show displeasure of the act, some community beat a corpse at a certain point before the burial.



- 16. *A woman should not serve a man one, two or three pieces of chicken or meat as it is considered an insult. A similar version is (Do not serve a male in-law three pieces of chicken or meat and equally, do not serve them certain pieces of chicken such as a neck)***

### **Application**

This taboo was applicable in most parts of the country in the past. It is still practised in some Zambian communities. The belief has been that, serving any man or male in-laws one, two or three pieces of chicken or meat was equivalent to displaying their sexual organs thus the penis and the two balls that constitute testicles thereby, insulting them. Similarly, it was believed that certain pieces of chicken such as the neck were considered equivalent to a penis of a man. These are part of traditional teachings by Alangizi and other women.

### **Moral**

Traditionally, there were different ways of communicating with the in-laws especially through symbols, signs and actions. Serving them three pieces of meat or a chicken neck, for instance, was a sign of disrespecting them or insulting them for the wrong that they might have committed in the past.

## **Why Myths and Taboos vary Across Regions**

Myths and Taboos are socially constructed entities that the older generation uses to teach and control behaviour through treats, social embarrassment, stigma and labels in various communities. Myths and taboos vary across communities due to differences in

topographical and geographical areas. For instance, communities that live in mountainous regions, forests, flood plains, plateaus, dissects, and valleys are likely to create myths and taboos that depict their environments. Myths and taboos also vary due to differences in individual experiences and orientations. Each individual in a community may have different orientations and perceptions of issues in the society. These variations may lead to the creation of wise teachings and restrictions. Cultural beliefs and values can also trigger variations in social and cultural teachings. What one community may treasure, may not be the case in another. For instance, it is forbidden in most community around the world to have sexual relationships between and among relatives consciously (incest), but, in some communities such as a named minority community in India, it is expected that, when a girl child becomes of age, the father is supposed to orient her sexually and socially into a man's world as part of her preparation for marriage in future. Similarly, issues of homosexuality and lesbianism are not allowed in some communities such as Zambia and Malawi, but they are allowed in America and other countries. This imply that, what may be accepted in one community, may not be in another.

## **Chapter 5: Cultural Laws in Zambia**

### **Legal Position of Culture in Zambia**

Zambia has several legal instruments or frameworks that govern different aspects of culture and its related matters. These laws serve as reference points as far as issues of culture and heritage are concerned. The evolution of prominent cultural related legal frameworks and laws in Zambia can be traced from the 1900s when Zambia (Northern Rhodesia then), was ruled by the British South African Company. The following are among the laws or legal frameworks related to culture and heritage in Zambia. The Witchcraft Act (1914), Chiefs Act (1965), the National Museums Act (1966), the National Archives Act (1969), the National Heritage Conservation Commission Act of (1989), the National Arts Council of Zambia Act (1994), the Copyright and Performance Rights Act (1994), the Penal Code Act (1955), and the Constitution of Zambia (1996). All these laws and legal frameworks are related to culture.

Chapter 90 of the Laws of Zambia is on Witchcraft. The Witchcraft Act of 9<sup>th</sup> May 1914 stated that, it was “An Act to provide for penalties for the practice of witchcraft; and to provide for matters incidental to or connected therewith”. The Witchcraft Act has undergone several amendments. For instance, there are amendments number 5 of 1914, 47 of 1948, 31 of 1952, and 47 of 1963 with Government Notices numbers 493 of 1964, 24 of 1977, 26 of 1993 and Act No. 13 of 1994. The Act provides guidelines on issues of witchcraft and how they should be treated.

The Chiefs Act of 1<sup>st</sup> November 1965 provides guidelines on issues related to chiefs and chieftainesses in terms of recognition, appointment and functions. The Act states in part:

An Act to make provision for the recognition,

appointment and functions of Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs; for the exclusion of former Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs from specified areas in the interests of public order; for the appointment and functions of Kapasus; and for matters incidental to or connected with the foregoing.

The Chiefs Act has also undergone amendments. For instance, there are amendments number 67 of 1965, and 13 of 1994.

The National Museums Act (1966) is an Act to provide for the establishment, control, management and development of National Museums and for matters incidental to or connected therewith. The act support the preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage in Zambia. It has passed through amendments number 10 of 1966, 13 of 1966, and 13 of 1994.

The National Archives Act of 14<sup>th</sup> November 1969, is an Act to provide for the preservation, custody, control and disposal of public archives, including public records of Zambia; and to provide for matters incidental to or connected with the foregoing. The act had amendments number 44 of 1969 and 13 of 1994. It was further repealed and replaced by the National Archives of Zambia Act, Cap 175 of 1995.

The National Heritage Conservation Commission Act Of (1989) which was repealed and replaced by the Natural and Historical Monuments and Relics Act defines the functions and powers of the Commission; to provide for the conservation of ancient, cultural and natural heritage, relics and other objects of aesthetic, historical, prehistorical, archaeological or scientific interest; to provide the regulation of archaeological excavations and export of relics; and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing.

Other Acts that impinge on Zambian culture include the

National Arts Council of Zambia Act (1994), the Copyright and Performance Rights Act (1994), the Penal Code Act (1955), and the Constitution of Zambia (1996). The latest are the National Cultural policy (2013) and the bill on Protection of Traditional knowledge, Genetic Resources and Expression of 2016. All these Acts are legal instruments related to Zambian cultures and heritage.

The National Cultural Policy (2003) stresses the recognition that culture can be a bedrock for national development and planning in Zambia and that, culture plays a critical role in facilitating national sustainable development.

The 2016 bill on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources and Expression provides guidelines on treatment, access, and use of community resources.

### **Some International Organisations on Culture**

Zambia committed itself to respecting and adhering to international agreements, laws and charters that do not conflict with the Zambian values, traditions and laws. The global conventions that relate to culture include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) conventions. These organisations support and promote people's cultures at different levels. The Zambian constitution as well grants basic rights and prescribes rights and duties of the state and obligations by citizens. For instance, article 19 gives freedom of conscience, article 20 on freedom of expression, and article 21 on freedom of assembly and association. All these issues are also in international charters and they relate to culture and traditional affairs.

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## GLOSSARY

***Acculturation*** - Cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact. It should be noted that individuals from culturally diverse groups may desire varying degrees of acculturation into the dominant culture.

***Acculturation Difficulty*** - A problem stemming from an inability to appropriately adapt to a different culture or environment. The problem is not based on any coexisting mental disorder

***Afisi*** - This is a man chosen to test the sexual skills of initiated girls towards the end of chinamwali initiation ceremony. He takes as many girls as he can to try out their sexual skills via sexual intercourse. He also plays other roles in the lives of the girls after wards such as helping and guiding them.

***Affliction Rituals*** - The affliction type of rituals and ceremonies, are those that are performed to placate or exorcise preternatural beings or forces believed to have afflicted villagers with illness, bad luck, gynecological troubles, severe physical injuries, and the like.

***Agnosticism*** - Is having reached no conclusion whether or not God exists. At first glance, a person who is investigating the entire “God” concept for the first time might conclude that all of these diverse deities are purely human creations. That is, God did not create humanity -- humanity created Gods.

***Animism*** - The belief that all entities have life force, a soul or mind. For example, rocks, trees and mountains have an awareness of their surroundings.

**Assimilation** - This is when a culture of a minority group is taken in or absorbed up into a main or major cultural body.

**Atheism** - the total rejection of the possibility that God exists.

**Bigotry** - The behaviour, attitude, or beliefs of a person who holds blindly and intolerantly to a particular creed, opinion, etc.; intolerance; prejudice.

**Calendrical Ceremony** - Refers to an event of social significance that takes place after a period of time such as a year, which is measurable by a calendar year. Similarly, calendrical ritual equally take place after a calendar year.

**Calendrical Ritual** - A ritual performed after a period of time that can be traced on a calendar year. [Ref. *Calendrical Ceremony*].

**Ceremony** - A ceremony is an event of social, spiritual, ritual, and religious significance performed on special occasions celebrating or landmarking achievement, anniversary, passage of time, coronation and presidential, atonement and purification, graduation, dedication, oaths of allegiance, initiation, marriage, funeral, birth ceremonies and others.

**Chinamwali Initiation Ceremony** - This is also known as Chisungu initiation ceremony where a girl that sees her first menstrual cycle is secluded for a week to be initiated into adulthood. In some communities such as the Ngoni people, Chinamwali is done even before a girl sees her first menstrual cycle. Young girls of certain ages are taken to some place for about a month teaching them various issues such as cleanliness, sexuality, marriage life, the social position of a woman in the society and in the home and others. Gender and sexual identities through Chinamwali are created and this in turn, influences the

social status of women in the society. Uninitiated women are treated as uncultured, segregated and considered immoral by members of the community.

**Communication** - Is the sharing or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

**Conservation** - Is the preservation and protection of something such as natural resources to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect, water conservation, and wildlife conservation.

**Contingent Rituals** - Are ceremonies that reflect life and character change or life-crisis in some cases. Contingent rituals are performed at birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, death, and so on, to demarcate the passage from one phase to another in the individual's life-cycle.

**Culture** - A way of life of people in a society. Culture is an integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting, roles, relationships and expected behaviours of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations; culture is always changing.

**Cultural Competence** - The ability of individuals to use academic, experiential, and interpersonal skills to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. Cultural competency implies a state of mastery that can be achieved when it comes to understanding culture. It encompasses individuals' desire, willingness, and ability to improve systems by drawing on diverse values, traditions, and customs, and working closely with

knowledgeable persons from the community to develop interventions and services that affirm and reflect the value of different cultures.

***Cultural Diversity*** - Differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, physical ability, language, beliefs, values, behavior patterns, or customs among various groups within a community, organization, or nation.

***Culturally Appropriate*** - Exhibiting sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities, and demonstrating effectiveness in translating that sensitivity to action through organizational mission statements, communication strategies, and services to diverse cultures.

***Cultural Awareness*** - Recognition of the nuances of one's own and other cultures.

***Cultural humility*** - Is a life long process of self-reflection and self-critique. Cultural humility does not require mastery of lists of “different” or peculiar beliefs and behaviors supposedly pertaining to different cultures, rather it encourages to develop a respectful attitude toward diverse points of view.

***Cultural Identity*** - Cultural identity refers to the inside feeling of belonging to a particular culture, generation, social class, nation, group, ethnic community, religion and others.

***Cultural literacy*** - Is the knowledge individuals possess about the culture of their environments and selected cultural aspects outside their vicinity.

***Cultural sensitivity*** - Understanding the needs and emotions of your own culture and the culture of others.

***Daily Ceremony*** - Also known as regular ceremonies or ritual

are those events that are performed regularly or on a daily basis. These events may include but not limited to the following; accompanying the daily offering of food and libations to deities or ancestral spirits or both.

***Deism***-The belief that God exists, but is remote, unknowable and uninvolved. It is believed that God created the universe, set it going, left, but has not taken an active interest in it since.

***Discrimination*** - The act of discriminating or distinguishing differences; the ability to make or perceive distinctions, perception, and discernment; a showing of partiality or prejudice in treatment; specific action or policies directed against the welfare of minority groups.

***Divinatory rituals*** - Are ceremonies performed by people such as political authorities to ensure the health and fertility of human beings, animals, and crops in their territories.

***Diversity*** - A quality, state, fact, or instance of being different or dissimilar; difference; variety.

***Duotheism (Bitheism)*** - The belief in a dual divinity (e.g. one good and another evil or one female and another male)

***Ethnic*** - A term relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.

***Enculturation*** - This refers to all forms of learning and acquisition of awareness of social behaviour in a particular group.

***Ethnicity*** - How one sees oneself and how one is “seen by others as part of a group on the basis of presumed ancestry and sharing a common destiny ...” Common threads that may tie one to an ethnic group include skin color, religion, language, customs, ancestry, and occupational

or regional features. In addition, persons belonging to the same ethnic group share a unique history different from that of other ethnic groups. Usually a combination of these features identifies an ethnic group. For example, physical appearance alone does not consistently identify one as belonging to a particular ethnic group.

***Ethnocentrism*** - The emotional attitude that one's own ethnic group, nation, or culture is superior; an excessive or inappropriate concern for racial matters.

***Ethnography*** - Is the systematic description of ways of life, customs, or world views of human groups.

***Ethnoligitis*** - Is depression, dejection or irritability caused by the strain of psychological accommodation due to living in a culture other than one's own.

***Ethnology*** - Is the formal or scientific study of ways of life, customs or world views of human groups.

***Henotheism*** - Belief in many deities of which only one is the supreme deity.

***Homophobia*** - Irrational hatred or fear of homosexuals or homosexuality.

***Initiation Ceremony*** - The initiation ceremony(ies), are events of social significance that orients the younger generations or individuals into another phase or life style. These may include ceremonies that introduce girls and boys into adulthood, adults into witchcrafts, cult, priesthoods devoted to certain deities, into religious associations, or into secret societies.

***Literacy*** - Is knowledge, competencies and skills in a particular field.

***Makishi Dance*** - The Makishi dance of the Luvale people is a

performance that usually takes place at the end of the Mukanda ceremony, an annual initiation ritual for boys between the ages of eight and twelve in most cases.

***Matrilineal*** - A kinship principle based on the line of the mother. A related term is matrilineage which also refers to a line of descent as traced through women on the maternal side of a family. In some cultures, membership of a specific group is inherited matrilineally. For example one is a Bemba by tribe, if one's mother (rather than one's father) is from a Bemba ethnic group.

***Matrilocality*** - Customary residence with the wife's relatives after marriage, so that children grow up in their mother's community. This is common in a few ethnic groups in Zambia.

***Monism*** - The belief that what people perceive as deity, humanity and the rest of the universe is in fact all of one substance - that divisions among the body, mind, flesh, spirit, material, physical are not real. All are simply aspects of one being.

***Monotheism*** - The belief in a single God. Examples include Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism). Within Christianity, most denominations consider themselves to be monotheistic, even though they teach the existence of three separate persons in the Trinity. Some believe that religiously inspired violence is often found among monotheists

***Multilingualism*** - This refers to the ability of an individual speaker or a community of speakers to communicate effectively in three or more languages. The term is contrasted with monolingualism, the ability to use only one language. A person who can speak multiple languages is known as a polyglot or a multilingual.

**Multiculturalism** - Is the co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles.

**Myth** - A myth is a story or saying generated by a particular community and it is widely held as truth but it is a false belief or idea and many times, it is hard to prove its assertion in a real physical world.

**Nshima** - This is also known as Sima or Nsima, which refers to one of the major meals, most popular, most preferred food in Zambia and other Southern African countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia and others.

**Panentheism** - The belief that the entire universe -- substances, forces and laws -- is God; the universe is God's body. God transcends the universe as well. (e.g. some components of New Age belief).

**Pantheism** - The belief that every existing entity (humans, animals, etc.) together, is a part of God. They do not see God as having a personality, the ability to make decisions, etc. Rather, God is the very spiritual essence of the entire universe.

**Patriarchy** - Political system ruled by men in which women have inferior social and political status, including basic human rights.

**Patrilineage** - Line of descent as traced through men on the paternal side of a family each of whom is related to the common ancestor through males. Synonym is agnation and opposite is matrilineage.

**Patrilocality** - Customary residence with the husband's relatives



after marriage, so that children grow up in their father's community.

***Polytheism*** - Belief in many Gods and Goddesses: (e.g. various Neopagan religions. Hinduism is often looked upon in the west as a polytheistic religion).

***Power*** - The ability to control others; authority, sway, influence; a person or thing having great influence, force, or authority.

***Prejudice*** - Implies a preconceived and unreasonable judgment, or opinion, usually an unfavorable one marked by suspicion, fear, or hatred.

***Race*** - Variations in the colour of the skin, physical appearance and other traits that separate the people of the world into groups. Normally influenced by social, political and biological make up.

***Racism*** - A doctrine or teaching, without scientific support, that claims to find racial differences in character, intelligence, etc.; that asserts the superiority of one race over another or others, and that seeks to maintain the supposed purity of a race or the races; any program or practice of racial discrimination, segregation, etc. based on such beliefs.

***Regular ceremony or ritual*** - These are events or ceremonies that takes place regularly. [Ref. Daily Ceremonies].

***Religious Discrimination*** - Religious discrimination is treating someone differently because of what they do or don't believe. Religious discrimination is closely related to racism, but there are differences in how it is expressed and how it is treated in law.

***Rites of Passage*** - Culturally defined activities (rituals) that mark a person's transition from one stage of life to another. These aim to help participants move into new social roles, positions or statuses. Initiation, Puberty, Wedding

and Childbirth are examples of rites of passage.

**Ritual** - A ritual is a ceremony or action performed in a customary way with outlined step by step actions.

**Sexism** - This refers to prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender against women or men and girls or boys.

**Sexual Orientation** - A person's habitual sexual attraction to, and activities with: persons of the opposite sex, heterosexuality; the same sex, homosexuality; or both sexes, bisexuality.

**Traditional ceremonies** - These are events and practices of social significance that take place in specific regions of Zambia, reflecting the traditions, historical background, morals, and values of the host communities. For most Zambians, traditional ceremonies refers to calendrical ceremonies such as Kuomboka, Nc'wala, Ukusefya pang'wena and Lwiindi ceremonies. However, traditional ceremonies also include other practices such as Chinamwali and spiritual practices.

**Tribes** - People or nation belonging to the same stock; a division of humankind possessing traits that are transmissible by descent and sufficient to characterize it as a distinctive human type.

**Trinity** - Belief in a single deity who has three aspects (e.g. historical Christianity, whose members generally believe in Trinity formed by a Father, Son and Holy Spirit who they view as being a single entity). Christians often look upon God as being omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and omnibeneficient (all knowing, all powerful, all present).

**Undisclosed ceremonies or rituals** - Are those events of social

significance that are performed by secret societies such as nyau dancers, makishi dancers, alangizi women and some traditional marriage counsellors. undisclosed ceremonies are common in most African communities among secret societies.

***Universal*** - Something that exists in every culture around the world.

***Zambian Cultural Identity*** - Refers to all aspects of culture that are accredited, accepted and approved by the general populace, representing Zambian practices.

***Zambian Culture*** - Refers to a way of life of all Zambians or most Zambians

***Zambian Cultures*** - Refers to cultures from different ethnic groups including those practices that are unique to one ethnic group. All life styles or practices taking part within the borders of Zambia are part of Zambian cultures.

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