

EXPLORATION OF *SIKENGE* AND GIRLS' SCHOOLING: A CASE OF THREE
SELECTED SCHOOLS IN MONGU DISTRICT.

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the award of the degree of Master of
Education in Educational Psychology, Department of EPSSE.

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

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Declaration

I, MusoleMusole, do hereby declare that this dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia for the award of a Master of Education degree in Educational Psychology has never been submitted at any learning institution, that it is my own work, and that all cited sources have been acknowledged.

Signature:.....

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Approval

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

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Abstract

The *Sikenge* rite of initiation for the Lozi girls is not adequately explored. The few studies conducted on *Sikenge* such as Chama (2006), and Mundumuko (1990) did not adequately give in-depth information on the perceptions of girls who went through *Sikenge* and their attitudes towards schooling. For instance, Mundumuko's (1990) study indicates the decline of *Sikenge*. Therefore, this study sought to have an in-depth understanding of the perceptions surrounding the girls who went through *Sikenge* and how these girls perceived schooling by drawing a sample size of 9 initiated girls; 3 initiators, and 3 teachers in Mongu District of western Zambia. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data which were transcribed from the voice recorder and analysed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis method.

Three themes emerged as perceptions surrounding the girls who went through *Sikenge*. These were: Perceptions of initiated girls about themselves; societal perceptions of the initiated girls; and the attitude of initiated girls towards schooling. Each of these themes had sub-themes beneath it. Perceptions of initiated girls about themselves had the following sub-themes: initiation brings about maturity; initiation brings about a new identity; and initiated girls look down on the uninitiated. Societal perceptions of the initiated girls included the following sub-themes: initiated girls are the cream of society; initiation brings about mastery of cultural values; and acquisition of sexual knowledge in readiness for marriage. The attitude of initiated girls towards schooling included the following sub-themes: school attendance during and after initiation; initiated girls' performance at school; and initiated girls seek adult attention.

The findings have supported the major argument that this dissertation had adopted, which was, the rite of *Sikenge* was quite complex, therefore it needed a holistic approach. In view of this, the present study had recommended that all stakeholders should work in harmony to help girls who went through initiation accomplish their formal education.

Dedication

In loving memory of my late father, Mr A. Musole, (MHSRIP), I would like to dedicate this dissertation to him.

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I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to God Almighty, for being with me throughout this academic pilgrimage. There have been many trials and tribulations, numerous to mention, from the time I embarked on this programme; but through God's grace, guidance, and protection, I have managed to sail across the threatening tides and waves of the deep sea. Thank you, Lord!

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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CBD- Central Business District

DEBS-District Education Board Secretary

FAWEZA- Forum for African Women Educationists of Zambia

IPA- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

MOESVTEE-Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational and Early Education

PTA- Parents Teachers Association

TB- Tuberculosis

UNFPA- United Nations Fund for Population Activities

UNIP- United National Independence Party

URT- United Republic of Tanzania

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter briefly introduces the historical background of initiation rites and their influences on the behaviour of girls who go through them. The study, in particular, focused on *Sikenge*, the female initiation rite practised among the Lozi people of western Zambia. The role of *Sikenge* and its importance has been briefly given. The chapter proceeds by presenting the statement of the problem, followed by the purpose of the study, the objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the delimitations and limitations of the study have been highlighted. Finally, the chapter ends with definitions of operational terms. The next section presents the background of the study.

1.1 Background Information

No matter where or when we inquire into the history of humanity, as Farrant (1980) argues that evidence for their possession of knowledge, skills, and customs that are the result of deliberate teaching can be found. From this argument, it could be concluded that, though schooling was a comparatively recent feature of man's society, education dates as far back as the creation of humanity. Africa, before the advent of the western education, had a form of education which was responsible for the inculcation of good morals, values, and skills into her people. The education imparted into the young people gave life-long teachings that equipped them with survival skills. Among such traditional teachings that were passed on orally were initiation rites, dances and religious ceremonies. In this regard, the teachings were in conformity with Durkheim's (1911) definition of education, as cited by Kelly (1999, p.9), that "Education is the action exercised by the adult generations on those who are not yet ready for social life. Its purpose is to induce in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by society as a whole and the social environment for which he is particularly intended."

According to Van Gennep (1960), virtually all human societies use ceremonial rites to mark the significant transition in the social status of individuals. These rites highlight and validate the changes in a person's status particularly on the occasion of such life transforming events as birth, puberty, marriage, parenthood, and death. In her work on initiation, Brown (1963; 1970) observes that the initiation rites bestow on the young person undergoing them a new identity together with a set of responsibilities. As Moore, Sanders, and Kaare (1999) indicate initiation rites represent the final step to adulthood and the ultimate loss of the child's blamelessness. They are an important moment of socialization of individuals and the acquisition of gender, sexual and linguistic or ethnic identities. Children receive information about etiquette, deportment, sexuality, death, and sometimes about history (Beidelman, 1993; Spring, 1976; White, 1953;).

The initiation school, which is held in a secluded corner of the bush, marks the transition from childhood into adulthood (Snelson, 1974). During this time as Snelson adds, detailed lessons and instructions were passed on to the *mwalyanjo*. For the Lozi boy, *milaka* was their 'school', while the girl was/is still initiated through *Sikenge* (Mundumuko, 1990). Tuupainen (1968) states that initiation rites for girls are one of the most important practices, though oldest rituals in most ceremonies. There were a number of virtues that a girl child learns from these rituals. Intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical and economic matters were some of the virtues inculcated into the young woman during these rites.

In Zambia, like in other patriarchal societies, initiation rites (see Raising, 2001; Richards, 1956) are means through which female adolescents are initiated to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. They significantly play a vital role in as far as behaviour modification is concerned. Each ethnic grouping has a way in which they initiate their young ones though the function is the same. As such, each culture has a special term for the initiation rite. For instance, the Lozi call the female rite of passage *Sikenge* and the initiate *Mwalyanjo*, the Tonga of southern Zambia call it *Nkolola* and the initiate *moye*, the Mbunda call it *Litungu* and the initiate *mwali*, while the Lunda of north Western call it *Mukanda* and the initiate *kankang'a*. The Bemba speaking people call it

Ichisungu and the initiate *nachisungu*. Though the ceremonial rites differ in the way they are conducted among these different ethnic groups, the goal is one and the same: to inculcate the valued norms of society and to prepare the young women for their marriage and motherhood roles.

The rite of *Sikenge* has been practised by the Lozi people of western Zambia from time immemorial. The young girl, who undergoes this rite as indicated above, is called *mwalyanjo* or *mwalanjo* depending on the dialect. During this time, the girl is tutored on several social attributes as society's general view is that a girl/woman is defined by her relationship to a man and not as an independent person in her own right (Kelly, 1999). In line with this, Lemrini (2000) states that African cultures tend to socialise girls and women to such an extent that they begin to serve men as wives and mothers. *Sikenge*, like other traditional ceremonies, plays a vital role in shaping and moulding the young lady's behaviour. It teaches the girl, among other things, respect for elders, and health matters on how to conduct herself when she experiences menses, virtues of a woman, how she should take care of her home and future husband. In this regard, *Sikenge* is in line with Baylies' (2000) observation that traditional ceremonies have educational purposes. The rite culminates into a jubilant ceremony known as *Siyomboka*, where people from far flung areas converge to witness the newly crowned young lady crossing into womanhood. During this occasion, the girl's newly acquired status is validated.

Research has shown that traditional initiation rites have influences on the behaviour of the girls that go through them (Lincoln, 1991). However, for the girls that went through *Sikenge*, there seemed not to be adequate documented information about the perceptions surrounding them and their behaviour towards schooling after going through the rite. It is against this background that this study was conducted to establish the perceptions of the girls who go through *Sikenge*. Through the analysis of data, three main themes emerged. The first, being how girls perceived themselves after they had gone through *Sikenge*. Secondly, how girls were perceived by society after going through *Sikenge*, and lastly, the girls' attitude towards schooling after they had gone through *Sikenge*. The subsequent section presents the problem that this study sought to investigate.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Though studies had been carried out to investigate the female initiation rites and their importance (e.g. Brown 1970; Lincoln, 1991; Van Gennep, 1960), there seemed to be scanty documented information on the perceptions surrounding the girls who went through the Lozi female initiation rite- *Sikenge*. How the initiated girls perceived themselves; how they were perceived by society; and how they perceived the formal schooling, had not been fully explored. As a result, scholars depended much on studies done from other cultures such as those done by Raisings and Richards on the teachings, the values and the importance of these traditional rites (e.g. Raising, 2001; Richards, 1956).

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of girls who had gone through *Sikenge* and assess how they perceived schooling.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To assess how girls perceive themselves after going through the *Sikenge* initiation rite.
2. To establish society's perceptions of the girls who have gone through the *Sikenge* initiation rite.
3. To investigate the attitude of girls towards schooling after they have gone through the *Sikenge* initiation site.

1.5 Specific research questions

The following were the specific questions for this study:

1. How do girls perceive themselves after they have gone through *Sikenge*?
2. How does society view girls who have gone through *Sikenge*?
3. What is the attitude of girls who have gone through *Sikenge* towards schooling?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study may provide a better understanding of the perceptions surrounding the girls who had gone through the *Sikenge* initiation rite of the Lozi people. It was hoped that the findings of this study would enable relevant stakeholders in particular the educators, parents, planners, and law makers, to develop effective and efficient skills to handle these young ladies. Additionally, the study may attract further research in the field of traditional practices in general and initiation rituals in particular.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The research was guided by the Social Identity theory and the Self Categorization theory. Both theories have overlapping concepts in their understanding of the self (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Social Identity theory focuses on the causes and consequences of identifying with a social group or category; while Self categorization theory focuses on the causes and consequences of identifying with a particular role ‘*identification*’ (Burke & Stets, 1998). A person realises that he or she belongs to a social category or in- group (self-categorization) (Hogg & Abrams, 1988), therefore, he or she needs to behave as expected by that in-group s/he belongs to. Any person who differs from the self, is labeled the out-group. Stryker (1980) argues that self-categorization is relevant to the formation of one’s identity in which categorization depends upon a named and classified world.

A study conducted by Tajfel (1982) reveals that in the identity formation process, the persons determine who and what they are by associating themselves with the bigger group of people with whom they intermingle within their social setting. On the other hand, in the identity theory the core of an identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of the role and the incorporation into the self, of the meaning and its importance (Burke & Tully 1977; Thoits, 1986). These expectations form a set of standards that guide the behaviour (Burke, 1991; Burke & Reitzes 1981).

In addition, individuals view themselves in terms of meaning imparted by a structured society (Mc Call & Simmons 1978; Stryker 1980; Turner et al. 1987). Correspondingly,

Haslam, Knippenberg, Platow, and Ellemers (2003) and Munsaka (2009) point out that individuals identify with others in the in-group and see things from the perspective of the group. Because they have a role in society, they act to fulfill the expectations of the role. Tajfel (1982) and Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell (1987), further argue that because individuals know that they belong to a particular group, their behaviour equally changes to suit the expectations of such a group. In-group- based identities, the uniformity reveals itself in so many ways which may be categorised along cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural lines (Hogg & Abrams 1988; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner 1994). Individuals who identify with the group feel a strong attraction to the group as a whole; free from individual connections within the group. This in itself may provide an understanding why the newly initiated girls behave in a particular way; they feel they have a duty and responsibility to serve that group they belong to. However, the truth about this is not yet known.

In line with the theories guiding this study, the findings of this study established that the girls that went through *Sikenge* formed social groups among themselves as in- groups where they discussed, among other issues they learnt in *Sikenge*, how to handle a man during love making. But for the uninitiated girls, because they were perceived to be ignorant of so many cultural values imparted during *Sikenge*, they were looked down upon as they were considered to be immature culturally.

1.8 Delimitations

The current study was conducted in three (3) primary schools of Mongu District which were purposively selected from one district. The three schools were Mandanga, Kalangu, and Malengwa. These schools were selected due to their location. They were surrounded by people that still held traditional culture highly and they practised *Sikenge*; so, they became suitable for study.

1.9 Limitations

There is only one major limitation in this study. Being a qualitative study that used a small sample size (15 participants), the results cannot be generalized to the whole population of Western Zambia.

10.0 Operational definition of terms

Chilombola: Initiation counselors among the Luvala or Mbunda people of Western Zambia.

Culture: The learned behaviour of a group of people that is generally considered to be the tradition of that people and is transmitted from generation to generation.

Initiation: A rite of passage ceremony marking entrance or acceptance into a group or society

Lozi: The largest and dominant ethnic group in Western Zambia.

Menarche: The first menstrual period, or the first menstrual bleeding indicating transition from girlhood to womanhood.

Mwalyanjo: is the Lozi female initiate

Ndola: the Kunda female initiate.

Perception: the impression or interpretation of something, in this case, an initiated girl in order to represent and understand her behaviour.

Ritual: a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a confinement and performed according to set sequence.

Sikenge: the Lozi female initiation rite

Siyeke: another term for *Sikenge*

Siyomboka: is the Lozi female initiation ceremony.

Taboos: Vehement prohibition of an action/behaviour based on the belief that such action/behaviour is sacred for an ordinary person to undertake, under threat of supernatural punishment. Breaking a taboo is usually considered offensive by society.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

In this chapter, the researcher's main objective was to review studies conducted on female initiation rites with special interest in the perceptions surrounding the girls who came of age, the values, virtues, and morals inculcated into them during such occasions. The literature review is categorised into three views: the global view, African view, and the Zambian's in general and the literature on *Sikenge* of western Zambia in particular. By reviewing the literature, the researcher tried to identify which gaps had been left out so that they could be bridged (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The next section gives the global view of initiation rites.

2.2 The global view of initiation rites

Virtually, all human societies use ceremonial rites to mark significant transition in the social status of individuals. Ceremonial rites, as Van Gennep (1960) observes, are rites of passage that mark a young person's movement from childhood into adulthood. Cosmological ideas are passed on to the initiate during the initiation rite (Mwanakatwe, 1974; Raising, 2001). These rites highlight and validate changes in a person's status, especially on the occasion of such life transforming events such as birth, puberty, among others. Brown (1963, 1970) argue that, these puberty rites bestow on the young person being initiated, a new social identity together with a new set of social roles. Van Gennep (1960) discovered that the rites of passage usually have universal features and have three stages: separation, transition, and reincorporation. In these rites, individuals were symbolically killed, and nurtured as they took on new social statuses and then reborn into society as new and different persons (Manika, Vizedom, & Gabriellee, 1960).

Exemplifying the importance of the initiation rite, Manika et al. (1960) cite the Okiek people of Kenya who shave the young women's heads and remove their eyebrows on the first day of the Koroseek initiation ceremony. The shaving of the young woman's head and removal of her eyebrows signify that the girl undresses the old ways of living

and embraces the new and acceptable life. In this way, these rituals and ordeals are designed to redefine the initiate's social standing.

Lincoln's (1991) book, *Emerging from the Chrysalis*, offers a detailed treatment of women's initiation rites among five cultures, which included the Tiyyar of South India, the Navajo, the Tiv of West Africa, and the Tukuna of North west Amazon. In these cultures, male dominance was high. Therefore, women's initiation rites did not only involve a transformation of the self but also of the cosmos. Lincoln further argues that women and girls' pattern of initiation involves enclosure, metamorphosis, and emergence. According to Lincoln, women and girls are enclosed during initiation; they undergo metamorphosis when they menstruate and emerge to unite with the entire family again during the celebration that culminates the whole process of the rite. Lincoln draws his analogy from the cocoon where the changes happen inside, in privacy and only experienced by the initiate and those very close to her. After undergoing change, the initiate emerges from her cocoon for everyone to see her change into a sort of newness. She has become a butterfly for everyone to witness (Lincoln, 1991). Though Lincoln's pattern of initiation focuses on the women and girls in particular, there seems not to be much differences with Van Gennep's theory which focuses on initiation in general. The difference, according to the researcher's observation, lies in wording and theory as the process is the same.

The views of Lincoln (1991) were supported by Janssen (2002), who observed that the onset of puberty was traditionally viewed in terms of the girl's emergent sexuality and prospective motherhood. During the seclusion, the young woman was given a detailed ritual bath, after a kneading with a perennial herb called turmeric and vermillion (i.e. a bright red pigment) in order to stimulate and beautify her as she emerged from the seclusion to reunite with the entire family.

According to Ray (1963), the Modoc of Californiac celebrated a girl's first menses with a dance of notification, which was in essence a way of announcing publicly the fact that the girl was now ready for wedding. Additionally, the festival provided a period of social happiness, love making, and sexual experimentation for young men and women,

particularly the unmarried. This function was also observed among the Gabrielino of California. The observation made by Ray somehow seems to indicate that the woman's maturity is not only announced to the public so that they know that she is now grown up and that now she belongs to the group of female elders, but also serves the purpose of bringing people together for merry making and enjoyment. In addition, the young woman is no longer a girl but a woman who is ready for marriage.

In Japan, puberty, during which menarche occurred at ages 12-14, like in most parts of the world, was marked by a change of dress (*genpuku*) (Herold, 1985). Herold states that the change of dress signified that the initiate was now grown up and needed to behave as a mature person. Sexual education, which accompanied the teachings that were given to the initiate, was provided by the grandparents, not the parents; it largely consisted of the introduction to prostitution after the *genpuku* (Herold, 1985).

In a related study conducted by Eder (1977) among the Batak of Palawan Island in the Philippines, a small Negrito society, the *umbay* ceremony and related practices were celebrated to represent a rite of passage for boys and girls (aged about 14) from childhood to adolescence, in which there was a mock sexual intercourse scene between the initiate and the already initiated partner of the opposite sex. Here, it may be argued that the ceremony ushers the newly initiated men and women into another stage of life that of pairing with the opposite sex and that it has been legalized and therefore, they should enjoy themselves. The simulation performed has a bearing on the mind of the young ladies who begin to think that they can only have sex with men who are older to them not of their age.

Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) established that there was behaviour change in girls who come of age to cultural traditions among the Bedouin Arabs of the Negev area. Abu-Rabia-Queder's revelations on initiation rites, though indistinguishable, have traditional aspects to the Zambian context in that regardless of their localities, they seem to have similar traditional elements and universal teachings that hinge on the inculcation of moral values or norms. These teachings, eventually, seem to have a bearing on the behaviour of the initiates.

In Fingoland, Brownlee (1935) was informed that during the seclusion at the menarchal/the larchal initiation rite, a girl's hymen is perforated by means of an ox horn, and that the same instrument is used for extending the labia majora in order to make intercourse more pleasurable and fruitful. The World Health Organisation equally observed that in some parts of Africa the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was still being practiced. Like other female initiation rites, the idea of practicing FGM was to serve the male folk who assumed the position of supremacy.

2.3 Initiation rites in Africa

In African cultures, women and girls tend to be stereotypically socialised such that, in the end, they become wives and mothers that will obey their husbands (Lemrini, 2000). A study conducted by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), (2005) confirms that initiation rites strengthen gender stereotypes, encouraging men to assume dominance and young women to be submissive. Among the Tswana people of Botswana, as Munsaka (2009) notes, boys are viewed as the epitome of authority in the tribe. The affluence of the family ancestry and that of the entire tribe is shouldered by the boy child. On the other hand, the girl child is expected to serve as a wife and mother and to accomplish other household tasks (Egbo, 2000; Nyati-Ramahobo, 1999).

In order to impart the patriarchal requirements in the minds of the young people, a number of African cultures hold initiation rites. Milubi (2000) observes that among the Tsonga tribe of South Africa, the Musevhetho initiation ceremony is performed to signify a girl's entry into puberty. The Musevhetho initiation includes the rite *u kwevha* which involves elongation of the girls' labia minora, which is locally referred to as *milevheto* to prepare her for providing sexual gratification to her future husband.

According to Janssen (2002), the most important lesson of *domba* and the other initiation schools practised by the Venda or Bawenda of South Africa was the instruction about the institutions and responsibilities of motherhood, fatherhood, and marriage. Therefore, if a girl became pregnant during *domba*, she received no praise at all for not following the seeming teachings that the school was imparting into her. Thus, the girl was humiliated and thrown out. According to Janssen, girls undoubtedly express a desire for mysterious

knowledge when they say “we go to *domba* [or *vhusha* etc.] because we want to ‘learn the laws’ (*u gudamilayo*): and indeed they learn much about good manners and the correct social and sexual behaviour of married women. Again here one learns that the main purpose for these teachings is to stereotype the girls so that they serve men as wives and mothers.

A study conducted by the Malawi Human Rights Commission (2012), revealed that the Malawians celebrate traditional rituals known as *Chinamwali* for girls to mark the transition between childhood and adulthood. This is done to give the girl’s sexual partner maximum pleasure during coitus. To support the act of pulling the labia, the Commission quotes one participant from the focus group discussion as saying, “Njingayopandazogwilirasiikweredwa” (a bicycle without handles cannot be mounted properly) (p.15). In this case, the handles of the bicycle refer to the labia minora. The deeper meaning of the adage is that a woman without the labia minora does not offer a man good sexual satisfaction as the man will have nothing to fondle in the sexual act.

In a related study conducted by Munthali and Zulu (2007) in Malawi, girls who have gone through the rites of passage feel more elevated than those who have not, and are actually encouraged to avoid associating with non-initiates because they are now adults. This information corresponds with the principles of the Social identity theory which is guiding this study (see above). Apart from providing individual counseling to a girl who attains puberty, most parts of Africa organize big initiation ceremonies for the initiates and in some places they may involve all girls who have attained puberty that year. For instance, Munthali and Zulu (2007) report that:

...a number of participants in Mangochi and Blantyre mentioned that they attended *msondo*, an initiation ceremony for girls who have experienced menstruation. The girls are taken to a special house or area called *Tsimba* for this ceremony where the counseling is offered by *anankungwi* (traditional initiation counselors) who sing songs and teach young women how to dance. The ceremony may take up to one month, and the initiates are taught the three key things at initiation ceremonies namely: respect and obedience, hygienic practices, and

avoiding sex. Though respect may be the central theme in initiation rites, sexual instructions play a vital role in the life of a girlchild. During such ceremonies, girls are also advised to pull their labia because of the understanding that men enjoy pulling them during sexual intercourse (2007, P. 67).

The findings by Munthali and Zulu on initiation rites corroborate those found by the Malawi Human Rights Commission afterwards where the value of these rites is rated high. A girl who goes through the initiation rite carries herself in high esteem as she feels that she is now an adult. This cultural aspect seems to agree with what Richards (1956) observed among the Bemba speaking people of northern Zambia when she concluded in her study on *Chisungu* that it aims at turning girls into fully grown women.

In Mozambique, among the Tsonga tribe, the female puberty initiation rite involves having the girls pair up to stretch each other's labia, performing tasks symbolizing women's horticultural duties, and ritual defloration with a musical kudu horn. The role of this initiation school, according to Xitlhabana in Milubi(2000) is to gratify men's sexual desire: the longer the labia minora, the better wives for they will provide men with better sexual play.

The Tswana people, like other African tribes, conduct initiation rites for the girls who have attained puberty. According to Kinsman (1983), the Tswana girls received extensive sex role training and passive obedience at ages 10-13 when they attended *boya* the initiation rite. The girl's sexual organ was internally inspected, after which her hymen was perforated with a tuber. Subsequently, the initiate was explicitly taught about sex by her tutor and traditionally, a widow. To this end Schapera(1991) reports:

[...] the girl learned 'immoral' songs, which the missionaries believed were corrupting the soul. Unlike the girls, the boys of the age-group were given substantial freedom in conduct, especially in matters of sex" (Schapera, 1991, p.32).

The above quotation seems to point to what other scholars (e.g. Munthali& Zulu, 2007;Raising, 2001; Richards, 1956;) found namely that central teaching of the female initiation rites is the preparation of the girl for future life, and life in this context meant marriage through which she would live with her future husband.In Tanzania, initiation rituals are still widely practised among the Kaguru of Morogoro district.Young women are introduced to the *digubidance* at the time of puberty, and a version of thedance is performed at the time of marriage. The Kaguru were studied in the 1950s by an anthropologist, Beidelman, who described puberty rituals and sexual initiation for girls in the following way:

At the onset of menstruation, girls are immediately isolated in a special house and subjected to intensive initiation rites. The purpose of these is to ‘cool’ the girl whose menstruation has ‘heated’ her, that is, made her sexually (and thus morally) unstable and potentially dangerous. During this period various substances (ashes and water infused with herbs) are put on her skin to ‘cool’ her. She is taught by women of her grandmother’s generation and girls who have already been initiated. The girl is taught various riddles, sayings and songs with double meaning relating to proper sexual conduct and sexual hygiene. In the past, the girl was required to remain indoors for many months. The idea was that she becomes pale and fat; two attributes of beauty. Kaguru girls are or were subjected to labiadectomy. This is said to ‘soften’ the girl and thereby make her better able to bear children (Beidelman cited in Molnos, 1973, p.264).

Several years later,Mlama(1990) conducted a similar study among the Kaguru people of Kilosa District in the Morogoro region though this time on theatre forms, and in particular on rituals of sexual initiation. Like her counterpart, Beidelman, Mlamadrew attention in particular to *digubi*, a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood for girls. In this respect, Mlama thus reports:

[...] During the *digubi* the life experiences of womanhood are represented with the practical purpose of instructing the girls on how to fulfill their various roles as adults. Enactments are performed that instruct on the physiological nature of the woman and its relation to reproduction processes, marriage life, parenthood and the obligations and responsibilities of women in the society (Mlama, 1990, p. 166).

The above findings seem to underscore the importance of initiation rites in changing the mindsets of girls, such that when they come out of them they feel they are fully fledged grownups and would not want to associate themselves with those that have not gone through the rite regardless of whether they are age mates or not. This notion seems to underscore the relevance of this study addressing which states, ‘to find out how girls perceive themselves when they come out of initiation ceremony’.

The rituals performed by the African societies serve vital cultural functions. They introduce new adult members to the cultural traditions of the group, and they help integrate them into the community. The *digubi*, according to Mlamain Janssen (2002) has a dual function: to impart information and to provide a means for socialization. The information is imparted during the seclusion by the elders of the grandparental generation whereas socialization is realized during the ceremony that wraps up the whole ritual. Mlama further points out that, at a material level, the focus of the instruction is on menstruation and sexual hygiene, on how to conceal menstrual blood, dispose of sanitary napkins, and keep the body clean, and so on. This finding seems to marry well with Raising’s (2001) and UNFPA’s (2005) findings about the hygienic value of these traditional rites. While Raising states that initiation rites deal with issues of reproductive health, marriage, domestic and agricultural duties, respect for elders as well as for her husband, sexual matters and cultural taboos in particular those related to food, UNFPA observes that initiation rites are schools through which girls learn how to be experts in sexual matters so that they may entice their future husbands.

Quite recently, Magesa, Rehema, Bakari, Mroto, and Mogombola (2014) conducted a study on the effects of initiation rituals to primary and secondary school girls in Morogoro Rural District of Tanzania. Magesa, et. al.(2014) used a cross sectional research design in which a sample size of 74 participants was used covering district government officials, ward executive officers, village executive officers, parents, primary and secondary school teachers and pupils, ritual mothers and the clergy. Like other scholars (see Beldelman in Janssen, 2003; Mluma, 1990), Magesa, et al.'s (2014) findings seem to complement the essence of initiation as they report:

[...] Girls attend initiation ceremonies as early as they reach puberty be eleven or twelve years....Girls who attend these ceremonies encounter mistreatments, abuse and sometimes they miss their precious school time. Additionally,... girls change their behaviour and thus some of them feel that they cannot cope with formal education. As a result the girls drop out of school to pursue other womanly responsibilities of getting married and having families (Magesa, et al., 2014, p. 2).

In line with the above scholars, Hari (2009) notes that these rituals are blamed to be a cause of girls' drop out of school due to the long period they are held and sometimes they are held during the term resulting in girls missing lessons. In this regard, as Hari adds, the rituals affect girls in two ways: in performance and attendance. Another factor that Hari points out is the fact that having gone through the initiation rite the girls consider themselves to be adults who are ready for marriage. As a result, the girls may not concentrate on their school work as it may not help them in their future life.

In a traditional Ngoni culture, according to Kenny (2005), when a girl experiences the first menses, she notifies the grandmother or aunt who in turn shares the good news with the rest of the community. Later, the women gather to perform the ritual and the girl is placed in an isolated hut where she receives virtues of womanhood such as taking care of herself, relating with men, being a good wife to her future husband. Mteweile (2012) and Hamdani (2012) also report that among the Luguru of Morogoro region, the

girl's first menses should be reported to the maternal grandmother who is responsible for the whole process. The girl should also shift to her grandmother's home from her mother's place. While at her grandmother's place, the girl is placed in a small room in which she is provided with a short bed purposefully made for the ritual. The girl is expected to bend her legs towards her chest for the period ranging from months to years. Mteweale and Hamdani sum up what transpires during the seclusion as follows:

During the confinement period the girl is not allowed to do heavy domestic chores but rather helping her granny in light duties. She is served with the best food to make her become more attractive and beautiful. On her skin, she applies castor oil and she is obliged to avoid sun burning her skin. She is taught how to become economically independent in such activities as hair plating, vegetable sorting, pounding maize, making baskets, mats and pottery. Above all, the girl is taught sexual matters in readiness for her future husband (Mteweale, 2012 and Hamdani, 2012, p. 45).

The above information seems to correspond to Munsaka's (2009) findings in which one of his female initiated school dropouts narrated what happened during the seclusion thus:

... When you come out of initiation, they decorate you so beautifully and you look beautiful because you spend a long time not doing anything, you become nice and rounded; your hands are soft.... On the day you come out everybody in the village comes to watch you; they even give you some money and gifts. As you sit there men come and give such remarks as, "this one is mine, no matter what, I will marry her." Others even touch your face as they give you money. Some men even go far as to say, "Even if you are at school, I want you, I will see you after...." A number of girls get married soon after coming out of initiation; they forget about school (Munsaka, 2009. P. 113).

From the above information, one may compare the initiation school to the farming period in that, during the initiation, the initiators keep themselves busy preparing the girl to look beautiful and attractive for men, who in this regard, seem to be the potential buyers. Whereas during the farming season, the farmer equally prepares the fields, plants, makes sure that his crops receive the best attention by providing the necessary farming implements such as fertilizer, insecticides all to try and produce the best crops on the market. So the young lady being the product of the seclusion may be compared to, for instance, a ball of cabbage that has been nurtured well; both are destined for the market. In this sense, initiation seems to reduce the status of girls. In the next section studies conducted in Zambia are reviewed.

2.3 Studies on initiation rites in Zambia

A study conducted by Drews (1995) among the Kunda people of the Luangwa valley of eastern Zambia, reports that *Chinamwali*, which previously used to take 2 to 3 months, but now for a short period of a month, mainly the December holiday, teaches the girl about sexual matters, hygiene among other virtues. The *ndola*, the neophyte, who is barely clothed in a ragged material around her hips with her eyes looking down, sits on the floor while the participants show case their tradition. Drews adds:

[...] according to the Kunda, *chinamwali* makes a girl 'like her mother', a position she assumes on the day she comes out of the initiation. On this 'big day' the *ndola* is placed on a mat with her mother and the instructresses beside her. She is now said to 'be like her mother'. Many speeches, especially from the male folk, follow. In former times, this was the moment of shaving. Today, this tradition is only remembered by putting scissors on the head of the *ndola*. The visitors then have to bring their gifts, mainly money, to the girl and her teachers, which they place at their feet. At that occasion, the girl gets new clothes from her father. While the audience is dancing, the girl will go and change and then dance for everybody in her new clothes. These clothes symbolize the financial support that the girl will receive from her future husband

based on her sexual performance. The *chinamwali* comes to an end with a *phwando*, beers and a big meal for everybody (Drews, 1995, p. 103).

In the above excerpt, one might argue that the status achieved by the girl during such a ritual is not through proliferation but instead, through the evidence that she has displayed of her social and sexual abilities. The act done by her father of providing her with clothes, entails that a man is the provider of material wealth depending on the woman's sexual ability. In other words, the better a performance the woman exhibits during the sexual act, the more the enjoyment the man gets; hence more financial support she receives. The attainment of the social identity through these rituals by the young woman seems to be in agreement with the Social identity theory which is guiding this study.

Binsbergen(1987)conducted a study among the Nkoya speaking people of western Zambia in which he reveals that the Nkoya girl's initiation rite is the celebrationthrough which she shall finally become a woman, after months of confinement in which the only way she was able to move in and out of doors was in a stooping position and wrapped in a blanket; after some months of rough sexual and social teachings from the part of her mentrix and other elderly women in the evenings. To this effect, Binsbergen (1987) reports:

Great emphasis lies on the acquisition of an adult female sexual role. The girl is taught to enlarge her vagina till three fingers can go in; she is taught to wiggle and incline her pelvis during the coitus; and acquires knowledge about secret herbs that (unfortunately at the cost of damage to her fertility) prevent vaginal secretion — to serve the Nkoya male ideal: penetration in a bone-dry vagina. She has already been setting herself to make her labia larger than nature provides: starting in her ninth or tenth year up until her coming-out ceremony, the girl spends hundreds of hours, by herself or in company of girlfriends, indoors or somewhere in an open spot in the

woods, stretching these parts of her body until they have reached an extra length of some centimeters (Binsbergen, 1987, p. 67).

The above findings seem to validate what the African culture has in store for the young girls as research indicates (see Richards, 1956). There could be minor variations on how one society performs the initiation rite, but the goal is the same- to prepare the young woman for her future marriage where she is expected to serve the male ideal.

The Bemba speaking people of northern Zambia are known for their detailed sex instructions. As Hinfelaar (1994) describes the Bemba matrilineal instructions on how to please a future husband were said to be given in such detail that many men who intended to marry a lady from another tribe set great store in her being taught by the Bemba grandparents in the rural areas. However, some scholars felt that the teachings imparted into the girl children were not appropriate as they taught them promiscuous skills which later affected their lives. A female journalist was quoted by Hinfelaar lamenting as follows:

The rise in promiscuity which the nation is experiencing can be squarely attributed to the initiation ceremonies on which women spend much of their time teaching small girls how to become professional love-makers. Is this what initiation is all about, a tradition that turns daughters of the soil into prostitutes who later bring unnecessary problems like unplanned babies and diseases (Hinfelaar, 1994, p. 186).

Research done by Richards in the 1930s gives a full description of the Bemba female initiation ceremony, *Chisungu*, (see Richards, 1956). The word *Chisungu* as Hinfelaar (1994) explains is drawn from the verb *ukusunguka*, to be dumbfounded, to be dismayed and is associated with the noun *chisungusho*, a 'wondrous event' (Hinfelaar, 1994). Upon experiencing their first menstruation, the initiates, locally known as *Cisofu* 'the big elephants' run into the forest where their undisguised sexual fertility will be retrieved from chaotic animal needs and brought under social control. Hinfelaar

further points out that, *UkuwilaIcisungu*, to have one's first menstruation, was celebrated as a wondrous event when the young woman received the gift of her sexuality from the Supreme Being.

The Lozi culture where the study was conducted is dominated by patriarchal traditions that view the roles of women as revolving around marriage and motherhood. Sumbwa's (1988) work on *Sikenge* relevantly explains the importance of initiation ceremony among the Lozi that makes the researcher tap it and use it in his work. Mundumuko (1990) reaffirmed Sumbwa's assertions on *Sikenge* by stating that *Sikenge* was meant to celebrate the first menses which were seen as a miraculous divine event when the girl received the gift of her sexuality and parenthood from her fore fathers (Colson, 1958; Mundumuko, 1990).

According to Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979), the girl, during the seclusion, received lessons on endurance such as lifting up a plate from one place to another with her teeth or by picking up beads with her foot. This task entailed that during the seclusion the girl was to suffer since she was leaving childhood and preparing for marriage. In line with Mbikusita-Lewanika's findings on *Sikenge*, Mundumuko (1990) reveals that on the first day of seclusion, the girl was given a symbolic beating, pinched, and teased by the principal tutor locally known as *MaheMwalyanjo* or *chilombola* to signify the authority of elders to the girl despite her attainment of maturity. The principle tutor is carefully chosen among the close relatives and should be one whose first born is alive and of good standing so that the girl can receive similar blessings like hers.

Mundumuko (1990) further discloses that on the second day of the seclusion, a ritual locally known as *kulumisa* was performed. In this ritual the girl was made to bite a small lump of *nshima* from the potsherd and spit it into all directions. The principal tutor afterwards tapped the chest and back of the initiate with the broken potsherd while the initiate clapped. In this ritual, the potsherd symbolized heavy heart one that keeps secrets and the spitting of food particles symbolized evoking the ancestral spirits to intervene into the happenings of the initiate.

On the night prior to her coming out, the mwalyanjo was taken to a stream and washed and in some cases punished by immersing her into the stream for some time while some powerful woman was on top. Thereafter, she was taken back home on the back of her 'mother'. The following day, she was shaved, dressed in new clothes and perfumed as she was to appear before the expectant audience. She was later taken into the central place for all to see. All sorts of gifts were given to her and finally, she was made to dance to a special dance called *likeyenge*. Thereafter, she chose a name that signified her newly acquired status (Mundumuko, 1990; Sumbwa, 1988). To ensure that the young woman did not only acquire a new status, but a new role as well, she was involved into a play locally known as *Nalikwendangile* where she followed a staggering woman while balancing a cup of water on her head. The balancing of the cup of water entailed that the girl mastered the facts of life while the staggering woman signified her parents and any other elderly woman. Thus, she had a responsibility to look after her parents as they were growing old (Mundumuko, 1990). So, among the Lozi, *Sikenge* is not only about caring for the future husband but also the aged. This helps to reduce the stigma applied to the aged in Zambia.

Chama's (2006) study investigated the effects of the Lozi female initiation rite (*Sikenge*) on women's behaviour in Mongu District. Chama used a qualitative approach where qualitative methods were used such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions. In her study, a sample size of 70 participants (30 initiated, 30 non-initiated and 10 initiators) was arrived at through purposive and snowball sampling methods. In summary, Chama revealed that the majority of women who went through *Sikenge* changed their behaviour as they began to associate themselves with the elders. However, the researcher finds Chama's study not to have covered the perceptions of girls who had gone through *Sikenge* towards schooling. Chama's study involved women in general. But this study involved initiated school girls, initiators and teachers some of whom were male teachers to have a holistic approach. This information gap attracted the researcher to investigate these perceptions; hence this study was undertaken.

2.4 Summary

The review of the related literature has demonstrated that there were numerous perceptions surrounding girls who went through initiation rites. To a greater extent, initiation rites have a significant influence on the behaviour of the girls undergoing them apart from the advantages of imparting moral values in them. The review of literature seems to validate the findings of this study. The initiates began to perceive themselves differently and associated themselves with the in-groups in order to be in line with the expectations of society. Initiation rites served a purpose of educating the new adults; teaching them the norms and values of society and at the same time incorporating them into the community. In the next chapter, the researcher presents the methodology that was used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter begins by explaining the methodology that was used in the study. Thereafter, it explains the research design, followed by the research site, the population, sample size and sampling procedure, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation. Lastly, ethical issues will be elaborated.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The study used the qualitative methodology due to the complex nature of initiation rites. Initiation ceremonies were quite complex as they hinged on people's culture; their beliefs, attitudes, experiences, perceptions, and behaviours which were difficult to quantify. As such, the use of qualitative methods helped bring out an in-depth understanding of the Lozi female initiation rite. Through qualitative research, the investigator sought to depict and analyse the people's way of life from the participants' point of view (Kasonde, 2013; Kombo and Tromp, 2006). In other words, qualitative methods engaged the researcher into the phenomenon to make sense of subjective reality and attach meaning to it.

As Reid, Flower, and Larkin (2005) observe in qualitative research, the participants give their feelings, and experiences about what they are going through. In this way, as Orodho and Kombo (2002) observe, people's feelings and insights, which are important in qualitative research, will be captured. According to Morse (1994), the best way to understand what is going on, in qualitative research, is to become engrossed in it and to move into the way of life being studied and have an experience of what it is like to be part of it.

3.3 Research design.

The study employed a case study in order to offer in-depth information and better understanding of the Lozi female initiation rite. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006, p. 72), “a case study seeks to describe a unit in detail, in context and holistically”. In other words, the researcher, in a case study, does not deal with so many phenomena, but instead focuses his or her attention on one phenomenon so that he/she gets deeper insights, and eventually, has a better understanding of it. Therefore, by using a case study, it is hoped that the researcher captured the feelings, experiences, and attitudes of the initiated Lozi girls in terms of how they perceive themselves, how society perceives them and their attitude towards schooling.

3.4 Description of the research site.

Western Province is one of Zambia’s ten provinces. As the name entails, it is located in the western part of the country, about 650 kilometres away from the capital city, Lusaka. During the colonial era, the province was called Barotseland. It has about 33 ethnic groups whose lingua Franca is Silozi. Like other African societies, the province is a patriarchal society where male dominance is high and women were generally considered to be subordinates of men. Western Province has sixteen districts one of which is Mongu District where this research was conducted. Mongu district is situated on the higher ground on the eastern edge of the 30-kilometre- wide Baroste Floodplain, which during the rainy season, floods right up to the town, thereby giving very spectacular scenery. In terms of climate, Mongu has an annual average rainfall of 945 mm falling in the rainy season from late October to April. The flood usually arrives by February and peaks in April but subsides by June. During the rainy season, the people living on the plains relocate to the dry land together with their animals, a movement known as transhumance. Mongu is hot from around September to December, with a mean maximum for October of 35.4 degrees Celsius, and cool from May to August, with a mean maximum in June of 26.9 degrees Celsius and a mean minimum of 10.3 degrees Celsius.

Being the provincial capital, Mongu has a population of about 179, 585 (2010 Census). These people include some who come from other parts of the country and outside the country. In terms of economy, the people of Mongu district, especially in the rural areas and on the plains, depend on cattle rearing as the mainstay of the traditional economy. The animals are sold mainly to ZAMBEEF, and to some local butcheries when money is required for the purchase of goods, school requirements and medical expenses.

Crops such as maize, rice, and vegetables are grown on the fertile flood plains and along the margin of the floodplain on the upperland. Generally, the sandy soils of the district, like most parts of the province, are good for plantations such as cashew nuts and mangoes (see fig.2). However, these cash crops are not exploited fully to benefit the people of western province and the country at large. As a matter of fact, the cashew nut plantation, which was established by the United National Independence Party government off Mongu-Limulungaroad, about 14 kilometres away from the Central Business District, has become a white elephant. Fishing is yet another important economic activity happening in the district from March upto November after which there is fish ban.

Though the province may have so many ceremonies such as the Kuomboka, Sikenge, as already stated in the introduction, was still being practised among the Lozi people to inculcate good morals, values among other virtues. This study drew some of the participants from three schools of Mongu district namely, Malengwa, Kalangu and Mandangawhich were purposively selected. Malengwa and Kalangu Primary schools are situated on Mongu-Limulunga Road in the northern part of Mongu town about 5 and 7 kilometres away respectively. As for Mandanga Primary school, it is situated in Mandanga compound, off Mongu- Lusaka road about 3 kilometres away from the CBD. The selection of these schools was due to their location. The schools are located in areas where *Sikenge* was still being practised and valued as it offers traditional education to the young girls.

The photographs below show some of the economic activities happening in Mongu and one of the schools from which data were collected.



Figure 1. Mongu Central business district



Figure 2. The Cashew nut industry



Figure 3. One of the markets in Mongu district



Figure 4. Some women selling on the market



Figure 5. Some traders from other places



Figure 6. Malengwa Primary School Administration Block.

3.5 The Study Population.

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the study population refers to a group of individuals, objects, or items from which samples are drawn for investigation. The study targeted all newly initiated school girls. The initiation instructors, as well as teachers were involved thereby giving three categories of participants.

3.6 Sample size and sampling procedure

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. In other words, sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. Therefore, a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 2005). In other words, a sample is a small, but well-chosen group of participants representing a much wider group.

In this study, three schools namely, Malengwa, Kalangu and Mandanga were purposively selected to draw participants from. Kombo and Tromp (2006) indicate that the supremacy of purposive sampling depends on selecting information rich cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied. So the choice of these three schools was to have in-depth information about Sikenge as they are located in areas where Sikenge was still being practised. Three categories of participants were used. The first group comprised nine initiated school girls; the second category was composed of three initiation instructors and the third one was of three teachers from the three selected schools. Altogether, the sample size was 15 participants.

3.7 Sampling Technique

To identify the participants, Snowball or Chain sampling technique was employed. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), Snowball sampling begins with a few people or cases and then gradually increases the sample size as new contacts are mentioned by the people that the researcher started with. This is exactly what was used in this study. At each school, after paying courtesy call to the headteacher, the researcher was

introduced to either the deputy or senior teacher who, in some cases, called the guidance and counseling officers who were responsible for identifying girls who went through *Sikenge*. Initially, one girl was identified. Later on, other girls were mentioned during the interview by their friends. Through this process, the researcher managed to interview the required number of participants.

3.8 Research instruments.

This study used the semi structured interviews and in particular, three interview guides (see appendices F, G, & H) each with a set of questions suitable for each group. In this regard, the data collected was rich and holistic. These semi-structured interviews were chosen because of their use of open-ended questions. Gray (2004) observes that open-ended questions leave the participants completely free to express their feelings and experiences. In this way, as Munsaka (2009) adds, the researcher extracts as much information as possible thereby having a deeper and broader understanding of the phenomenon.

3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi- structured interviews are data collection instruments based on the use of an interview guide. Kombo and Tromp (2006) explain that an interview guide is a list of questions that the researcher uses to extract participants' experiences about the situation (see appendices D,E,&F). The interview guide was preferred because not only does it grant participants freedom to express their feelings, but also allows the researcher to interact with participants due to its flexibility. In this way, the researcher gained in-depth insights and had a better understanding of *Sikenge*. Unlike a structured interview which has a rigorous set of questions which do not allow the interviewer to divert, a semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the respondent says (<http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/>).

3.9 Data sources and collection Procedures

This study used two major sources of data. The first source was primary source which is information collected directly from the respondents (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The

second source was secondary data which, according to Kasonde (2013) is information neither collected directly by the user nor specifically for the user. Below are a few details on each one of the data sources.

3.9.1 Primary data.

The primary data was collected by using the semi-structured interview. An interview guide was administered to the respondents on one-to-one and face-to-face bases with the researcher. Considering the inability to comprehend the English language which was used in the semi structured guide by the respondents, particularly, the girls and initiators, the researcher, being a native speaker of Silozi, translated each question into Silozi. Teachers, especially those in the Department of Guidance and Counseling were interviewed separately by using the interview guide in the English version. Initiation instructors were also interviewed separately. In other words, considering the sensitivity of the matter, all participants were interviewed individually. To capture every detail and contribution given by the respondents, a voice recorder was used during the interviews. The researcher transcribed and translated all the interviews.

3.9.2 Secondary data.

Secondary data, according to Kombo and Tromp (2006), is information which is not collected by the user or specifically for the user. It involves gathering information which other people collected elsewhere. In other words, secondary data involves desktop review of existing literature on the topic. As indicated in the second chapter, the literature included both locally and internationally produced materials such as studies by other scholars, books, journals that provided information on female initiation ceremonies. In this way, the study was not only enriched with information, but was also put within the confinement of the topic being investigated.

3.10 Data Analysis

Because the research was qualitative where the researcher had firsthand information some of which was collected through observation, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse data. The Interpretative framework is important in

that not only does it help in interpreting the participants' experiences of the phenomenon but also among other advantages, the researcher's perceptions and observations about the phenomenon (Munsaka, 2009). Considering that data came from three categories of participants, that is, the initiated girls, initiators, and teachers, the triangulation method was also used in order to harmonize the findings and put them within the context of the investigation. Munsaka (2009) further indicates that triangulation is a strategy that enhances the credibility of the research results. To shed more light on the IPA and triangulation, the section below gives a brief account on each one of them.

3.11 IPA Strategy

The IPA which was used to analyse data blends two principles namely phenomenology and hermeneutics (see Munsaka, 2009) of data interpretation. The researcher found this method suitable for his study, firstly, because he was able to combine the respondents' experiences with his interpretation of those experiences. In this way, the researcher gained a more in-depth understanding of the topic under study. Secondly, the idiographic approach offered by IPA gave him more advantage in understanding the participants' issues. The idiographic approach analyses data starting with each participant's transcript. In this regard, the researcher was able to analyse and transcribe each respondent's verbatim (Willig, 2001). Thirdly, the researcher found the method useful due to its emphasis on the integration of cases (Munsaka, 2009). Even here the researcher was able to integrate aspects as they were given by the three categories of respondents.

As stated earlier on, the IPA combines the phenomenological and hermeneutics principles (see Munsaka, 2009). In the phenomenological principle, the researcher digs deeper into the phenomenon and extracts information from the participant's point of view. In other words, the researcher is emic (insider) as he or she interacts with the respondent on face to face basis. Whereas in the hermeneutics principle, the researcher interprets data from his point of view by observing the expressions, gestures and other body language expressed by the participant. In other words, the researcher is etic

(outsider) who tries to conceptualize the experiences and aspirations of the participant and irradiate them in a manner that responds to a certain research question (Munsaka, 2009).

3.12 Triangulation Strategy.

Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. According to Webb (1966, p. 3), “Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes”. However, it is worth noting that while triangulation strategy may yield positive results, it should not be concluded that the findings remain unquestionable. It may be that all the sets are flawed. To this end, Denzin (1970) distinguished four forms of triangulation: Firstly, is the data triangulation, which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered. Secondly, is the investigator triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data. Thirdly, is theoretical triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data. Lastly, is the methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data.

3.13 Forms of triangulation used in this study.

In this study, the researcher used two forms of triangulation, namely data triangulation, and theoretical triangulation. With data triangulation, the researcher combined the findings obtained from the three sources of data: girls who have gone through *Sikenge*, instructors, and teachers. As regards theoretical triangulation, the researcher combined two theories: Social identification and Self categorization. These two theories have overlapping concepts in their understanding of the self (see Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995).

3.14 Data interpretation in IPA

The use of IPA in data interpretation is firstly based on the perceptions of the research participants. In this regard, the researcher, without much interference, grants the participant freedom to express his/her views on a particular phenomenon (Munsaka, 2009; Simith, 2004; Willig, 2001). The second process is that the researcher deciphers the meaning from the participant's narrative by using his/her own spontaneous interpretations (Munsaka, 2009; Simith, 2004; Willig, 2001).

However, the point to note here is that the two processes are not treated separately, but instead the findings are intertwined such that they supplement each other. In this regard, the meaning deciphered from the respondents' experiences is deepened and broadened. As the data come out, the researcher interprets them by comparing between and among the varied participants' views (Munsaka, 2009).

3.15 Data interpretation in this study.

Firstly, the researcher read the transcribed expressions from the voice recorder many times while comparing them with the objectives. This was done to ensure that information gathered from the participants matched with the objectives to facilitate easy interpretation (Munsaka, 2009; Willig, 2001). As the researcher read through the transcriptions, he made notes in the margin against each participant's expressions, such as language, descriptions and so on. Secondly, the researcher assessed each transcript for some emerging sub-themes, which in the third stage were grouped to form themes which were the reflection of the objectives (Munsaka, 2009; Reid et al., 2009). The three themes generated were: Perceptions of initiated girls about themselves; societal perceptions of girls who have gone through *Sikenge*; and the attitude of girls who have gone through *Sikenge* towards schooling.

However, in the presentation of data (see Chapter 4) each theme had subsidiary themes which came from the analysis of data in relation to the interview guides used.

In short, the interpretation of data in this study, involved a back and forth process of all the transcripts (Munsaka, 2009; Willig, 2001). The table below summarizes how the analysis of data was done in this study. In short, it was a cycle of data analysis.

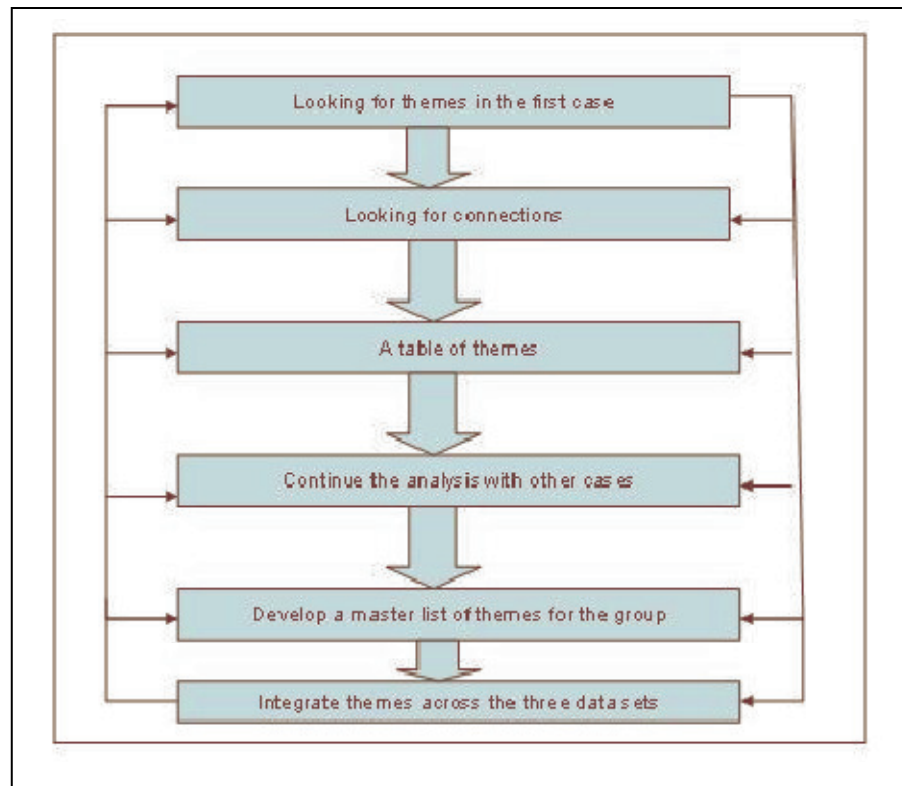


Figure 7.The cyclic data analysis process used in this study. Adapted from Munsaka (2009, p. 107).

Research, like any human activity, has laws, principles or moral values that direct it to reduce on tension that may occur during and after its administration. These principles that guide research are known as ethics. Therefore, the next section presents the ethical issues used in this study

3.16 Ethical issues

In this study, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the University of Zambia Ethical Committee. In addition to the ethical clearance, the school of Education to

which the researcher belonged had provided him with an introductory letter which he presented to the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS), Mongu district, before administering the study. The DEBS provided the researcher with an introductory letter which he presented to the headteachers of the targeted schools (see appendices). The headteachers introduced the investigator to the deputy head teachers and senior teachers who also responded positively.

Before commencing the interviews, the researcher introduced himself to the participants and explained why he was conducting the study. In other words, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to each stakeholder that helped in this research. In this regard, the purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of girls who had gone through *Sikengeto* towards schooling. The information collected was for academic purposes and nothing else. For every interview made, consent forms (see appendices), which the researcher translated into Silozi due to some participants who did not speak English, were given to the participants; though, in this case, they never filled them; but instead read them and where they were unable to comprehend, the researcher clarified for them. The forms granted participants freedom to participate or not to in the study. Not only were the participants given the consent forms but also were told that their participation was voluntary and they were assured of confidentiality.

For the girls who were below 16 years old, a translated assent form (see appendix D) was given to them. This was due to the fact that these girls by law were not allowed to participate in any research. So, the assent form enabled them to participate into the study.

To enhance anonymity and confidentiality, all participants were advised to contribute anonymously and individually (see Levine, 1976) so that they could not be identified by anyone who may have access to this study. Each participant was assigned a number and a pseudonym instead of using their real names for fear of being identified. The principle of justice was observed as the participants were given equal amount of time, equal number of questions as listed in the semi-structured guide (see Appendixes). Every participant was fairly treated regardless of the age, or background. Privacy was highly

considered (see Kelman, 1977). In terms of privacy, a room was organized where each participant was called to and interviewed from.

As regards storage and disposal of data, both the raw and processed data were still kept under key and lock and password protected. However, after the examination, the data from the flash were deleted. The recorded information, after the transcription, was equally deleted from the voice recorder.

3.17 Summary

This chapter has described the methodology which this study followed in conducting the research. It has explained the qualitative research paradigm which the researcher employed because of the complexity of the topic studied which hinges on the cultural aspects of the Lozi people of western Zambia. The chapter has demonstrated how the semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The use of the IPA in data analysis and interpretation has been elaborated; that is, IPA combines two important elements: phenomenology and hermeneutics. In brief this method enables the researcher to analyse data from the participants' point of view. At the same time the researcher is able to analyse data from his point of view based on what he observed: the attitudes, expressions, and gestures of the participants. Besides the IPA method employed in this study, the chapter has also demonstrated how the data, methods, and theories were combined. The combination of data is known as triangulation. The population which this study targeted as well as the sample size, sampling techniques and procedure has been explained. The chapter has demonstrated how ethical issues were handled. For any study to be successful there must be results thereof. For that reason, the subsequent chapter unveils the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

In this chapter, the presentation of the findings through themes and sub- themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews is given concurrently basing on the fact that they came from three categories of participants namely; initiated girls, initiators and teachers. To illustrate the information given by the participants, quotes or excerpts have been used emanating from the transcribed interviews. Against each quote, a word other than the real name of the participant and a number are put so that the participant is identified. In this sense, the identification does not reveal the participant's name as that might violate the ethics of research. Therefore, the words used in this study are 'Girl' for initiated girls; 'Initiator' for initiators; and 'M/Teacher and F/ Teacher' for male teachers and female teachers respectively. Because the girls were nine, numbers 1 to 9, were used. As for initiators and teachers numbers from 1 to 3 were used since they were three participants in each category.

The three main themes used in this study are a reflection of the objectives of the present study namely; the perceptions of initiated girls about themselves, the societal perceptions about the initiated girls, and the attitude of the initiated girls towards schooling. Nonetheless, each theme had sub-themes, as alluded to, which emerged from the analysis of data to substantiate each main theme. The next section presents the findings under the first theme and its sub-themes.

4. 1 Perceptions of Initiated Girls about Themselves

This theme has three sub-themes which emerged from data analysis. These were initiation was a period of maturity attainment; initiation brought about a new identity; and initiation made the initiated girls disassociate themselves from the non-initiated. The following section presents the findings on how initiation brings about maturity.

4.1.1 Initiation brings about maturity.

Initiation was said to be a period of maturity attainment in the girls that went through it in that the girls would have experienced what other girls would have not. During this period, the girl received ordeals, or instructions which made her a member of society. She was invested with a particular function or status. Most of the participants interviewed in this study revealed that initiation rites made girls become more mature than before. It was a period that marked the end to childhood and ushered one into adulthood. The quote below reveals the views of one of the participant:

*Sikenge is a period that a young girl who has attained puberty is put in seclusion upon experiencing first menses. Normally, the menses of a girl who has never had sexual intercourse with a man don't look like blood, but instead look like beans soup. The first time the girl experiences this (menses), she runs amok, becomes confused and wonders to what has happened to her. Some cry the whole day, and may refuse to eat. Upon seeing this kind of behaviour, the grandmother or aunt is told to inspect the girl's pants. Once the blood is confirmed, the girl is put in seclusion; where she will receive great instructions signifying that she is no longer young, but is now an adult (**Initiator 2, interview, February 5, 2015**).*

Another participant interviewed revealed that *Sikenge* was the period of imbibing moral principles that made a girl who had attained puberty behave responsibly and that if a girl did not go through it she became an imbecile:

*Sikenge is the period of seclusion, to learn a lot of cultural values. We, women are told that, 'if you don't go through Sikenge, you are useless; an imbecile' (**Girl1, interview, February, 2015**).*

The excerpt above seemed to indicate that initiation was an indispensable period in the life of every girl among the Lozi people because it was the time that she received some very important teachings of society. Through these teachings the girl attained maturity.

Initiation brought behaviour change in the girls and made them behave responsibly. One participant revealed as follows:

Initiation has changed my life. I'm no longer what I used to be. In terms of dressing, there is a difference between how I used to dress before I went through initiation and now after going through initiation...(Girl6, interview, February, 2015).

The above initiated girl's perception about initiation was substantiated by her colleague in the next excerpt who shared the same sentiments as follows:

I felt very happy when I was in Sikenge because I learnt so many and very important things that will help me in future. There is a way Sikenge has changed my life due to the fact that before I went through it I was ignorant of many things but now I know (Girl5, interview, February, 2015).

To demonstrate how important *Sikenge* was in terms of changing the girls' behaviour and bringing about maturity, one of the initiators gave her biological daughter as a practical example in the following elaborate quote:

May be I give my daughter as an example. She had a child in(bunaluleya), a period before going through Sikenge when she only had twelve years old. She was raped. When I took her to the hospital for examination, she was found pregnant. At that time she was in Grade 7. When she qualified to Grade 8 she gave birth. Through observing her behaviour, the way she did things, as a concerned mother, I failed to let her live that kind of life even when she had a child. However, people advised me not to put her in Sikenge as she already had a child; what was needed, according to them, was just to invite elders. However, I didn't heed to that advice. So I just waited for her to complete Grade 12 that was last year, in 2014. Immediately she completed her school, sometime in November, 2014, I invited people to help me put her in seclusion. She was there the whole of November and much of December. In short, she was there for one month

three weeks. On 25th December of the same year, she came out and reunited with others. Since she came out, she is now a changed person.

Before she was put in seclusion, she would leave home around 19hours and come back at about 22hours. This behaviour was very disrespectful to us parents. Her elder sister whom I put in Sikenge when she was in Grade 10 does not come out of the home at awkward times up to now (Initiator 2, interview, February, 2015).

The revelation in the above excerpt seemed to validate the importance of *Sikenge* in as far as mind shift of young ladies that went through it was concerned. It seems to provide a testimony that mirrors societal values, virtues that could not be found in a street or anywhere else except in seclusion. A woman who had not passed through this important ritual of this particular tribe was looked down upon, as one initiated girl in the focus group retorted:

A woman who hasn't passed through Sikenge is a scoundrel, ill-mannered. She behaves like a chicken whose head is cut off... (Girl7, interview, February, 2015).

Another participant expressed her views on what she understood about *Sikenge*. To her *Sikenge* offered an opportunity to someone (girl) to learn how to run her home when she got married:

Sikenge means learning how you will live your life when you get married. I was 18 when I was put in Sikenge. I stayed there for three weeks. I saw blood and told elders. The elders told me that there was dirt on my pants. So, I was put in Sikenge which was in my mother's house. I never used to come outside for fear of being seen by people especially men. I was just staying inside the house until the day I came out (Girl5, interview, February, 2015).

From the above quote, it can be argued that most of the girls that went through *Sikenge* expressed one thing in common, that is, *Sikenge* marked the attainment of maturity. Additionally, for one to be in *Sikenge*, one must have experienced a flow of blood. Another thing that came out strongly from these experiences was that the inspectors of these girls once they experienced a flow of blood, were the grandmothers or aunts, not their mothers. Nevertheless, some girls expressed shock about *Sikenge*; they never had adequate information as to why they were put there. They just found themselves being dragged outside the village or behind the house where they were living. Usually, the explanation would be given afterward. The excerpt below confirms this:

I know about the issue of Sikenge. I was caught and put there when I was 13 years of age in October, 2014. It so happened that in the evening of a certain day I was told to go behind the village; so they (elders) followed and caught me and put me in a small hut that was there. Then they told me, 'from today you will be here; you are now a grown up person, do you understand?' So I was there for three months. I used to be there with my mother (Girl 4, interview, February, 2015).

Another girl also expressed ignorance of what happened to her when she was caught and put in *Sikenge*. She expressed fear about the way elders behaved on the day she was put in *Sikenge*. Below is an excerpt of her narrative:

...I just saw a group of elders in the afternoon talking privately. So I was wondering about what they were talking. In the evening I just heard my mother telling me, 'let's go and fetch firewood'. As we were going into the near bush, we were joined by my aunt, grandmother and two more elderly women. I was in front of them. So at some point, one of them, my aunt, called me to stop and wait for them. As they were closing up with me, they caught me while saying, 'you stubborn girl, today we shall see you. You used to make fun of us, you thought you were clever. Yaah! We shall see who is cleverer than the other. Come on! Hold her this way, beat her, pinch her....' (Girl 9, interview, February, 2015).

The above scenario seems to underscore the point that before a girl went through *Sikenge*, she was ignorant of the process through which girls were initiated as this was only available to her on the day she was put in seclusion. Again, what came out strongly was the fact that *Sikenge* was the time to discipline the stubborn girls. Apart from disciplining girls it emerged from this study that initiation brought about new identity. The next section presents findings on the new identity formation.

4.1.2 Initiation brings about a new identity

As already alluded to, *Sikenge* marked the boundary between childhood and adulthood. It was a period that young women shed off their old ways of life and put on new ones as they joined the elders. By joining the group of elders, the girls had achieved a rare but very important stage in life. They were able to rub shoulders with elders and share secrets of life pertaining to their culture. The girls felt they belonged to a certain group and that group was of elders. They were able to participate in cultural matters. They had no boundaries. This spirit brought self-esteem in them. The excerpt below confirmed this point:

I no longer play with children. I'm now grown up and am proud of myself. I can do everything that an elderly woman does... (Girl 4, interview, February, 2015).

To validate what the above participant narrated, another participant echoed her voice in a similar manner. She narrated how she used to be chased before she was put in *Sikenge*. But after graduating from *Sikenge*, she was free to perform rituals pertaining to *Sikenge*. The verbatim below confirms her experiences:

Before I was initiated, I never used to go in Sikenge when elders were there. I would be chased the moment they came in. Elders would tell me that I was too young to know the secrets of culture. But now, I'm free and can go in Sikenge at any time I feel like. I am able to contribute to the teachings of society. I can teach the initiate on how to dance in bed by wriggling the waist... (Girl 6, interview, February, 2015).

Yet another participant added to what others had said. She expressed sadness at the manner in which the uninitiated girls behaved. To her, these girls' thinking capacity was in its infancy.

When I look at my friends who have not yet gone into Sikenge, they are not mature enough. Their thinking is still in its infancy stage. We differ in terms of thinking (Girl, 3, interview, February, 2015).

Initiated girls seemed to feel they were held in high esteem. This was demonstrated by the remarks of one of the initiators who expressed her views on initiation, and this is how she put it:

When you are initiated, you really feel you are on top of others. You walk with your head up because you are part and parcel of the community. Your dealings are mature; and this is the most important stage in the life of a woman. Every woman who attains it is rated most high in society. So I 'm happy that I have attained it...(Initiator3, interview, February, 2015).

At school, some initiated girls were seen forming groups among themselves as they did not want to associate with the non-initiated girls. In other words, the girls put themselves in categories. One of the teachers interviewed commented on the behaviour of the girls who had gone through *Sikenge* as follows:

... There is behaviour change in the initiated girls as they tend to associate themselves in groups. They wouldn't want to associate with the non-initiated ones. There are groups or camps in school as a result of the teachings they receive in Sikenge(F/Teacher 2, interview, February, 2015).

Most of the girls that had gone through *Sikenge*, seemed to take up certain responsibilities that they never used to do. For instance, they could take care of their homes, look after the children and show love to their lovers. The following quote substantiates this point:

In Sikenge, I was taught how to care for my home when I get married, how to take care of my husband, look after my children, look after my husband's relatives. When there is no food or relish in the home I should provide it, that is, I should know where to find it. The point is, children should not stay without food. If there is no relish, I should prepare something, even vegetables to keep my family going (Girl, 2, interview, February, 2015).

The above quote seems to point to the fact that initiation played a vital role in as far as roles acquisition was concerned. These roles acquired were significant in the life of a woman. They provided identity to the woman. To show how the initiated identified with elders, certain things changed, especially in the olden days. Initiator 1 attested to this as follows:

In the past, when a girl came out of Sikenge, she was given a new name to signify that she was grown up. Usually, such a name would start with, 'Ma' then a name. For instance, 'Ma-Nyambe', which, literally, means, 'the mother of Nyambe'. In this way, the young lady automatically took up the roles of a woman. She was considered to be a mother even before she had a child (Initiator 1, interview, February, 2015).

The roles given to the girls during seclusion seemed to validate the new status that the young lady acquired. The status of being a woman and not any other woman but a real woman, brought prestige in the young lady; hence, the formation of groups when they came out because they felt they were no longer like others who had not passed through it. In the subsequent section, findings on the disassociation of initiated girls from the non-initiated ones are presented.

4.1.3 Initiated girls look down on the uninitiated.

As demonstrated above, the majority of the initiated girls seem not to associate with the non-initiated for various reasons but most importantly, according to the initiated, the non-initiated exhibited high levels of ignorance about what they (initiated) learnt in

seculsion. What the initiated girls knew was more than their non-initiated friends. The excerpt below from one of the female teachers seems to qualify this assertion:

...Sometimes the girls disassociate themselves from other pupils; they put themselves in groups and share the same information which they have been taught. Some of the information shared includes relationships with boys (F/Teacher 3, interview, February, 2015).

The above sentiments by one of the teachers interviewed were authenticated by one of the initiated participants who came out strongly on the issue of not mixing with the non-initiated girls as she referred to them as children:

....I can't play with children. I only play with those that have come of age. Those who have not yet gone through Sikenge are young (Girl 8, interview, February, 2015).

However, the same girl realized that she was a pupil; so, she hesitated a bit and continued:

...But for classmates, there is no problem, whether they have gone through Sikenge or not as what we are learning is the same (Girl, 8, interview, February, 2015).

The realization of the fact that at school all pupils were equal and therefore should mix and work together by the initiated girl in the above assertion, seemed to indicate that while initiation played a vital role in preparing someone for future life and set a boundary from childhood to adulthood, formal schooling was key to someone's life. Therefore, all pupils at school were equal regardless of the status. However, the issue of disassociation of initiated girls from the non-initiated still came out strongly as another participant contributed individually as follows:

The friends who used to visit me when I was in Sikenge were the already initiated ladies because they used to

teach me what they also learnt during their seclusion. As for my friends who have not gone through Sikenge, they do not know anything because they have not been taught(**Girl 7, interview, February, 2015**).

To show how initiation marked the end to childhood, and an introduction to adulthood, one of the initiators indicated that the initiated girl was not supposed to play with children as she had joined the elders' group. This is how she put it:

A girl who has passed through Sikenge should not be seen playing with kids (referring to those who have not passed through Sikenge regardless of their age) (Initiator, 3, interview, February, 2015).

When asked who her friends were now that she was initiated, participant girl number six expressed her feelings joyfully as she narrated as follows:

My friends are those who are initiated because they may teach me what they went through. We (the initiated) are the models of society. But now when I have come out, my friends are both the initiated and non-initiated (Girl6, interview, February, 2015).

Still another initiated young lady said:

My friends are those who are initiated because they have passed through Sikenge. As for my friends who have not gone through Sikenge, I just see them; I don't listen to what they talk about as it is childish. Once the non-initiated start their conversation, I disassociate myself from them and sit among the elders (Girl, 4, interview, February, 2015).

The findings from the teachers, initiators and initiated girls in this section have demonstrated that the perceptions about initiated girls seemed to rate themselves highly due to the instructions they went through during the seclusion. As such some of them

would not want to associate themselves with the non-initiated. The section below presents the perceptions of society about the initiated girls.

4.2 Societal perceptions of the initiated girls

This theme had a number of sub-themes that resulted from the analysis of data, such as initiation teaches about virtues of a woman, initiation brings about knowledge of cultural values/norms/taboo, initiation brings about socialization, and the acquisition of sexual skills.

4.2.1 Initiated girls are the cream of society

The girls who have gone through *Sikenge* are perceived by society in so many ways. Some people think that the girls are the best in society in terms of mastery of cultural values. Others feel they know it all. There is nothing an adult woman can talk about culture that an initiated girl does not know, be it social life, economic life, physiological life or psychological life. Some people interviewed revealed that marrying a woman who had not been initiated was as good as not having been married at all. They expected such a girl to be fully matured, to have respect for elders, to remember and put what she learnt into practice. The girl is expected to be independent as she has acquired all it takes to be a woman. In other words, the girl must exhibit maturity. Two of the questions I asked the instructors (see appendix E) seem to have brought some of the perceptions of society. The first of the two questions states that, ‘What are the expectations of society of the girls who have gone through *Sikenge*?’ The second one was, ‘How does society perceive the girls who have gone through initiation?’ The following verbal quote supports the above findings:

A girl who has been initiated is expected to behave maturely. She is a fully fledged woman who should exhibit maturity. She should not play around, cooking earth buhobe (thick porridge) or play with young boys and girls in the central village arena; that is unheard off, ee,...A girl who does not show respect for elders is unmarriageable (Initiator 1, interview, February, 2015).

The above excerpt demonstrates that society expects the initiated girls to behave themselves and stop whatever society considered childish behaviour such as playing night games in the village arena with children. To behave like this would mean the girl was still young in her deeds. Society expects the initiated girl to show respect to elders. In other words, the initiated should be obedient to elders. Another initiator interviewed had this to say:

Society perceives initiated girls to be loyal and receptive or accommodative. The way she talks to elders and everybody else in the community should be exemplary and elderly. She should give good example to her young sisters. She should not wait to be told what to do, but be a self-starter in most of the activities (Initiator, 3, interview, February, 2015).

The above sentiments were consolidated by one of the teachers who equally passed through Sikenge. She revealed that the initiated girl was supposed to welcome visitors, look after children, and this behaviour was supposed to be demonstrated shortly after she graduated. In the following excerpt, the teacher expresses her sentiments:

Initiated girls should know how to welcome visitors in their homes. And this should be exhibited immediately they come out of initiation, at their parents' home as they are not yet married (F/Teacher, 1, interview, February, 2015).

When asked on how society perceived her, one of the initiated girls indicated that people in society appreciated her very much because of so many things she had learnt during the seclusion:

People consider me to be a grown up woman. Some of the people even say that now we want to see you managing your own home. What you have learnt should not go to waste but be put to good use (Girl4, interview, February, 2015).

The above excerpt seems to be heavily loaded in the sense that apart from being grown up, the community expects her to manage her own home where she is expected to practice what she learnt during the seclusion. These sentiments seem to be in line with participant six's observations who revealed how the community considered her:

The community looks at me to be a changed person. Actually, some told me that, 'You look to be a changed person; you are now an adult' (Girl 6, interview, February, 2015).

The above excerpt was underscored by yet another girl who expressed that people in the community she lived in had a lot of respect for her as they considered her to be matured:

The people I live with respect me because now am grown up (Girl8, interview, February, 2015).

When asked to comment on society's perception of the initiated girls, the guidance and counseling teacher for one of the schools interviewed had this to say:

....Those girls have sex with elderly men. Immediately they come out of initiation, they are treated like adults. They no longer sleep in the houses of their parents; instead the parents build a small hut for their daughter, a bit far from theirs'. The reason being that once they slept with their daughter in the same house, they would prevent her from having a man as a sexual partner. So they would want to grant her total freedom (F/Teacher3, interview, February, 2015).

The above verbal quote seems to indicate that once a girl was initiated, she was ready to handle any man regardless of the age. It also seems to point to the fact that such a girl reached the period of independence; she could be staying alone in her home. This observation by the teacher was echoed by another teacher who noted that the girl's

coming of age was appreciated greatly by some men whose desire to have a feel of such a girl was not concealed. The excerpt below confirms the above findings:

...some men/boys once they notice that a girl has been initiated, they want to take her in order to have a feel of her in bed. So even if the girl is well behaved, men will lure her into sexual matters...(M/Teacher 2, interview, February, 2015).

The observations by the male teacher in the above excerpt seems to give two scenarios; the first being that the initiated girl would want to experiment what she learnt during the seclusion to see whether it was appreciated by men. The second one is that men, with the knowledge of what initiation does to girls, would want to know what an initiated girl feels like. While initiation teaches about good virtues of a woman, it also offers recreational value to society as it brings people together to celebrate the coming of the newly initiated young lady. The next section gives memories of some participants who were interviewed in this study.

In the Lozi culture, initiation was valued a lot as it did not only offer knowledge to the initiates, but also brought happiness in the hearts of people as they celebrated joyfully the coming out of the initiate. Just knowing or hearing that a certain girl was in Sikenge, or had come out of Sikenge, some men, in particular, started preparing for the day the girl would come out. In fact the day she came out, locally known as *Siyomboka*, was filled with a variety of activities. One participant in this study recalled what transpired on the day she came out of initiation and this was how she put it:

On the day I came out, men, women and children turned up in large numbers to witness my coming of age. I will never forget that day. The previous night that led to the 'big day' was filled with a variety of activities. There were ten drums of locally brewed beer, known as Seven days. In terms of entertainment, ten drums and seven xylophones were organized. I tell you, Sir, it was a colourful day. There was jubilation as people danced the whole night; really there was jubilation all over. No one would talk and expected to be heard amidst such

jubilation. While men were whistling, women were ululating... (Initiator 2, interview, February, 2015).

Another participant expressed similar sentiments as she recalled what happened on the day she came out, thus:

I remember how wonderful my Siyomboka was. One of the songs they sang on that day was, 'My darling is a man without a pot belly; my darling is without a pot belly...' Hah! That day was really wonderful (Girl 5, Interview, February, 2015).

In the above song, the people seem to communicate something to the newly initiated girl; suggesting to her the type of man she should have: one without a pot belly. The song also seems to suggest that time was up for the girl to be married or have a love affair. So apart from offering recreational activity to the community, initiation is time for marketing the newly initiated girl. At the same time, men present themselves to the community.

4.2.2 Initiation brings about mastery of cultural values

Society expected the initiated girls to have mastered the cultural values. This was so because norms and values of society were imparted during seclusion. *Sikenge* was the right period that a girl child was availed with the norms of society. The Lozi society, like other African societies, has so many taboos, norms and values. These values were imparted during such processes. Many participants demonstrated that elders used to tell them not to eat certain food stuffs, such as groundnuts of all kinds, sugar cane, bananas and many others. The two excerpts below give evidence to the above results:

In Sikenge, I learnt that when I get married I should never eat ground nuts, sugar cane, bananas in the presence of my in-laws as that was a big insult to them (Girl 5, interview, 5th February, 2015).

Don't play with boys...again don't eat sugar cane and bananas in the presence of your in-laws (she looks down and stops talking).

The researcher asks her, is it all you learnt in seclusion for three weeks? She looks down and hesitantly, responds,

“Yes, this is all I learnt for three weeks”(Girl 7, interview, 6th February, 2015).

Another participant who went through initiation also gave her experience during the seclusion where elders taught her not to eat certain crops:

The elders used to tell me not to eat ground nuts, sugar cane and bananas (Girl 8, interview, 6th February, 2015).

After the initiated girls unveiled what they learnt on taboos, the researcher felt that the responses given by the girls were inadequate. So, he made a follow up and asked the participants individually to give an elaborate explanation on the meaning of the taboos or myths they shared. One of the initiated girls gave her experience:

I was told not to eat bananas, sugar cane and ground nuts in the presence of my in-laws because: eating bananas, for instance, symbolizes the sexual act. The peeling off a banana simulates the stripping off the man's sexual organ (penis) in readiness for a sexual act. On the other hand, the peeled banana represents a penis. The mouth in which the banana goes in and out represents the vagina. So when you eat the banana in the presence of your in-laws, you are simply insulting them. As for sugar cane, the sound you make when you are eating it, simulates that of a couple makes when it is having sexual intercourse. As regards ground nuts, they symbolize the clitoris. This is so because... (Looks down, hesitates and smiles shyly, then continues) when you look at their round shape, it's exactly like that of a clitoris. Eee,...never eat these food stuffs where your in-laws are present; they will make you

pay a chicken; have you understood?(Girl 5, interview, February, 2015).

In response to the question, ‘What teachings do you impart into the girls who go through *Sikenge*?’ The initiators gave detailed explanation from which the researcher picked excerpts for this section. The following excerpts reveal what was gathered:

*We teach the girls many things: It’s a taboo to sleep with men (having sex) when you are menstruating; because men of nowadays can tell you to sleep with them when you are having your menses, and say that there is no problem. This is a taboo. You can cause them (men) to suffer from a chronic illness; monthly periods are dangerous to you men. A woman cannot put salt in relish when she has menses, no. Instead, she will have to call a child who has not yet reached menarche; give her salt to put in the relish. Not a woman who is menstruating, no. She will cause her husband to suffer from an incurable chest disease; he will start coughing endlessly. If you went to the hospital today, you would find that a lot of men are suffering from tuberculosis (TB) as a result of not following these taboos. Men don’t follow the traditional values because they have adopted the western culture. Women are not initiated; thus they do whatever they learn from school. That’s where there is a difference between schooling and *Sikenge*. Connected to this is that a newly wedded woman, when she is having her menses, should go and sit behind their house. Then the girl who escorted her (*kashambeli*) will go and bring her from there and hand her over to her husband. Then the husband will know that my wife has gone through *Sikenge*.... (Initiator2, interview, 5th February, 2015).*

The issue of keeping secrets was given equal attention in *Sikenge*. Society expects an initiated girl not to divulge secrets of society. Usually, after teaching the girls, the instructors and elders would sit them down and counsel them never to disclose what they learnt through *Sikenge* to non-initiated girls and any other person whose knowledge of the culture was not necessary; we teach girls to keep secrets. In the excerpt below, the Initiator2 gives a scenario in which a non-initiated woman would divulge bedroom secrets:

...Yes, a girl may have gone to school quite alright, but if she has not gone through Sikenge you will notice the way she behaves. In a home, should the husband make a silly mistake like that of wetting beddings, she will publicize it, 'I'm astonished, today, and my husband has wetted beddings, or has urinated on me'. If the husband has hernia... an uninitiated girl will go round telling people and friends that she is startled by the size of her husband's testicles which are abnormally big. Nonetheless, for the one who has gone through Sikenge that will be not the case; she understands that that is how my colleague is, it's an illness that's needs to be treated(Initiator 2, interview, February, 2015).

In this excerpt, the participant compares the teachings given to girls during *Sikenge* with schooling and bemoans the lack of integrity that a non-initiated girl would exhibit in a marriage by not keeping secrets. She perceives *Sikenge* to be more important in imparting good moral values than schooling, and the process for the young ladies to receive cultural values which they cannot get anywhere else. *Sikenge*, from her point of view, teaches life skills that every woman should possess. The next theme presents some teachings on sexual matters.

4.2.3 Acquisition of sexual knowledge in readiness for marriage

Matters of sex were given prominence in as far as *Sikenge* was concerned. Young ladies are trained in a number of aspects relating to sex. It seems more attention was given to this part than any other. Girls were taught on how to handle a man during coitus, how to clean his manhood after a sexual act, how to arouse his interest during the sexual act among other skills. Many participants interviewed expressed the need to train a woman on issues of sex. Some even said knowledge of sexual skills adds value to the woman; if a woman did not go through *Sikenge* and was getting married, she should go through some sexual teachings through what is, presently, known as Kitchen party. Most of the participants revealed that initiated girls are knowledgeable about sexual matters. The excerpts below seem to confirm the above findings:

Initiated girls tend to be proactive in terms of their relationship with boys. What they learn in Sikenge, among other things, is how to deal with men during sexual intercourse. They have an experimental attitude, thus become naughty. So somehow they want to experiment what they learnt there (M/Teacher 2, Interview, 5th February, 2015).

Since they (girls) have learnt ...how to handle men during sexual act, they would want to put what they learnt into practice. In the process, some dropout of school for them to get married (F/Teacher 1, Interview, 5th February, 2015).

The above excerpts seem to qualify the general purpose of female initiation rites of imparting sexual matters in the young girls in readiness for marriage. In the next quote, Initiator 2 gives an elaborate discussion about what the girls were taught during the seclusion. She indicates:

The first thing we teach the girls is to clean the man's sexual organ after intercourse.

We teach them that, after cleaning the penis, you put it in between your husband's thighs nicely, draw backward and clap respectfully.... That's what makes initiated girls feel shy when they look at their male parents. The teachings they receive in Sikenge make them behave differently towards their fathers. The other issue we teach them is that on the wedding day, a woman should not join her husband without a thorough preparation of herself, no. She should ensure to cut her nails both from hands and toes, shave her pubic hair as well as the armpit hair. These are wrapped in a plastic paper and taken to a stream where they will be put under water in mud. We also teach the girls that once they are at their husband's home, they should never shave pubic hair or armpit without their husbands' consent. Even if their husbands are absent from home for some time, they have to seek permission from them. If he (husband) refuses, the woman has to wait for him until he comes back. When he comes back home, he will shave his wife both the pubic and armpit hair. These are some of the teachings we teach the

girls in Sikenge. Once a girl receives such lessons, which cannot be found anywhere else apart from Sikenge, even if she was so stubborn, she will behave herself. Sorry, sorry, I forgot one important thing. In Sikenge, we don't use the real penis to demonstrate on how to clean the man's penis, no! We use the index finger, the one we use for pointing. We demonstrate on how to clean it starting from the base where dirt accumulates up to the head. Once you are done, if the man is uncircumcised, you roll up the fore skin nicely, and then replace the penis in between the thighs... (Initiator, 2, Interview, 5th February, 2015).

In the above excerpt, the teachings inculcated into the young girls seem to prepare them for marriage life where they are going to serve the male as wives who will have to be dominated by the males. The next excerpt from initiator 1 seems to amplify the above findings:

...We teach girls about marriage issues. On their wedding day ... When the bride reaches the groom's place, she stands aside until she is given money. Once she has been given the money, she sits on the floor and not on the mat provided as that would be used by those who had escorted her. After people have entertained themselves through dances, songs accompanied by beer and food, the bride is advised to leave for her husband's bedroom in the company of her instructor (chilombola)...While inside the house; she sits at the end of the bed. Now the instructor comes out leaving her in the hands of her husband. Immediately, the husband stands where he was seated, walks towards the bride and holds her by the pinky (little finger), lifts her and leads her to the bed. There she cannot strip off her clothes unless she is given money. Once given money, the bride undresses and leaves the clothes right there as the groom would know where to put them. Even though she has stripped off her clothes, she does not climb the bed in the middle but at the end of it until the man draws her towards himself. Culturally, the groom starts the sexual play and not the bride; so he would fondle her though sometimes not to the point where the bride is sexually ready. So they will have coitus. In the process, the bride should be more attentive to the groom's feelings. As the man is about to ejaculate, the woman puts

her hand at the bottom (implying that this is a missionary position) to intercept the sperms from wetting the beddings as that would attract a fine (Initiator, 3, Interview, 5th February, 2015).

Commenting on what was taught in *Sikenge*, most girls interviewed indicated that they learnt on how to keep their home, maintain marriage, and on how to relate with the relatives of their future husbands. In the next verbal quote, Girl 1 states what she was taught during the seclusion:

...How to keep home, maintain marriage, how to relate with my in-laws... (Girl 1, interview, 4th February, 2015).

While much of what was taught in *Sikenge* seemed to revolve around marriage matters, it was discovered, in this study, that *Sikenge* prepared the girls to be economically independent. The excerpt below seems to reveal the sentiments of the initiator 2 on the economic value of *Sikenge*:

A young lady, who has passed through Sikenge especially, in the olden days, should know how to make baskets, reed mats, pottery works and other things (Initiator 2, interview, 5th February, 2015).

Initiation was also found to teach girls to avoid relating with boys. It also taught young girls to dress decently as society never expected them to wear short or miniskirts. Girl 6's contribution seems to qualify the above findings:

In Sikenge, I was taught to keep myself away from young men who were just cheating women. I was also taught on how to dress properly... If it is a skirt, it should go beyond the knees. Short skirts make a lady a prostitute (Girl 6, interview, 6th February, 2015).

In the above excerpt, initiation seems to prepare girls in so many aspects of life. Good morals seem to be taught during the seclusion such that when the girls come out they seem to behave themselves.

In this section, the teachings imparted during the seclusion have been outlined. While there were so many aspects taught during *Sikenge*, the larger part of what was taught during seclusion was centered on marriage life. The girls seemed to be prepared for marriage life which they may go into shortly after the seclusion. In the next section, the attitudes of girls towards schooling have been presented.

4.3 The attitude of initiated girls towards schooling.

The attitude of initiated girls towards schooling was varied depending on various factors as revealed by most of the participants in this study, as could be seen from the various sub-themes that emerged from this theme.

4.3.1 School attendance during and after initiation

In terms of school attendance, the majority of the participants stated that initiated girls seemed to exhibit peculiar behaviour; their behaviour seems to change due to the teachings they receive in seclusion. Some participants interviewed in this study, said that initiated girls did not come to school regularly as they had to attend to other duties assigned to them by their parents. Other participants said that not only did initiated girls shun schooling due to home chores and responsibilities given to them, but also due to the new status they acquired in society; that is, the status of an adult which is equivalent to that of their mothers and other women. They have nothing to fear about as their minds are preoccupied with marital issues: All the teachers interviewed in this study reported that most of the initiated girls did not come to school regularly.

The verbal quote below from F/Teacher 3, underscores the teachers' revelations:

Most girls who don't come to school are those who have gone through Sikenge. They like participating in so much makishi dances that in the process stop coming to

school. Some get pregnant and eventually drop out of school (F/Teacher 3, Interview, 6th Feb. 2015).

On the contrary, some participants expressed that *Sikenge* nowadays did not interfere with the girls' education. The verbal quote below from one of the initiators supports the above results:

We put some girls in Sikenge while they are at school. I had one girl who was a Grade 10 pupil at Holy Cross Girls' Secondary School whose behaviour was unruly. So her mother requested me to put her in Sikenge even though she was in Grade 10. At first, I hesitated and advised her to let the girl continue schooling as putting her in Sikenge would disturb her school. But her mother insisted that I initiate her and suggested that she be in Sikenge for one year. Knowing that there were afternoon activities at school, I proposed that we go to school and talk to her class teacher. We went to the school the following day and informed the class teacher that the girl was in Sikenge. While at school, we were told that there were three more balanjo (initiates) in her class. The teachers thanked us and assured us that they would be freeing them in the afternoon during the co-curricular activities. This girl stayed in Sikenge for one year as I have already indicated while she was attending lessons at school. We would teach her on Saturdays then on Sundays she rested and went to school during school days... (Initiator 2, Interview, 5th February, 2015).

For the first teacher interviewed, in this study, had mixed feelings as regards initiated school girls' attitude towards school:

It depends. Some girls would want to practice what they learnt during Sikenge while others would want to continue with school. We have such cases, whereby some girls want to get married and already some have stopped school and gone for marriage (F/Teacher 1, Interview, 4th February, 2015).

However, all the 9 initiated girls interviewed expressed willingness to continue with school. Below are some of the excerpts confirming the abovepoint:

My views about school are to continue schooling. Even in Sikenge, I was advised to continue schooling and not focus on men, who are time wasters (Girl 2, Interview, 4th Feb, 2015).

...I'm still willing to continue with my education at school because if I stopped, how would I survive? (Girl 1, Interview, 4th Feb. 2015).

My wish is to continue schooling. I'm doing fine at school (Girl 7, Interview, 6th February, 2015)

In terms of school, I'm happy and I intend to continue. I don't think about marriage as that is inviting suffering for myself (Girl 6, Interview, 6th Feb. 2015).

As regards schooling, I consider it to be very important; even when I was in Sikenge; I used to come to school. I don't feel to be grown up (Girl 4, Interview, 6th Feb. 2015).

In these excerpts, different views have been demonstrated concerning initiated girls. The following section presents perceptions concerning initiated girls towards schooling.

4.3.2 Initiated girls' performance at school

Teachers disclosed that the performance of some initiated girls deteriorates during and after initiation. Reasons given by the teachers include absenteeism due to initiation-related issues and the feeling of tiredness especially if the girl had some great teachings the previous day. Some teachers maintain that it would depend on the learner's intellectual ability whether the academic performance of an initiate or initiated girl drops or not. One educator gave a scenario of a very intelligent learner who was initiated but the process negatively affected her performance resulting in failure at the end of the year. The following verbal quotes support the above issues that emerged from the educators' responses:

Yes, they perform very poorly. The reason is because initiation poses lots of challenges on the girls (F/Teacher 1, interview, 4th February, 2015).

Eh..., I had an experience where a learner, before she was initiated all the years she was excellent in class, but now it's something else...(F/Teacher 3, interview, 6th February, 2015).

Teachers disclosed that the general performance of the schools in the district would be poor as a result of high rate of initiation rites practised in society. Some of the reasons they gave include absenteeism; lack of concentration on school work and low cooperation between them and teachers; and divided attention:

Initiated girls don't come to school; as a result they miss lessons which by the end of the term they don't perform well in end of term tests (M/Teacher 2, interview, 4th February, 2015).

The first few days, if not a week or two, of initiation, you may not be allowed to attend school lessons and this negatively affects your performance; worse still, is when the activity happens during the exams (Girl 4, interview, 4th February, 2015).

It's good that some parents especially, here in town have realized the negative impact posed by initiation on the girls. Thus, some parents don't rush into having their girls initiated to avoid causing them have divided attention (F/Teacher 3, interview, 6th February, 2015).

...the majority of them are underachievers because they have to serve two masters at the same time-the initiators and teachers (F/Teacher 1, interview, 4th February, 2015).

Another factor is the period during which the initiation takes place. Worse is when it happens in the third term then their performance in the exams really goes down (M/Teacher 2, interview, 4th February, 2015).

The teachers think that initiation causes more harm than good to the girl child. If a school has a huge number of initiates in that particular year, the performance, generally, will be bad. According to them a child's performance largely depends on how much dedication and importance she attaches to her studies. But this scenario, how can a girl perform well when she is in a quagmire-to trust the material she receives from the initiators at home or that from the her teachers at school. In this regard, some teachers suggested that initiation should wait until the girl finishes her grade twelve or when she goes for marriage. To support the above findings, below are the verbal quotes:

Girls should be allowed to complete their school before they are initiated (F/Teacher 1, interview, 4th February, 2015).

I think there is no need of initiating the girls once they experience menarche as this affects their performance (F/Teacher 3, interview, 6th February, 2015).

However, some teachers and initiators felt that performance depended on someone's capability and level of intelligence. Some girls are gifted and determined; so, they can perform wonders regardless of being initiated.

...But some of the girls perform well at school. It depends on the capability and level of intelligence that a child has (F/Teacher 3, interview, 6th February, 2015).

...We initiated one girl who was at Holy Cross, as I'm speaking now; she has completed her training at Mongu College of Education. So we have seen that initiation does not disturb their schooling...(Initiator 2, interview, 5th February, 2015).

Generally, the performance is poor as the girls are preoccupied with the experiences they have gone through. Some boys also make fun of the initiated girls by asking them silly questions like, 'So you know how to keep a home. So to avoid that, the girl may stop coming to school (M/Teacher2).

4.3.3 Some initiated girls seek adult attention

The relationship between teachers and initiated girls seemed to be somewhat cordial. One teacher revealed that whenever there was a function such as *Siyomboka*(the celebration which marked the end of initiation) for one of their pupils, they were invited to witness the coming out of their child and give support. However, two teachers expressed disappointment in the way the initiated girls related with them. One of the female teachers disclosed that some initiated girls did not behave well towards teachers. They seemed to compete with female teachers in terms of dressing, cosmetics application and other things. As regards the girls' relationship with male teachers, some participants disclosed that initiated girls tended to focus on male teachers as their husbands. They seemed not to express fear or give them adequate respect; a situation that seemed to point to the fact that they (girls) can be more than ready to marry them. In other words, the girls expressed intimacy relationship towards male teachers. The following excerpts seem to consolidate these findings:

...some initiated girls behave like equals with us. They seem to compete with us in terms of dressing, hair styling ... (F/Teacher 1,).

Some initiated girls perceive male teachers as their intimate friends. Even when you are explain g something to them, they seem not to be serious; they would keep on viewing you...(M/Teacher 2, interview, 5th February, 2015).

Some teachers disclosed that for those girls who dropped out of school and opted for marriage, they sacrificed their time by following them up to their villages. In some cases, they had managed to retrieve them from their husbands. The following excerpt confirms this point:

...being a member of FAWEZA, we normally go into the villages and look for married girls, bring them back to school. For girls that are in our catchment area, once we notice that they no longer come to school, we go out

looking for them. Once we find them, we bring them back to school (F/Teacher1, interview, 4th February, 2015).

For those that value marriage so much, we normally advise them that before they go for marriage, they should take school seriously and find a job if they will have to live well (F/Teacher 1, interview, 4th February, 2015).

The above excerpts had demonstrated the negative effects of initiation on the girls who went through them. Through the teachings the girls received in the seclusion, their minds seemed to be transformed and made them look at issues from their own understanding.

4.4 Summary

The study sought to investigate the perceptions of girls who had gone through *Sikengetowards* schooling. This study revealed, among other things, that initiation taught girls about cultural values, such as taking care of their homes when they got married, and taking care of their future husbands. Other values included respect for elders and knowledge of about sexual matters. People's expectations and perceptions about initiated girls were as well brought forth. Some of the people's views include the need to see girls behave responsibly by showing respect to the elders; behave maturely by not playing with children as they are now adults. It was also revealed that initiation makes some girls poor achievers academically as their minds are preoccupied with issues to do with sexual matters. However, it was also disclosed that schooling was very important in the lives of children; thus all participants indicated that schooling surpassed initiation. In the next chapter, the findings are discussed in relation to other scholars' work.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to other studies done in some parts of the world in general, Africa, and Zambia in particular. To ensure that there was coherence in the way the findings were discussed; three themes which were the reflection of the objectives were followed. These themes were: perceptions of initiated girls about themselves; societal perceptions of initiated girls; and the attitude of initiated girls towards schooling. In addition, each theme had three sub-themes that made the discussion flow properly. Just to revisit the purpose of the study; it was undertaken to investigate the perceptions of girls who had gone through *Sikenge* and their perception about schooling.

The revelations of the current study seemed to indicate that perceptions concerning initiated girls were numerous. All the three categories of participants used in this study, though had their own way of looking at initiation, seemed to have one thing in common, that is, the preparation of girls in sexual matters and motherhood. While there were three categories of participants used in this research, the findings of the current study were not discussed separately; but instead were mixed together to have a comprehensive as well as a holistic report. By mixing the findings, the researcher employed a technique known as triangulation in order to enhance the credibility and legitimacy to the findings (see Munsaka, 2009). The next section discusses the theme of how girls who have gone through *Sikenge* perceive themselves.

5.1 Perceptions of initiated girls about themselves.

After the analysis of data, three sub-themes emerged from this theme. These were Initiation is a period of maturity attainment; initiation brings about a new identity; and initiated girls look down on the uninitiated girls. The following section discusses the findings of how initiation brought about maturity.

5.1.1 Initiation brings about maturity.

This study established that *Sikenge*, like other African female initiation rites, made girls who went through it become more mature than before. This maturity seemed to be attributed to the teachings the girls received during the seclusion. It was observed that, among the Lozi people, great instructions for the girl child were mainly given during the seclusion period. The great instructions and ordeals that the girl received in seclusion seemed to transform her thinking capacity in such a way that she began to view herself differently in the eyes of people. In other words, *Sikenge* was celebrated as a rite of passage to mark the transitioning of a girl from childhood into adulthood. The views of Instructor 1 seemed to confirm the maturity that girls attained during seclusion as she says, "... once the girl experiences the first menses, she is put in seclusion where she receives great instructions, signifying that she is... now an adult..." The word 'adult' in this context seemed to refer to the full development and maturity of the girl; implying that the girl had crossed the border that separated childhood from adulthood and was now a mature woman. In this regard, *Sikenge* conformed to Van Gennep's (1960) concept of 'rites of passage' which he developed in 1908. *Sikenge*, in this regard, was equally similar to Lincoln's (1991) interpretation of initiation. It is important to re-visit Van Gennep's (1960) concept of rites of passage and Lincoln's (1991) understanding of initiation here in brief to see how they related with *Sikenge* taking each phase at a time.

According to Van Gennep (1960), initiation of any kind be it, birth, puberty or death, followed three phases: separation, transition and reincorporation. This was similar to Lincoln's (1991) interpretation of the pattern of initiation-enclosure; metamorphosis and emergence (see Chapter 2). To elucidate on these three phases, Van Gennep (1960) states that, in the first stage, the neophyte was cut off the rest of society in order to go through some instructions that would prepare her take on the new identity and sets of roles expected of her by society. Initiator 3's narrative seemed to give the type of instructions the girls received during the seclusion when she says, "...Our role, as *chilombolas* to *mwalanjo*,...is to give her instructions. And she should grasp these instructions.... The first instruction, when she goes into marriage, is to respect her husband, not to insult him..." This corroborates Lincoln's (1991) second stage of

initiation in which the novice received detailed teachings that transformed her inwardly. It was during this stage that, in addition to the teachings she received, the girl was empowered with a collection of roles and responsibilities (Brown, 1963; 1970).

The present study established that the girls who were admitted to *Sikenge* were those who had experienced menses. In other words, the girls who had attained puberty *mwalanjo*, neophytes, were put in seclusion just upon experiencing the first menses; she was separated from the rest of the family members in order to undergo some important instructions pertaining to society. Instructor 1's sentiments seemed to authenticate this finding. For example, Instructor 1 said, "... once the girl experiences the first menses, she is put in seclusion where she receives great instructions...." This quote seemed to emphasize the fact that, instructions of maturity were given during the seclusion.

It emerged from this study, as already mentioned above, that during the seclusion the girl received great instructions. This was so because society felt that it was during this period, in the life of a girl, that she was instructed on a number of cultural aspects in order to transform her thinking capacity and the way of living. This understanding was evidenced by the contributions given by most of the participants interviewed in this study. Girl 6, for instance, appreciated how *Sikenge* had transformed her life when she said, "...Initiation has changed my life...In terms of dressing, and there is a big difference...." This assertion seemed to resonate with Van Gennep's (1960) second phase where the girl received instructions that transformed her thinking capacity. In other words, Van Gennep believed that initiation transformed the initiate psychologically. There seemed to be some change in the young lady in terms of thinking, dressing, and generally, in the way she did things. This change acknowledged by this girl seemed to emanate from the instructions grasped from seclusion. Instructor 2 equally, seemed to underscore this finding when she said, "...Before she (my daughter) was put in seclusion, she would leave home around 19 hours and come back at about 22 hours..."

It was important to learn that, in the Lozi society, like in other African societies, a young woman who went out of parents' home during the night without properly explaining her destination was considered to be disrespectful, playful, childish, and stubborn. In fact, in some cases, she was labeled a prostitute. Hence, the sentiments of Instructor 2 above seemed to disapprove the behaviour of her daughter before she was put in seclusion. However, after the girl was put in seclusion, she behaved responsibly. The change in behaviour was attributed to the teachings she received in seclusion. The use of the word 'before' by Instructor 2 in the above verbatim seemed to clarify the assertion that the girl was stubborn and was leading a promiscuous life before she was confined and this led her to conceive a child before being initiated. A study carried out by Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) among the Bedouin Arabs of the Negev area seems to agree with the above findings. According to Abu-Rabia-Queder, there was behaviour change in girls who went through cultural traditions such as initiation rites. This revelation suggested that cultural traditions, to which *Sikenge* was part of, were held to transform the young women.

In the Lozi society, like in most African societies, a girl who conceived a child before initiation was looked down on by society; it was a great taboo. It could therefore, be deduced that *Sikenge* was a place of reformatory. Furthermore, it could be argued that maturity, among the Lozi girls, was attained during the *Sikenge* ritual. Studies done in some parts of Zambia on initiation rites were in line with the above findings. For instance, Richards (1956), and Raising (2001) in their study among the Bemba speaking people discovered that initiation rites were means through which female adolescents were initiated to mark the transition from childhood into adulthood. In his study among the Tonga boys and girls who dropped out of school, Munsaka (2009) observed that female initiation *Nkolola* was celebrated to mark the girl's transitioning into adulthood.

This study further revealed that if a woman did not go through *Sikenge*, she was not worth a woman; but instead, a fool, an imbecile, and not marriageable. As exemplified by Girls 1 and 7 in the separate interviews, *Sikenge* was a 'school' organized to transform the young ladies. Girl 1, for instance, asserted, "...if you don't go through *Sikenge*, you are useless; an imbecile...." This verbatim seems to disapprove all women

who had not passed through *Sikenge* that they did not know anything pertaining to the traditional practices and culture; as such, they were considered worthless. Like the former participant's views of the uninitiated woman, Girl 7 perceived an uninitiated woman to be worthless, unprincipled, and behaved strangely as she was found everywhere. Girl 7 said, "...A woman who hasn't passed through *Sikenge* is a scoundrel, ill-mannered. She behaves like a chicken whose head is cut off...." The use of the metaphor "chicken whose head is cut off" in this utterance, seemed to negatively describe the behaviour of an uninitiated woman. In the researcher's understanding of the metaphor, this kind of behaviour was uncalled for; as the woman did not have a direction at all as she moved up and down aimlessly. In the Lozi culture, a woman regardless of the age needed to undergo initiation if she was to be considered a real woman.

Other studies conducted in Zambia (see Mundumuko, 1990; Munsaka, 2009; Mutunda, 2013; Raising, 2001; Richards, 1956) seemed to resonate the above findings. For instance, a study conducted by Richards (1956) among the Bemba speaking people, reported that initiation played a very significant role in the life of every woman. Marrying a woman who was not initiated, according to Richards, was as good as remaining single. Richards compared an uninitiated woman to an uncured clay pot, because that woman was ignorant of vital cultural values and virtues. In other words, the uninitiated woman was uncultured; and therefore, unmarriageable (see Munsaka, 2009; Jassen, 2002). Richards' (1956) comparison of uninitiated woman to uncured clay pot, seemed to suggest how immaturity such a woman was. Under normal circumstance, a clay pot should be cured so that it becomes strong, does not leak or weep while cooking. In other words, the inner surface of pottery must be sealed before use. Similarly, in the Lozi culture, uninitiated girl or woman portrayed the qualities of the woman described by Richards; she seemed to be uncultured; had no direction both in her thinking and dealings, and had no morals. Perhaps it was in this context that Initiator 2, in the above assertion, disapproved the behaviour of her daughter who would go out of home from 19 hours and come back somewhere around 22 hours. So, she (Initiator 2) decided to have her daughter initiated to correct the misbehaviour. The celebration of *Sikenge* among the

Lozi people brought prestige in the lives of girls who went through it because of the new identity they acquired in society. In the next section, the researcher discussed how *Sikenge* brought about a new identity.

5.1.2 Initiation brings about a new identity.

The present research unearthed that initiation brought about a new identity in the women who went through it. The majority of the participants in this study disclosed that initiation was very important in the life of every woman and that those that had not gone through it had something lacking in their life; they had not reached the climax of their life. For those who had gone through *Sikenge* had the courage to boast around. Girl 4, for example, boastfully said that she was no longer playing with children; and this was how she put it:

“I no longer play with children. I’m now grown up and am proud of myself. I can do everything that an elderly woman does...”

These sentiments coming from the newly initiated young woman seem to indicate that initiation brought about self-esteem which brought assertiveness in a woman. The girl was proud of herself for undergoing initiation which, according to the Lozi society, and other African societies, seemed to be the most important event in the life of every woman. This feeling of initiated girls was in agreement with some scholars’ understanding of initiation which stated that individuals view themselves in terms of meaning imparted by a structured society (Call & Simons 1978; Stryker 1980; Turner et al., 1987). It was for this reason, as one may argue that, the initiated girl may begin to exhibit very strange behaviour especially towards the male folk; she perceives herself to be unique in the eyes of others. As a result of feeling unique, the girl may begin to form some intimate relationships with the male folk, in which, at the loss of her schooling, may become pregnant. A male teacher (**M/Teacher 2**) had the following to say:

Initiated girls tend to be more proactive in terms of their relationship with boys. They have an experimental attitude...So, somehow, they want to experiment what they learnt there...

The above assertion seemed to underscore the findings of Markus and Kitayama (1991) cited in Munsaka (2009) who indicated that the concept of 'self' to non-societies was understood from the collectivistic point of view which in this case, included most African societies. It may be argued that the Lozi society from which these findings were unearthed, being collectivistic, seemed to form the concept of self in the women through the initiation rite. Self-esteem was still displayed by Girl 6 who bragged about her coming of age and indicated that before she was initiated, she never used to go to *Sikenge* when elders were present as she would be chased

"Before I was initiated, I never used to go in Sikenge when elders were there. I would be chased the moment they came in...."

From the response of Girl 6 (see page 44), it was clear that her self-esteem was centered on the sexual expertise of dancing in bed (during coitus) which she learnt from initiation. She had the audacity to boast around that she could teach the initiate on how to wriggle in bed. In the Lozi culture, like in most African cultures, the initiate should learn how to please her future husband in bed. The issue of wriggling in bed was also reported by Drews (1995) in her study among the Kunda people of the Luangwa Valley. Richards (1956) also noted that an initiated girl should display bedroom dances during coitus in order to serve the male ideal. The majority of the Lozi men, culturally, seemed to know that initiated girls knew bedroom dances. Perhaps, it was against this background that when a girl came out of seclusion, on the 'big day' as Drews (1995) calls it; men and women rushed there just to have a glimpse of the young lady who displayed bedroom skills (wriggling) in public especially among the Mbunda speaking people. In other words, during the celebration, some men attended these functions not only to recreate themselves but to assess how skillful the newly initiated girl was. Other men even pledged to marry her as soon as she came out (see Munsaka, 2009).

Girl 3 in her perception of non-initiated girls seemed to consolidate the views of Girl 6 in the latter excerpt in which she stated how initiation had prepared her attain self-esteem (see pages 44 and 45). This girl looked down on the uninitiated girl by stating that such a girl was an infant referring to immaturity in terms of her thinking capacity.

The views of Girl 3 seemed to indicate that the young lady was very excited with her graduation from seclusion which had transformed her thinking capacity, and the way she performed her duties was more than her colleagues who had not. In other words, initiation had added more value to her than her friends who had not gone through *Sikenge*. These findings were related to Beckwith's observations among the young girls from the Krobo ethnic group, which was dispersed across Ghana who performed the *Dipoceremony*. According to Beckwith, the initiate was encouraged to leave behind her childish ways and adopt the stature of a woman full of dignity and beauty. In addition to home chores, the girl was taught the art of seduction as the Krobo women took the art of pleasing a man in every way possible seriously. The teaching of all these aspects to a woman, seemed to make her feel so educated that she may not wait for an opportune time (marriage) to transfer the skill. Like in other African societies, in the Lozi culture, the art of preparing young girls in marital issues seemed to bring great joy in the girls and women. Probably, it was against this background, that all the participants in this study particularly the initiated girls and women, supported the institution of *Sikenge* as it made them realise their full potential in society. Initiator 3's assertion shown on page 45 of this dissertation about *Sikenge*, and part of which is repeated here, concretizes the above findings:

“When you are initiated, you really feel you are on top of others. You walk with your head high because you are part and parcel of the community. Your dealings are mature; and this is the most important stage in the life of a woman. Every woman who attains it (initiation), is rated most high in society. So, I'm so happy that I have attained it”.

From Initiator 3's assertion, it may be understood how the girls who had gone through *Sikenge* perceived themselves in society. They felt unique in the eyes of people. The use of the superlative in the second last line in the above utterance 'most high' seemed to point out that there was not any other institution (formal schooling inclusive) that could impart similar teachings. However, this notion, as the researcher observed, seemed to derail and brainwash most of the girls who went through *Sikenge* from school. F/Teacher 2's observation stated on page 45 of this dissertation about the initiated girl, shaded more light,

"... there is behaviour change in the initiated girls as they tend to associate themselves in groups. They wouldn't want to associate with the non-initiated ones. There are groups or camps in school as a result of the teachings they receive in Sikenge".

Initiation, in this sense, seemed to create categories in the girls as they grouped themselves. The girls associated themselves with the elders and not with their age mates who had not gone through *Sikenge*. The two theories that guided this study, "Social Identity"; and "Self categorization" seemed to be in harmony with the above findings. According to Tajfel (1982), 'social identity' was the portion of an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group. People were motivated to achieve and maintain positive concepts for themselves. In other words, the Social -identity theory focused on the causes and consequences of identifying with a social group or category; while the Self- categorization theory, a theory developed by Turner et al., (1987) focuses on the causes and consequences of identifying with a particular role '*identification*' (Burke & Stets, 1998). A person realised that he or she belonged to a social category or in- group (self-categorization) (Hogg & Abrams, 1988) therefore, he or she needed to behave as expected by that in-group s/he belonged to. Any person, thus, who differed from the self, was labeled the out-group. Stryker (1980) argues, self- categorization was relevant to the formation of one's identity in which categorization depended upon a named and classified world (In this case, the Lozi society).

As alluded to in the previous paragraph, it was established in this study that initiation constructed social identity in the young ones. Most of the participants interviewed, demonstrated that *Sikenge* played a great deal in imparting social roles in the initiates. The roles ranged from looking after home, taking care of parents, children to most importantly, caring for the future husband. This became evident when Girl 2 seemed to demonstrate how valuable, among the Lozi society, initiation was, “In *Sikenge*, I was taught how to care for my home when I get married, how to take care of my husband, look after my children, look after my husband’s relatives....”

As can be seen from the above verbatim, the Lozi society valued *Sikenge*, as a period the *mwalyanjo* received a new status through a variety of roles she was given. The *Sikenge* curriculum was fully packed with traditional virtues, and morals that were given to the young woman. However, schooling was hardly mentioned in seclusion. In this sense, it could be argued that, the lack of mention of formal schooling during *Sikenge*, but the concentration more on sexual matters, seemed to erode the girls’ thinking about schooling. Hence, when the girls graduated from *Sikenge*, they seemed to put little or no attention at all on formal schooling. These findings are related to Munsaka’s (2009) discovery in which he reported that initiation influenced girls to drop out of school as they were in a dilemma whether to follow what they learnt during the seclusion or fulfill the requirements of formal schooling. The receipt of the new status by the *mwalyanjo*, was consolidated by Initiator 2 who explained how a name was used to change someone’s status:

In the past, when a girl came out of Sikenge, she was given a new name to signify that she was grown up. Usually, such a name would start with, ‘Ma’ then a name. For instance, ‘Ma-Nyambe’, which, literally, means, ‘the mother of Nyambe’. In this way, the young lady automatically took up the roles of a woman. She was considered to be a mother even before she had no child.

In this excerpt, the *mwalyanjo* assumed responsibilities soon after she graduated from the *Sikenge*. What seemed to be interesting in the above excerpt was the manner in

which the new status was conferred on the newly graduated young woman. In the Lozi culture, like in other African cultures, usually a woman, after giving birth to a child, was named after that child. Such a name began with “Ma” plus the name of the child. The prefix “Ma” entails “mother of”. So, if a graduating girl was given such a name, she automatically assumed the roles of a wife and mother. These findings are related to what Sumbwa (1988) as cited in Mundumuko (1990) discovered when he conducted a study on *Sikenge* among the Lozi people.

According to Sumbwa (1988), on the day of coming out of *Sikenge*, the young woman was made to choose a name that signified her newly acquired status. To ensure that the young woman did not only acquire a new status but roles as well, she was involved into a play locally known as *Nalikwendangile* where she followed a staggering woman while balancing a cup of water on her head. The balancing of the cup of water entailed that she mastered the facts of life while the staggering woman signified her parents and any other elderly person. Thus, she had a responsibility to look after her parents as they were growing old (Mundumuko, 1979). Nevertheless, this might not be the case currently. Generally, media reports showed that the elderly people in Zambia were shunned by their children. Some were beaten, killed or burned to death after being accused of practicing witchcraft. In this scenario, it is doubtful whether all the girls that undergo *Sikenge* put into practice what they were taught.

A study by Drews (1995) among the Kunda of Luangwa valley equally, reports similar findings. According to Drews, the Kunda people, during *Chinamwalimade* a girl “like her mother”. The girl assumed this status on the day she came out of seclusion. Drews further states that, on the day the girl came out of seclusion, she was made to sit on a mat with her mother. Just there, the status of motherhood was conferred on her. It, therefore, follows that female initiation rites, confer a new identity on the girls who go through them thereby making them feel so elevated in society that, in the end, they look down on the uninitiated. In the next section, the researcher discusses the theme of how initiation causes initiated girls to look down on uninitiated girls.

5.1.3 Initiated girls look down on the uninitiated.

It emerged in this study that the relationship between the initiated and non-initiated girls, was not very good. The factors behind their not co-operating may be numerous; but the most evident one, was the ignorance exhibited by the uninitiated on cultural matters. Most participants, as can be seen from the findings in chapter 4, felt that the non-initiated were unaware of very significant cultural values, such as wriggling their waists. As such, the initiated girls threw disparaging remarks such as uncultured, ill-mannered, among other terms, on the uninitiated. According to some initiated girls (see responses from Girl 6, & Girl 1, p. 59), respect, obedience and other virtues were adequately inculcated in *Sikenge*. For instance, Girl 6 remarked, "...When I look at my friends who have not yet gone through *Sikenge*, I take them not to be mature enough. Their thinking is still in its infancy stage..." These remarks seemed to disregard the uninitiated in that the use of the word "infancy" suggests that the uninitiated girls, regardless of whether they were older than the initiated girl, still behaved childishly. As such, the initiated would not want to associate with them. Tajfel's (1982) revelations on the new identity formation process, seems to underscore the above findings. According to Tajfel, the persons determine who and what they are by associating themselves with the bigger group of people whom they mix with in society.

The sentiments of the girls in the above paragraph seemed to qualify the perceptions initiated girls had about themselves. They considered themselves to be more qualified in cultural matters than their non-initiated colleagues. In this regard, these findings cemented on the work of Munsaka (2009); and Abu- Rabia- Queder (2006) who, in separate studies, established that there was mind shift in the girls who went through cultural initiation rites. It may be argued, therefore, that the teachings which girls receive during initiation seem to result into the school girls taking schooling secondary. All the three teachers, in this study, observed that the initiated girls sometimes grouped themselves to share information, some of which included what they learnt during *Sikenge*. F/Teacher 3 observes, "...Sometimes the girls disassociate themselves from other pupils; they put themselves in groups and share the same information which they

have been taught in *Sikenge*. Some of the information shared includes relationships with boys”.

As can be seen from the above quote, the initiated girls viewed themselves as the cream of society; therefore, they would not feel comfortable to mix and share information with the uninitiated girls. Two of the initiated participants (Girl 8 & Girl 4) came out strongly on the issue of playing with the non-initiated girls as they referred to them as kids. For example, Girl 8 says, “....I can’t play with children. I only play with those that have come of age. Those who have not yet gone through *Sikenge* are young”. This excerpt seems to demonstrate the difference that exists between the initiated and uninitiated girls in terms of knowledge, skill acquisition, and thinking capacity, among other aspects. These findings seem to re-sound the work of Hogg and Abrams (1988); Oakes, Haslam, and Turner (1988). These scholars point out that, individuals who identify with the group feel a strong attraction to the group as a whole. Similarly, the initiated girls disassociate themselves from the uninitiated.

However, the present study also unearthed that, much as the initiated girls formed groups among themselves, there were still some, among them, that expressed willingness to co-operate with the uninitiated as they were all school girls whose ultimate goal was the same: to acquire formal education that would usher them into formal employment. This notion was demonstrated by Girl 8 who after stating that she could not associate with the uninitiated girls realized that for school girls there was need to work together to achieve a common goal-accomplish schooling. This was how she put it hesitantly, “...But for classmates, there is no problem, whether they have gone through *Sikenge* or not as what we are learning is the same....”

From the above views, it may be argued that, not all initiated girls had the notion of disassociating themselves from others when they were at school. Some of them (initiated girls) seemed to cooperate with their friends and such girls might continue and complete schooling. The realization of the importance of formal education by Girl 8 seemed to suggest that not all girls who went through *Sikenge* had the spirit of abandoning school in preference for marriage, but they did so to fulfill the requirements

as prescribed by society in which they grew up. In the next section, the theme of how society perceived the initiated girls is discussed.

5.2 Societal perceptions of the initiated girls.

This theme was subdivided into three themes which were as a result of the analysis of the data. These are: Initiated girls are the cream of society; Mastery of cultural values/virtues/taboo; and acquisition of sexual knowledge in readiness for marriage. The next section discusses the perception of how initiated girls are the cream of society.

5.2.1 Initiated girls are the cream of society

The girls that had gone through *Sikenge*, as mentioned several times in this study, were perceived by society in so many ways. Some people thought that the girls were the best in society in terms of mastery of cultural values. Others felt the girls knew it all. While still others felt that there was nothing an adult woman could talk about culture that an initiated girl did not know, be it social life, economic life, physiological life or psychological life. Some people interviewed in this study, revealed that initiated women were the best for marriage because they knew how to keep marriages due to the teachings they went through in seclusion. Teacher 3 said, “...You know what? Those girls are considered to be the cream of society, immediately they come out of initiation, they are handled by elderly men; they are treated like adults...” This assertion seemed to be loaded; the teacher’s perception of these girls seemed to be negative. By using the phrase “are handled”, the teacher seemed to suggest that, those girls had sexual intercourse with elderly men. In the Lozi culture, as was in other African cultures, the issue of sex was considered secret; it could not be talked about publicly. Speaking about sex in public, one had to use a euphemism; hence, the use of “handle” by Teacher 3 to refer to sex by the above respondent.

Another respondent, Initiator 1 said, “A girl who has been initiated is expected to behave maturely...She should not play around, cooking earth *buhobe*(thick porridge) or play with young boys and girls in the central village arena;...A girl who does not show respect for elders is unmarriageable”. What seemed to be poignant in this narrative was

the point that, in the Lozi society, the initiated girl was expected to leave behind all that she was doing before she was initiated and embraced new kind of life. The acts of cooking earth *buhobe*, mixing with boys and the like were considered childish deeds. This perspective of the Lozi people resonate the work of Moore, Sanders and Kaare (1999) who state that initiation rites represent the final step to adulthood and the ultimate loss of the child's blamelessness. What this implied, was that much of what the child did seemed to be silly and attracted criticism from time to time. So, when a girl graduated from the seclusion, she left behind all this unwanted behaviour and clung to the newly acquired status.

The Lozi society, like other African societies, expected an initiated girl to be fully matured, a "professional" in cultural matters that commanded respect in society. She must have respect for elders, and be able to remember and put what she learnt in *Sikengeinto* practice. It was expected that the girl should be independent as she had acquired all it took to be a woman. The findings in the above paragraph corroborated the findings of UNFPA (2005) which stated that initiation rites were "schools" through which girls learnt how to be experts in sexual matters so that they may entice their future husbands. In other words, a girl who related well with others in society; one who showed knowledge of cultural values particularly those related to sexual matters, was the yard stick with which maturity, in the Lozi culture, and other African cultures, was measured.

The expectation of society was that, an initiated girl should know how to welcome visitors into their homes. This aspect was emphasized during the initiation because the girl was expected to run her own home one day where she will accommodate many people some of who will be the relatives of her husband. It was uncustomary, in the Lozi culture, not to welcome visitors. In fact, some people even said that when visitors came to a home, the wife should not wait to be told when to give them food. Initiator 2's narrative illuminated this observation (see page 50).

"Society perceives initiated girls to be loyal and receptive or accommodative. The way she talks to elders and

everybody else should be exemplary and elderly. She should give good example to her young sisters. She should not wait to be told what to do, but be a self-starter in most of the activities....”

In the above excerpt, one was made to understand that the virtue of welcoming visitors though may be learnt vicariously from the parents and siblings as the child grew up in the home, was greatly emphasized during the seclusion. In the interview with one of the teachers, the aspect of welcoming visitors by newly initiated girls was resounded. For instance, Teacher 1 who also underwent initiation explained that the aspect of welcoming visitors should be done as soon as the girl came out of initiation at their parents' homes as they were not married.

“Initiated girls should know how to welcome visitors in their homes. And this should be exhibited immediately they come out of initiation, at their parents' home as they are not yet married.”

The above findings related well with Brown's (1963; 1970) studies in which she says that initiation, apart from bestowing a new status on the girls who go through them, give them a collection of responsibilities. The work of Raising (2001) is equally in line with these findings. According to Raising, initiation rites deal with, among other issues, respect for elders.

As alluded to, a newly initiated woman should not depend much on the parents and relatives because, she had all it took to be a woman. In other words, the young woman seemed to be capable of running her own home. One of the initiated girls at one of the schools involved in this study stated that people in society considered her to be a fully grown up woman; one capable of looking after her own family. This was how Girl 6 put it, “...People consider me to be a grown up woman. Some of the people even say that now we want to see you managing your own home. What you have learnt should not go to waste, but be put to good use.” It was a little bit difficult to understand what really the girl meant by the use of the phrase, “managing your own home”. This might suggest that she was now ready to marry any man of her choice where she would run

her matrimonial home. This was so, because a woman, in the Lozi society, like in other African societies, may not manage to lead her own life as she seemed to depend on man. Probably, this may explain the reason why, during seclusion, the detailed instructions particularly the very salient marital values were imparted to them. This interpretation seemed to concur with Kelly's (1999) conclusion. According to Kelly, during initiation, a woman was tutored on several social attributes as society's general view was that a girl/woman was defined by her relationship to a man and not as an independent person in her own right.

In view of the above observation, an initiated girl, apart from acquiring social values, was expected to be economically independent so that she knew how to fend for her family when she got married. In this respect, the *mwalyanjo* was taught on how to make baskets, brooms, reed mats and on how to weed in the gardens. Instructor 2's views seemed to make this point clear when she said that, "A young lady, who has passed through *Sikenge* especially, in the olden days, should know how to make baskets, reed mats, pottery works and other things". This narrative corroborated with Snelson's (1970) interpretation of initiation ceremonies. According to Snelson, the novice was taught how to make household utensils and equipment. These utensils, which included, among others, clay pots, were the ones the young woman would use in her home once she got married and sometimes the young lady might use the skills she acquired in the initiation ceremony to produce more for sale. In this way, the education the girl acquired, as Snelson observes, was systematic and well balanced in the preparation of the girl for life.

While initiated girls were perceived to be the cream of society, some members of society felt that initiation introduced girls to sex and sexuality. F/Teacher 3, when asked to comment on the initiated girls, gave disparaging remarks about initiation and its teachings; a repeat of her remarks here is important:

...You know what? Those girls are considered to be the cream of society, immediately they come out of initiation, they are handled by elderly men; they are treated like adults... They no longer sleep in the houses of their

parents; instead the parents build a small hut for their daughter, a bit far from theirs'. The reason being that once they slept with their daughter in the same house, they would prevent her from having a man as a sexual partner. So they would want to grant her total freedom.

In the above excerpt, the tone of the teacher sounded to be very negative about initiated girls. To her, these girls were intoxicated with immoral teachings that made them not to behave responsibly. This perception of the initiated girls by this teacher seemed to complement Hinfelaar's (1994) study in which a female journalist was quoted to have lamented terribly about the Bembas' detailed sex instructions imparted to girls during the initiation rite (see Chapter Two). Hinfelaar bemoaned the type of teachings the girls received in seclusion. In fact, she attributed the rise in prostitution to the teachings girls received during the seclusion.

In the Lozi culture, like in other African cultures, it was not uncommon to find initiated girls not sleeping in the same house as their parents. It was believed that once a girl was initiated, she was fully grown up and as such she was advised to stop entering her parents' bedroom as that was a sign of disrespect. In most cases, a small house was separately built for the young woman a bit far from the parents' where she would have total freedom. F/Teacher 3 in the excerpt above seemed to underscore this observation when she said, "...They (initiated girls) no longer sleep in their parents' houses; instead the parents build a small hut for their daughter, a bit far from theirs'. A study by Munsaka (2009) equally uncovered similar findings among the Tonga of southern Zambia. According to Munsaka, initiated young women were built small huts away from the parents' houses immediately they came out of initiation. The use of the phrase "total freedom" by F/Teacher 3 in the above verbatim suggested that the initiated girl enjoyed utmost liberty as the parents had no control over her dealings. In the next section, the values, norms and taboos are discussed.

5.2.2 Initiation brings mastery of cultural values

This study established that, the Lozi society expected the initiated girls to have mastered the cultural values, norms and morals. This was so because norms and values of society were imparted mainly during seclusion. *Sikenge* was the right time, in the Lozi culture, for the girl child who had attained puberty, to be availed with the norms of society. Like in other African societies, the Lozi society, being a conservative and secretive community, had many taboos, norms and values. These values were imparted during the *Sikenge* ceremony.

It was established from this study that myths believed by the Lozi people included that of a menstruating woman not to have sex with her husband or put salt in the pot for fear of inflicting chest pains, pneumonia or in some cases causing TB into her husband. Initiator 2 gave a detailed account of such a revelation part of which was repeated here for the purpose of emphasis, "...It is a taboo to have sex with men when you are menstruating...you can cause them to suffer from a chronic illness (TB)...." These findings were in line with Mutunda's (2013) revelations which stated that, in Western Zambia, myths and taboos about food and food preparation by menstruating females was forbidden. According to Mutunda, menstruating girls and women were not allowed to add salt to food, as it was believed that men, when they consumed such food, develop chest pains, or pneumonia or even contract TB. In the current study, the majority of the participants indicated that elders used to tell them not to eat certain food stuffs, such as groundnuts, sugar cane, bananas and many other food stuffs for fear of unexplainable consequences. Girl 5 and Girl 7 individually, revealed some of what they learnt during the seclusion. For instance, Girl 5 stated that, "...I learnt that when I get married I should never eat ground nuts, sugar cane, bananas in the presence of my in-laws as that was a big insult to them."

The study conducted by Mutunda (2013), among the people of western Zambia consolidates the above findings. Mutunda reported that the people of western Zambia regard certain information as highly confidential or a taboo which should not be disclosed anyhow. Her findings established that coming-of-age or puberty rituals

incorporated myths, misconceptions, superstitions and taboos. The main mode of transmission of these taboos was initiation. Related literature to these findings was the study done by Ten (2007) in Western Uganda where it was established that the people there believed that menstruating women might not drink cow milk, as this would make the cow bleed from the udder and cause the milk turn to into blood. Ten, further reports that in Eastern Uganda, menstruating women did not plant groundnuts for fear of affecting the yields. As for the people from Central Uganda, Ten still reports that menstruation was kept secret; no one else apart from the menstruating woman should know it. In support of the above information, Pillitteri (2011), also reports that in Malawi, it was forbidden for girls to tell their mothers about their first menses. This was done to avoid the bad omen or death that would befall the girls for disclosing that to the parents. Hence, they had to inform other female relatives, like the grand parents or aunts, rather than their mothers.

In the Lozi society, the issue of keeping secrets as one of the virtues every woman should have was given much attention during the *Sikenge*. To demonstrate how secretive the Lozi society was, one of the initiators (Initiator 2)'s revelations on the need to keep secrets were worth repeating here. This was how she put it:

...Yes, a girl may have gone to school quite alright, but if she has not gone through Sikenge you will notice the way she behaves. In a home, should the husband make a silly mistake like that of wetting beddings, she will publicize it, 'I'm astonished, today, my husband has wetted beddings, or has urinated on me'. If the husband has hernia...she goes round telling people and friends that she is startled by the size of her husband's testicles which are abnormally big...

From the above revelation, it could be argued that the issue of keeping secrets, in western Zambia, was given a lot of attention during *Sikenge*. Society expected an initiated girl not to divulge secrets. Usually, after teaching the girls, the instructors and elders sat them down and advised them never to disclose what they learnt in *Sikenge* to non-initiated girls and any other person whose knowledge of the culture was not

necessary. This aspect of keeping secrets might be useful to women who take up leadership positions later in life in organizations in which they are supposed to keep state secrets. One specific example is the military force. A female officer who had undergone Sikenge might find it easier to keep secrets than one who had not. The researcher finds Sikenge to be advantageous in this area. Though initiators might not know the advantage of Sikenge, it can prepare girls for high profile leadership positions. The next section discusses the acquisition of sexual knowledge in preparation for marriage.

5.2.3 Acquisition of sexual knowledge in readiness for marriage.

The issues of sex and sexuality, in most African societies, are given prominent attention during initiation. In the interviews the researcher held with the participants, some participants indicated that the Lozi people of western Zambia took keen interest in ensuring that the girl child who had attained puberty was prepared for marriage during the seclusion. They stated that the girls were taught how to please a man during coitus, how to clean his manhood after the sexual act, and how to arouse his sexual interest among other aspects. M/Teacher 2, for example said that, "...What they learn in *Sikenge*,...is how to deal with men during sexual intercourse." The phrase "how to deal" seems to refer to coitus. The participant seemed to be uncomfortable with the word sex; so, he found a better way of referring to sex, hence, the use of "how to deal". The aspect of sexual teachings during initiation was acknowledged by many scholars. A study done by Van Binsbergen (1987) among the Nkoya people of western Zambia seems to relate well with the above findings. Van Binsbergen reported that in seclusion great emphasis lied on the acquisition of an adult female sexual role. The girl was taught to enlarge her vagina till three fingers could go in; she was taught to wiggle and incline her pelvis during coitus, and acquired knowledge about secret herbs that unfortunately prevented vaginal secretion- to serve the Nkoya male ideal: penetration in a bone-dry vagina.

Another scholar, whose findings have similar results to the above, is Hinfelaar (1994). Hinfelaar discovered that initiation taught young women to become sexual experts. Munsaka (2009) equally reports that female initiation aimed at preparing young women

to become professionals in sexual matters. The related literature reviewed in this study corresponded with the findings of the study. F/Teacher 1's assertion of initiation ceremonies seemed to complement M/Teacher 2 above when she said, "Since girls have learnt...how to handle men during sexual act, they would want to put what they learnt into practice...." From this narrative, it could be argued that much of the teachings imparted into the girls during seclusion were about sex and sexuality. Young women were prepared for marriage. This seemed to be the reason for holding kitchen parties in the case where a woman went for marriage.

Initiator 2's detailed account of what they taught in *Sikenge* illuminated the sexual teachings the girls received during initiation when she said, "The first thing we teach the girls is to clean the man's sexual organ after intercourse... After cleaning the penis you put it in between your husband's thighs nicely, draw backward and clap respectively...." From this account one could tell that in the Lozi society, a woman who did not exhibit this knowledge was looked down on. This explained why initiated young women were regarded as the best for marriage in the Loziland. But from Initiator 2's narrative, three cardinal aspects stood out: The cleaning of the man's penis after coitus; the placing of the penis in between the husband's thighs, and the act of clapping to show respect were areas that needed to be discussed. Two questions that one may ask oneself are: What kind of respect did men need that seemed to turn women into a sort of slavery? Why should there be an imbalance when the sexual act was enjoyed by both the wife and husband?

In the Lozi society, like in other African societies, initiation ceremonies were rooted in deep, conservative traditions. This was because African life revolved around the family and therefore female African initiation ceremonies tended to focus heavily on the preparation of young girls to be good wives and excellent mothers (Beckwith, 2006). Initiated married women seemed to know how to keep a marriage even when the husbands may be unfaithful due to the teachings they received in seclusion. Usually, if a woman faced challenges in her marriage, she would seek better ways of addressing them- through the village headman and the like. The researcher attributed this kind of

behaviour to the teachings the women were subjected during initiation- being submissive to their husbands.

However, what was surprising in this study was the fact that while girls were prepared for marriages, boys were not. A study conducted by Mundumuko (1990) points out that in the past while girls went through *Sikenge*; boys were taken to *milaka* (a place where cattle were kept). According to Mundumuko, the boys were taught how to look after animals, tilling land with oxen and the like. But issues of marriage were not given attention. The researcher felt that this scenario seemed to pose a challenge on couples in terms of keeping their marriages. The wife might apply what she learnt during the initiation, but the husband would have nowhere to refer to only depending on trial and error method to solve issues pertaining to their marriage. So, it is suggested, in this study, that there be an initiation or a “school” for the Lozi boys where they, too, would learn about marriages. In the next section, the researcher discusses the attitude of initiated girls towards formal schooling.

5.3 The attitude of initiated girls towards formal schooling

There are three sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of data. These are the school attendance during and after initiation; the school performance during and after initiation, and the relationship between the initiated school girls and teachers. In the next section, the researcher discusses the school attendance during and after initiation.

5.3.1 School attendance during and after initiation

In terms of school attendance, this study established two schools of thought. In one school, some participants reported that initiation caused girls to play truancy while the other school of thought stated that initiation did not affect school time. The remarks by one of the participants in this study seemed to vindicate the findings of this study which stated that initiation affected girls who went through them academically. This was validated by the sentiments of F/Teacher 3 who stated that most of the girls who did not come to school were those who had gone through *Sikenge*. These sentiments consolidated the findings of many scholars in this study (see Chapter Two) that

initiation had negative effects on school girls who went through them. This ties well with one of the meanings in Van Gennep's (1960) concept of rites of passage which states that there was a transformation of the mind of the girl that went through initiation which caused her to begin to perceive herself differently as she shed away the old self and put on the new one. The girl seemed to paddle two canoes: attending traditional lessons and going for formal lessons (Munsaka, 2009). Eventually, one side, mainly schooling, was affected as the lessons the girl received from the seclusion seemed to have long life effects on her mind. Initiator 3 stated, "...It is a taboo for a newly confined girl to start moving around ...". In line with these remarks, Hari (2009) concluded that these rituals were blamed to be a cause of girls' drop out of school due to the long period they were held and sometimes they were held during the term resulting in girls missing lessons.

In the Lozi tradition, the newly secluded girls were not allowed to move around for fear of attracting bad omens, and sometimes death. A study by Sumbwa (1988) revealed that *Sikenge* was/ and still is meant to celebrate the first menses which were seen as a miraculous divine event when the girl received the gift of her sexuality and parenthood from her forefathers. In this regard, society believed that the novice was not supposed to move around as she might go missing mysteriously. Now if the *mwalyanjo* was forbidden from moving about, how would she attend classes at school? However, the findings of this study indicated that some initiates attended school during *Sikenge*.

While the confinement of the girl was considered to be important culturally, its effects on the girl's formal schooling were devastating because the girl was denied her precious school time which resulted in her missing school lessons. This revelation was in accordance with the Magesaat *et al.*'s (2014) study which they conducted in Morogororural district between April and June, 2011 to establish the effects of initiation rituals to primary and secondary school girls. In their study, Magesaat *et al.*, (2014) report that many girls who attended the initiation ceremonies encountered mistreatments, and abuse which sometimes affected their school attendance. In this regard, initiation rituals were blamed to hamper girls' education. In a related study to this one by Chama (2006), it was established that initiated girls portrayed a behaviour that was rigid because of the

virtues and values taught to them in *Sikenge* which resulted in the girls failing to learn anything different besides what was taught during initiation rite. From this report, it could be argued that initiation seemed to affect schooling negatively.

The other school of thought, which this study established, propounded that initiation had no negative effects on the girls' school attendance. It emerged from this study that initiation, and in particular *Sikenge*, coped well with formal schooling. Most of the initiated school girls that participated in this study (see Girl 1; Girl 2; Girl 4; Girl 6; and Girl 7 in Chapter 4) showed willingness to continue schooling as they found it more important than marriage. These girls felt that rushing for marriage, young as they were, would simply mean inviting problems for themselves as their formal schooling and career ambitions would be thwarted. This was evident when Girl 6 said that, "...I intent to continue schooling. I don't think about marriage as it is inviting suffering for myself". These views were amplified by initiator 2 (see page 61) who disclosed that *Sikenge* and schooling could be held concurrently without affecting the girl. This was how she put it, "We put some girls in *Sikenge* while they are at school. I had one girl who was a grade 10 pupil....We would teach her on Saturdays then on Sundays she rested and went to school during school days...." From this testimony, it could be argued that initiation, in this case *Sikenge*, had undergone some transformation in terms of time the teachings were held. It conformed to the principles of culture which is a dynamic aspect. The realization of the importance of schooling was the turning point of the parents in initiating their children during the weekend or holidays.

However, there was something important to comment on in the above sentiments. The participant's use of the determiner "some" entailed that there were, still, some instances where girls in seclusion were not allowed to attend school lessons. The willingness of girls to continue schooling and the realization of its importance did not match with the literature reviewed in this study. This showed that there was an information gap in society's perception of initiated girls. Against this background, no literature was cited here. It emerged from this study that while cultural teachings were given to the girls, schooling was highly recognized. This came to light when Initiator 2 said that one of the teachings society imparted into the girls was not to indulge themselves in sex and

sexuality because of acquiring the virtues and skills in seclusion. A repeat of her remarks here illuminates the discussion:

“What we teach them are bedroom matters: knowing how to dance; not disco dances, no! ...dancing during coitus. ..., they (girls) should not put what they learnt in seclusion into practice before marriage as they should concentrate on their schooling...”

From this excerpt, it could be seen that two things were taught: imparting of marriage skills during the seclusion, and advising the novice not to display the bedroom skills before marriage, but instead should concentrate on schooling. As several times mentioned in this study, female initiation mainly equipped the young women with marriage skills (wriggling the waist during coitus) to prepare them for marriage. These findings have been consolidated by many scholars (see Richards, 1956; Brownlee, 1935; Munthali and Zulu, 2007). It was worth noting that nowadays, schooling was equally given attention by society compared to the past. This was so because of what the Initiator above said, “...they should concentrate on their schooling.” From this perspective, it could be debated that the attitudes of girls who went through initiation were slowly changing towards schooling. Society seemed to understand the importance of schooling much as they did not do away with their cultural practices. As already stated, the review of literature, in this study, did not find matching revelations concerning the willingness of initiated girls to continue schooling; hence, no literature had been cited here. In other words, this happened to be the new perception about schooling that this study discovered. In the next section, the performance of the initiated school girls is discussed.

5.3.2 Initiated girls’ Performance at school

In terms of school performance, the teachers captured in this study disclosed that the performance of some initiated girls deteriorated during and after initiation. The reasons given by the teachers included absenteeism because of initiation-related issues and the feeling of tiredness especially if the girl had some cultural teachings the previous day.

M/Teacher 2 reported that, “Initiated girls irregularly come to school; as a result they missed lessons which by the end of the term caused them to perform poorly....” Another educator gave a scenario of a very intelligent learner who was initiated but the process negatively affected her performance resulting in her failure at the end of the year. The following verbal quote from F/teachers³ supported the above findings that emerged from this study:

Eh., I had an experience where a learner, before she was initiated,... was excellent in class, but now it's something else ...

The researcher's interpretation of the words, “something else” in the above sentiments, was that the teacher seemed to refer to poor performance which was as a result of initiation. Similar findings were reported by Mutunda (2013) who found that the girls' performance deteriorated due to absenteeism, lack of concentration on school work and not cooperating with teachers. Some teachers, however, observed that the performance of some girls depended on their intellectual ability regardless of whether they were initiated or not. This was evident in F/Teacher 3's views, “...But some of the girls perform well at school. It depends on the capability and level of intelligence the girl has....” While some teachers felt that the performance of some girls depended on individual capabilities of girls, others expressed sadness that initiation caused more harm than good to the girl child. Some teachers lamented that if a school had a huge number of initiates in a particular year, the performance, generally, went down. M/Teacher 2 reported, “Generally, the performance is poor as the girls are preoccupied with the experiences they have gone through....”

According to the teachers, a child's performance largely depended on how much dedication and importance she attached to her studies. But in this scenario, how could a girl perform well when she was in a quagmire: to trust the material she received from the initiators at home or that from her teachers at school? F/Teacher 1 says, “...the majority of them (initiated girls) are underachievers because they have to serve two masters at the same time- the initiators and teachers.” It was against this background that

some teachers appreciated the realization of the negative impact initiation had on the girls' education by some parents. F/Teacher 3, for instance, says, "It is good that some parents...have realized the negative impact posed by initiation on the girls...." In this respect, it was suggested in this study that initiation should wait until the girl finished her grade twelve or went for marriage. The next section discusses how initiated school girls relate with their teachers.

5.3.3 Some initiated girls seek adult attention.

The behaviour of some initiated girls was somewhat worrisome. Some teachers expressed disappointment in the way the initiated girls related with them. One of the female teachers disclosed that some initiated girls did not behave well towards teachers. These girls, according to F/Teacher 3 seemed to compete with female teachers in terms of dressing, cosmetics application and other things, "...some initiated girls behave like equals with us. They seem to compete with us ...dressing, hair styling...." It was further reported that some initiated girls' relationship with male teachers was not a good one. Some participants disclosed that initiated girls focused on male teachers as their "husbands". They (initiated girls) did not express fear or give the teachers adequate respect they deserved; a situation that seemed to suggest that they could be more than ready to marry them. In other words, the girls seemed to express intimacy relationship towards the male teachers. For emphasis's sake, here is part of what M/Teachers 2 revealed:

Some initiated girls perceive male teachers as their intimate friends. Even when you are explaining something to them, they seem not to be serious; they would keep on viewing you...

From the revelations of M/Teacher 3, it could be argued that the behaviour exhibited by girls could be attributed to the teachings they received from the initiation. This was so because the account given by the teacher was indicative of the transformation of the girls' behaviour. As the Ministry of Education (URT, 1995) observes, some traditions, customs and practices (initiation inclusive) impeded the girls' education as they transformed their thinking capacity. The work of Munthali and Zulu (2007)

complemented the above findings when they said that a girl who went through the initiation rite carried herself in high esteem as she felt that she was an adult. Therefore, it could be argued that the behaviour exhibited by girls in this study might be attributed to the initiation teachings they received during the seclusion. However, it was also important to note that each person was unique in the way s/he behaved. Some initiated girls did not display the described behaviour above and tended to cooperate with everyone at school.

The present study established that in all the three schools that participated in this study, there was no policy on cultural and traditional practices that helped the school management solve some of the challenges that ensued from initiation rites, such as, absenteeism and early marriages. M/Teacher 2 reports “Our school has no policy on how to deal with such girls...” In this regard, it was recommended in this study that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs should come up with a policy document on traditional practices that should be provided to schools. The next section gives a summary of the chapter.

5.7 Summary

The present chapter has discussed the findings that emerged from this study in relation to other studies conducted in some parts of the world, Africa in general, and Zambia in particular. Three themes have been used to categorize the findings. These themes were: how initiated girls perceived themselves; how society perceived girls who had gone through *Sikenge*; and how initiated girls perceived schooling. Information pertaining to each one of the themes, and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of data was used in this discussion.

In terms of how initiated girls perceived themselves, it was established that such girls carried themselves in high esteem as a result of the teachings they received in *Sikenge* that transformed their mind sets. This self-esteem seemed to emanate from the new identity the girls had acquired from the initiation. Society seemed to consider them to be knowledgeable about many cultural values, norms and morals. The girls, as well as society, felt that they were able to take care of their homes, children and most

importantly look after their future husbands. At school, the initiated girls seemed to form groups amongst themselves where they shared some of the teachings they received in seclusion. Society's expectations of initiated girls were to see good morals in such girls as they were tutored by the elderly women of good moral standing in society on several cultural aspects. Indiscipline in these girls was not expected as they graduated from the cultural school.

Humility, obedience, and generosity were some of the virtues that society expected in initiated girls. The study also established that the initiated girls practiced what they learnt during the seclusion. As a result, some girls ended up either contracting sexually transmitted diseases, falling pregnant or getting married and eventually, dropping out of school. On the positive side, the present study established that all the initiated school girls demonstrated the love for school and willingness to continue schooling. The next chapter gives the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

This chapter gives the conclusion and recommendations that respond to the needs unveiled by the findings of the current study. The current chapter comprises two sections: The first one gives the summary of the whole study and the second section illustrates the recommendations as they are reflected from the findings. The next section presents the conclusion.

6.2 Conclusion

This qualitative study was conducted at three primary schools of Mongu District of Zambia. The schools were Malengwa, Kalangu, and Mandanga. During the interviews, participants were interviewed individually. In the discussion of the findings, the results for this study were compared to the findings of the related literature done in other countries in the world in general, Africa and mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and Zambia in particular.

The current study established a number of perceptions about the initiated girls, starting with how they perceived themselves, then how society perceived them, and finally, how the girls perceived schooling. In short, one of the girls' perceptions about themselves was that, they were the custodians of the customs of society, as they were able to transfer the knowledge they learnt during the seclusion to other generations. As for society's perception of these girls, the study established, among other perceptions, that initiated girls were knowledgeable of sexual matters and as such, they were the best women for marriage. With regards to schooling, the girls, in this study, contrary to other studies, indicated that they still wished to continue schooling as they found marriage unimportant. The initiation instructors, as well, reported that while initiation was held to equip young girls with life skills which they would not find in the streets or anywhere else, schooling still remained cardinal as it prepared young ones for better living; so, to them (initiators), both initiation and schooling could be held simultaneously without

affecting each other. Generally, the findings conformed to other studies conducted in some parts of the world and particularly, to the theories which guided this study. There were a few exceptions only, such as the willingness indicated by the girls to continue schooling that did not reflect any literature reviewed in this study. This information became part of the new information established by this study. The next section presents the recommendations.

6.3 Recommendations

As indicated in the significance of the study of this present study, the stakeholders to whom the findings of this study were directed were the educators, parents, planners and law makers. Thus, the stakeholders had a bearing on the lives of these school children. So, the initiated girls whom this study investigated on, like other school children, were affected by so many challenges that the above mentioned stakeholders needed to know. In this regard; therefore, the recommendations were given generally, taking into consideration, the findings as they emerged from the current study.

1. It emerged from this study that initiated school girls played truancy due to engaging themselves in some cultural practices like *Makishi* dances, as such; they seemed to perform badly at school as most of their precious school time and attendance were robbed of them. In this regard, it would be necessary if the parents were educated on the need to have their daughters complete school.
2. In this present study, it was also reported by one of the initiation instructors that, there was no problem to hold an initiation ceremony for a school girl during the term as long as the school was communicated to. During the week, the girl attended school lessons, but on Saturdays she was tutored on cultural matters whose curriculum has dominated this study (read the findings). Against this background, this present study, recommends that initiation ceremonies be held during the holidays to prevent the girls from having divided attention.

3. Connected to the above recommendation, were the role models; especially the girls' relatives (women who had gone through *Sikenge*, in particular) who were doing fine economically due to schooling, could be invited to the schools and give educational talks. In this way, the girls might see the need to continue schooling.
4. The present study also revealed that, some teachers made follow-ups of some girls who had stopped schooling and chose marriage as an alternative. In some cases, the teachers went to the extent of visiting the villages where the purported girls stayed. Sometimes, these teachers managed to retrieve the girls and brought them back to school. It is recommended that such teachers be supported by all well-meaning people so that no many girls dropped out of school.
5. It emerged from this study that some schools and the communities collaborated well during the initiation ceremonies, especially during the *Siyomboka*. Again, it would be important for schools and the communities to continue working together, especially when it came to some traditional practices which hindered girls from pursuing formal education.
6. Another finding that evidently came out from M/Teacher 2 was that schools were operating without any government policy on cultural practices. This posed a lot of challenges to teachers on how to handle some problematic issues that ensued from some cultural practices, such as initiation. Therefore, it would be better for the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational, Technical and Early Education (MOESVTEE) to provide a policy document on traditional practices in schools.
7. It was established in this study that initiation caused some initiated school girls shun school. In view of this, the present study recommended that a review of the traditional initiation curriculum was important to analyze certain topics that seemed to cause girls shun schooling whenever they came out of initiation.

8. Connected to the above, was the truancy played by initiated girls revealed in this study. It was recommended that initiation should wait until girls finished schooling or went into marriage.
9. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs ought to collaborate so that they devised a policy on cultural practices that would provide guidance to schools and traditional leaders.
10. Schools and the communities should discuss, through the PTA meetings, the need to protect the initiated girl child from being abused by men. At the same time, the Re-entry policy should be explained to parents so that, in the case where their daughters fell pregnant and dropped out of school, after delivery, they could return to school.
11. It emerged from this study that while girls were put in *Sikenge* in order to prepare them for marriage, boys were not. This study recommended that boys, too, be prepared for marriage by going through some marital teachings. In this way, marriages might be strong.
12. Finally, the present study uncovered that some parents engaged teachers whenever a girl was put in *Sikenge*. This study, therefore, recommended that all stakeholders (e.g. educators, parents, planners and law makers) should collaborate in order to help the initiated girls finish their school.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

In the execution of this study, it was discovered that, while much literature, both international and local, was available, the issue of initiation, being complex, still needed to be explored in detail. The findings of this study have, to some extent, tried to provide

some insights, but more research was still needed. It was for this reason that, in the section below, a list of suggested topics was provided.

1. The current study focused on the perceptions of girls who had gone through *Sikenge* towards schooling. What this meant was that the present study was biased in its approach towards girls leaving out boys; so, there was need to conduct a comparative study that looked into both the female and male initiation ceremonies, especially that in western Zambia, among some ethnic groupings, such as the Mbunda, Luvale, and Luchazi, the male initiation (*Mukanda*) was practised.
2. This study focused only on initiated school girls leaving out initiated girls who were not in school. So, there was need to conduct a study that combined both parties to see how both perceived education.
3. As the study was conducted in the peri-urban of Mongu district, where initiation rituals were almost diminishing, there was need to research on the same topic in the typical rural areas of Western Zambia for better results.
4. There was also need to carry out research on perceptions of initiations in town such as the capital city, Lusaka, and compare the results with those from a rural area, such as Shangombo.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:ETHICAL CLEARANCE



**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Telephone: 290258/293937
Fax: 250-1-290258/293937
E-mail: dgs@unza.zm
IRIS: 00006464
ORCID: 00005376

P.O. Box 52379
Lusaka, Zambia
Your Ref:
Our Ref:

27th May, 2015

Mr. Musole Musole
Mongu College of Education
P.O. Box 910294
Mongu

Dear Mr. Musole

Re: APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Reference is made to your application for ethical clearance for your proposed study entitled **"How girls who have gone through the Luvu female initiation rite (sikenge) perceive schooling: A case of three selected schools in Mongu District"**.

Having clarified on the issues that were raised you have now been given ethical clearance.

Please note that you are expected to submit to the Secretariat a Progress Report and a copy of the full report on completion of the project.

Finally, and more importantly, take note that notwithstanding ethical clearance given by the HSSREC, you must also obtain express authority from the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education and the local government and traditional leadership in the location of your research before conducting your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Mildred Nkolola-Wakumelo

**CHAIRPERSON, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE**

Cc Secretary, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM DRGS



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381
Telegram: UNZA, LUSAKA
Telefax: UNZALU ZA 44370

PO Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia
Fax: +260-1-292702

Date: 20TH OCTOBER, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam


RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS/ PHD STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter MLAM: **MUSOLE MUSOLE** Computer
number: **512805181** is a duly registered student at the University of
Zambia, School of Education.

He/She is taking a Masters/PhD programme in Education. The programme has a
fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her.

Yours faithfully, DEAN (PG)

 20 OCT 2014
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
PO BOX 32379 LUSAKA

Daniel Ndlovu (Dr)

ASSISTANT DEAN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Cc: Dean-Education
Director-DRGS

APPENDIX C: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION LETTER

All correspondence should be addressed to the DEBS

TA 0017 OF 2000
MONGU DISTRICT



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

In reply please quote

DEBS/MON/2/3/5

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EARLY EDUCATION
DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY
P.O. BOX 91000
MONGU-ZAMBIA
WESTERN PROVINCE

24th March, 2015

To: All Headteachers
Primary and Secondary Schools
MONGU

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MR. MUSOLE MUSOLE

The above subject refers.

This serves to introduce the above mentioned teacher, who is studying with the University of Zambia. The teacher is conducting a study research in the department of Psychology, Sociology and Special Education at the University of Zambia.

The purpose of writing is to inform you that the above teacher has been permitted by our office to collect data from schools in Mongu District for his studies.

I will be very grateful if you support him in any way possible.

Sendoi M. Londa
District Education Board Secretary
MONGU DISTRICT

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

I am a registered Masters student in the Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education at the University of Zambia. I am conducting a study on the perceptions of girls who have gone through Sikenge. For me to achieve my goal, I have to interview young ladies who have gone through Sikenge, Sikenge instructors, and teachers. The office of the District Education Board Secretary is fully aware of this. I assure you that the information you will provide will be confidentially kept. Write your name and append your signature in the space below if you are willing to participate. However, feel free to withdraw from participation if you are uncomfortable with the provision of the information.

Participant

Name:.....Signature.....

Date:.....Place.....

Witness/Researcher

Name:.....Signature.....

Date.....Place.....

Thank you very much for your participation.

APPENDIXE: ASSENT FORM

I am a registered Masters student in the Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education at the University of Zambia. I am conducting a study on the perceptions of girls who have gone through Sikenge towards schooling. For me to achieve my goal, I have to interview young ladies, such as you, who have gone through *Sikenge*. I understand that you may not have attained 16 years of age; so, this form allows you to participate in this study. The office of the District Education Board Secretary is fully aware of this. I assure you that the information you will provide will be confidentially kept. Write your name and append your signature in the space below if you are willing to participate. However, feel free to withdraw from participation if you are uncomfortable with the provision of the information.

Participant

Name:.....Signature.....

Date:.....Place.....

Witness/Researcher

Name:.....Signature.....

Date.....Place.....

Thank you very much for your participation.

APPENDIX F: Interview guide for the initiated girls

1. What is your age?
2. How old were you when you went through Sikenge?
3. What happened for you to be initiated?
4. Where were you kept during Sikenge?
5. For how long did you stay in seclusion?
6. Tell me some of the teachings you received during this period.
7. Who were your friends during this period?
8. How did you feel after going through Sikenge?
9. How do you perceive your friends who have not gone through Sikenge?
10. In your opinion, did the teachings you received influence your behaviour?
11. What is your attitude towards schooling?

APPENDIXG: Interview guide for instructors

1. What is your role during *Sikenge*?
2. What teachings do you impart into *Balyanjo*?
3. How do girls behave after going through *Sikenge*?
4. What are the expectations of society of these girls?
5. How does society perceive these girls?
6. What is the attitude of girls who have gone through *Sikenge* towards school?
7. In your opinion, how do the teachings you give the girls influence their behaviour?

APPENDIX H: Interview guide for the teachers.

1. What experiences have you had with girls who have gone through Sikenge?
2. What is the attitude of these girls towards school?
3. How does your school deal with girls who have come of age through Sikenge?
4. Do the girls behave the same after going through Sikenge?
5. In your opinion, why should the girls' behaviour be different after going through Sikenge?
6. How does the school relate with the parents of such girls?
7. How is the performance of girls who have gone through Sikenge?
8. Let's share, your school provides guidance and counseling services, so what do you do to a girl whose attitude towards school may be affected due to the teachings she received during Sikenge?
9. Finally, what advice would you give to fellow teachers who are handling these girls?