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Mkandawire, Sitwe Benson (2015). The State of Affairs of Cultural Literacy in Zambia's Multicultural Education System. In A. L. Jotia and J. Dudu (Ed.), *Multicultural Education Discourses: Breaking Barriers of Exclusion in Selected African Contexts* (PP. 190-204). Windhoek, Namibia: Zebra publishing (Pty) LTD ISBN: 978-99945-84-99-4

The State of Affairs of Cultural Literacy in Zambia's Multicultural Education System

by

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Introduction

Cultural literacy is an individual's ability to understand and appreciate the customs, values, beliefs and life style of people in a particular cultural setting. A full participation in the affairs of such a given society and its ways of life is a sign of enculturation (Hirsch, 1987). In ordinary times, enculturation entails the production of a culturally literate person who is expected to understand the social code and language of the community with its drama. This understanding of people's way of life is what Bate (2009) called culture. This chapter discusses the multi-cultural nature of Zambia by bringing out facts and speculations about its people, where they are coming from, where the country is today regarding what the people call *Zambian Culture*. It will also highlight on the cultural literacy levels amongst the people of Zambia with a bearing on multi-cultural education.

A mere enlightenment on the state of affairs of cultural literacy in Zambia's multicultural education system without a clear understanding of what constitute *Zambian culture* would breed complexities. Cultural literacy demands an appreciation of the topography and landscape of the state by understanding various issues surrounding the subject matter related to culture. The Republic of Zambia, previously known as Northern Rhodesia is a land locked country located in the southern part of Africa covering an area of 752,612 km². Zambia is sharing borders with Malawi, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania, Angola, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The Central statistical office for Zambia available at <http://www.zamstats.gov.zm/> notes that Zambia's population is approximately 13,459,000 (2011 census) and most of the people are Africans, with small Asian and European minorities. These minorities speak different languages and exhibit different social practice which constitutes an emerging *Zambian crossroad culture* which has aspects of their home countries of origin and Zambia.

The Multi-Cultural Nature of Zambia

Zambia like many other African countries is a multi-lingual and multicultural society. Multilingual in the sense that there are many languages and dialects that are spoken within the borders of the country. For instance, English is the official language and is widely spoken throughout the country mainly for official purposes in education and offices. The other seven recognized regional official languages are *Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Tonga, Nyanja, Bemba* and *Kaonde* which are used for trade, semi-official functions, official functions for

education from grades one to four literacy program and other general social contexts. The other remaining languages and dialects such as *Tumbuka, Nkoya, Lamba, Ila, Mambwe* and *Lenje* are equally used for general communication and other traditional official functions. It is estimated that the country speaks over seventy-two dialects and languages in its respective ethnic groupings in all the ten provinces. Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978) note that there are over seventy two dialects and languages spoken across the country which makes Zambia a diverse multilingual society.

All multilingual societies are multicultural in nature as it is impossible for a rational community to conceive the existence of many languages in a particular setting without making cultural references. Language and culture are inseparable as the latter is a vehicle through which culture is transmitted. The existence of many languages and dialects in Zambia imply that there are different ethnic groupings with their beliefs and cultural practices which makes Zambia a unique multicultural society. In addition, the country has two hundred and eighty six recognized chief related positions and over eighty recognized and celebrated traditional ceremonies countrywide. These remarkable chiefs practice and live different life styles that mainly define and celebrate the unique Zambian culture. Let it be noted herein that the varying practices, activities and ways of life that take place in the different chiefdoms such as the type of food they eat, dressing, communication channels, celebrations, politics, agriculture, social and economic ventures largely define Zambian culture. Fishing, hunting, agriculture, mining and quarrying of various minerals such as copper, cobalt, gold and various precious stones including amethyst, blue stones, emeralds and others greatly add value to Zambia's way of life. The manufacturing and engineering of products, textiles, building materials, processed foods, animal products, leather products and others products are all part of the mainstream Zambian Culture as they dictate people's ways of life. The issue in question is, to what extent has these cultural issues been addressed in the education sector to improve cultural literacy levels on Zambia's multicultural education system?

The Nature of Zambian Education System

Since independence in 1964, the Zambian education system recognizes a four-tier kind of hierarchy namely; the Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level. It is characterized by what Banda (2008) calls a broad base type of education starting with formal primary level that has a broad base surface with high levels of enrolments and ends up with higher education levels with a sharp apex where there are few people completing tertiary levels. The low numbers of people completing tertiary levels are due to a number of factors such as inadequate curriculum that does not address the needs and aspirations of learners and the society, lack of tuition fees for some pupils, lack of policies to help those who drop out of school, examinations and the poor nature of the curriculum which is only centered on white collar jobs.

The composition of classes at each educational level in Zambia is generally multi-lingual and multi-cultural in nature as they are made up of learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These classes composed of students from different cultural backgrounds on one hand problematic in nature as teachers face challenges of educating them to be on the same

level of conceptual understanding especially given the diversity of learners which also includes their complex and varying intelligences. On the other hand, multilingual classes are very good learning points for educators and students themselves since they can enrich one another intellectually given their pool of diversity and life experiences. Educators learn more from student's cultures in the classrooms and students themselves, benefit more by learning from each other and the different social backgrounds from which their classmates originate.

The content of the Zambian curriculum across different subjects does not adequately address issues of multicultural education as the nature of teaching and learning materials including the approaches used to teach these diverse classes does not encroach on multicultural education. Furthermore, the structure of the curriculum for instance does not adequately encourage students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view. For example, a lesson on marriage process would become an entire component exploring cultural conflicts in the class. This approach would in turn help learners transform their view points and thought patterns and this type of instruction involves critical thinking and involves a consideration of diversity as a basic premise for multicultural education (Banks, 1999). This implies that, in order to develop a comprehensive multicultural education system in Zambia, there is need to diversify the approaches used to teach multicultural classes and the curriculum must be developed with cultural inclusiveness in mind so as to accommodate every learner.

The nature of teaching by individual teachers within the multicultural classes in Zambia especially in those schools located in cities and towns; incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs and perspectives of pupils from different cultural background. This is what Sabbott (2013) calls a defining feature of Multi-cultural Education. Sabbott further notes that; At the classroom level, for example, teachers may modify or incorporate lessons to reflect the cultural diversity of the students in a particular class. In many cases, culture is defined in the broadest possible sense, encompassing race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, and 'exceptionality,' a term applied to students with specialized needs or disabilities and all these aspects constitute multicultural education (p.1).

While there may be selected teachers practicing tenets of multicultural education in Zambia, there is need for deliberate policies to categorically guide teachers on how to conduct or treat multilingual classes. The current inclusion of certain cultural components in the syllabus and in some teaching and learning materials is a good starting point for strengthening multicultural education in Zambia. For example, the content that is taught to Zambian school going children usually includes cultural perspectives and references. An English lesson for example, may have a comprehension passage based on *Kwenje traditional ceremony* practiced in one of the districts in Zambia. A geography lesson may discuss ways of life of different groups of people in Zambia and what they grow for their survival as staple food. All these aspects are characteristics of multicultural education and they make understanding and appreciation of concepts by the learners to be easy.

It is important to acknowledge that the inclusion of different cultural components in the Zambian educational materials such as the general way of life of the Zambian people as noted in the Grade four English pupils is a good initiative. The content shows six different images of people doing different activities such as cooking fish, farming, starting a fire and getting fruits from the bush which is a sign of incorporating cultural literacy awareness in Zambia's Multicultural Education System. The effort of trying to link culture with education is a commendable effort in that the curriculum tries to take into account content which is directly related to the lives of the Zambians rather than educating them from a "foreign content" which they absolutely cannot identify with. The inclusion of such cultural issues from diverse racial and ethnic groupings representing pupils in those classes helps learners value and respect their cultures. This view is also supported by Banks and Banks (1995: xi) who looked at multicultural education as:

a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. One of its important goals is to help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with peoples from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good.

This perception by Banks coupled with the description of the Zambian education system provided above entails that to some degree the Zambian education system makes an effort to take into account multi-cultural issues when educating the Zambian children. The inclusion of cultural aspects in different subject areas in school teaching materials is very important as it gives privileges to specific aspects of Zambian culture. However, the inclusion of such aspects can be improved to cover a wide range of issues that constitute Zambian culture so that children in school can be aware of what goes on around them at different levels. Currently, there are a number of Zambian cultural aspects which are not adequately covered in the curriculum. For example, the latest revised curriculum of 2012 does not adequately address the common dress codes, the type of food eaten in different regions, does not even mention some critical cultural components such as communication channels, celebrations, politics, social and the economic ventures that largely define Zambian culture. The implications of these aspects that are marginalised are that the children consequently leave the education system without a full understanding of what constitutes Zambian culture. There is need to adequately include the various aspects of culture from different regions and these must be factored in the curriculum, teaching and learning materials such as text books, charts and videos so that learners are enlightened on cultural literacy levels through Multicultural Education System.

The state of affairs regarding multicultural education demands the inclusion of diverse cultural content, cultural perspectives, concepts, paradigms and theories from specialized interdisciplinary fields such as ethnic studies and cultural orientations. The marginalized cultural aspects in the Zambian education curriculum are a challenge which needs to be addressed through either the instructional materials or pedagogical methods. Banks

and Banks (1995) argue that multi-cultural education interrogates, challenges, and reinterprets content, concepts, and paradigms from the established disciplines.

Multicultural education applies content from these fields and disciplines to pedagogy and curriculum development in educational settings. Consequently, we may define multicultural education as a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioural sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women studies, (Banks and Banks, 1995: xii).

It is prudent to note that there are some aspects which are included in the curriculum and that to some degree the teaching and learning materials to some degree categorically acknowledge and embrace multiculturalism to some varying degrees.

The Current state of Zambian Culture

Zambian culture refers to a collection of behaviours, practices, values, attitudes, beliefs, laws, morals, procedures and other common ways of doing things as exhibited by Zambians that can be transmitted from one generation to another. These practices are subject to modification by members of society as it changes. This way of looking at culture as common way or a manner of doing things is also contended by other cultural anthropologists and academics who have written much on cultural affairs such as Avruch (1998), Hofstede (1994), Matsumoto (1996), Spencer-Oatey (2008) and Bate (2009) who perceive culture as a way of life. Defining culture as a way of life is too broad as it touches on different living entities such as animals, bees, birds or the way of life of people in a particular community. When it comes to humans, this may include anything associated with the welfare of people in that community such as the way they treat political issues, socio-economic matters as well as the general manner of doing things. With this line of thought, we can deduce that every group of people have a culture as they exhibit some collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another (Hofstede, 1994). There are certain common events, practices, mannerisms and general way of doing things in Zambia which is being highlighted in a number of educational materials and curriculum. These common practices whether in the curriculum for education purposes or not are what constitute Zambian Culture. To be more specific, when people talk of Zambian culture, they are referring to the following things or aspects:

(a) Food eaten in Zambia including *Nshima*, Rice, Potatoes, sweet potatoes, sweet potato leaves (*kalembula*), pumpkin, pumpkin leaves (*Chiwawa/Gadabu/Munkhwanu*), fish, dry baby fish (*kapenta*), meat, *impwa*, chicken, birds, cassava, cassava leaves, millet (*nshima*), sorghum (*nshima*), cassava (*nshima*) and any other food that is frequently eaten by Zambians. Some of these foods are covered in the Zambian educational materials to help raise cultural literacy levels amongst the pupils.

(b) Dressing of Zambians such as wearing *Chitenge*, dress and head linen (*Duku*) by women,

trousers, shorts, *Chitenge* tops for men and any other common forms of dressing that is associated with Zambians. The curriculum does not cover much of this issue of dressing in the Zambian education system. The implication of this is that, it is hard for a school going child to categorically state what Zambian dressing is as opposed to universal or global dressing.

(c) Celebrations of weddings, traditional ceremonies, death ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, parties, initiation, birthdays and many other forms of celebration are part of Zambian culture. Yet, much of the education materials especially text books only make reference to traditional ceremonies without any proper reference to the various forms of celebrations and ceremonies. Technically the curriculum is silent on this issue.

(d) Sports such as football, boxing, netball, valley ball, golf, balling, chess, tennis, badminton and others are part of culture. Some of these sporting activities such as football and volleyball are adequately covered in a number of educational materials in schools. The other sports are not given much attention, yet they are also essential.

(e) Art and Entertainment such as theatres, cinema halls and stage live performances, poetry, comedy, music, films and drama are to some great levels covered in the educational materials especially stage plays and sketches and they constitute the textbook content. Much of these issues are discussed in literature subjects in schools.

(f) Clubbing and liquor/beer drinking is common in all the cities with its related vices but is rarely discussed in educational circles and in the curriculum in general, yet this are important cultural activities.

(g) Social organisation and politics which include among others the country's politics including traditional leadership. In many rural parts of the country, there are over 286 chiefs who govern the people in villages. Political issues and social organisations are also covered in civics subjects at secondary school level and are part of the curriculum.

(h) Agriculture and farming such as fishing, hunting, rearing of animals, birds and cultivation which greatly contribute to the economy and the general welfare of people in the country are also discussed in the curriculum. These aspects are included in different subjects in school such as agriculture science, history and geography related subjects including home economics.

(i) Industry, mining and quarrying of various minerals such as copper, cobalt, gold and various precious stones including amethyst, blue stones, emeralds and others greatly add value to Zambia's way of life and part of these are reflected in the curriculum.

(j) The manufacturing and engineering of products, textiles, building materials, processed foods, animal products, leather products and others products are all part of the mainstream Zambian Culture as they dictates people's ways of life and they are discussed in different subjects areas in schools.

(k) Communication channels in Zambia exist in different forms and at various levels. They are done by cell phone, internet emails, social media networks such as Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn and what's app. Radio, television, mobile radio messages and use of messengers are very common. Some of these are highlighted and discussed in the Zambian education system.

(l) Barbershops and Hair dressers are also part of the Zambian culture but are marginalised in the curriculum and are rarely discussed in the education system.

(m) Transportation system equally takes different forms ranging from bicycles, motorbikes, vehicles, planes, trains and trekking. Not so much is done in terms of coverage in the curriculum.

(n) Important sites such as national parks, safaris, game reserves and sanctuaries are part of the Zambian culture. Some of these aspects are discussed in the education sector to help uplift cultural literacy levels in Zambia.

Furthermore, the other physical manifestation of the current Zambian culture can be categorised using Julian Huxley's model of culture which was based on a comparison of biological and cultural evolution. Julian saw culture as being composed of three categories: mentifacts, sociofacts and artifacts and much of these are discussed in some selected subject areas in schools.

(a) Zambian Mentifacts

Mentifacts according to Huxley's model are abstract and mental activities human beings engage in such as language, religion, folklore, magic, artistic traditions and others. They are things to do with the mind. The Zambian mentifacts therefore include the seventy-three plus languages and dialects which are found in Zambia. The religions found in Zambia include; Christianity which has the largest population reflected in the various churches such as the Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, United Church of Zambia, Apostolic, Jehovah's kingdom, and others. Africanism, Islam, Hinduism and other religions are also found and practiced in Zambia which all constitute the way of life of the Zambian people. Art is another prominent cultural issue as there is some form of culture associated with it. The artistic activities of Zambia are mainly music, film, visual, stage plays, comedy and other artistic forms. The magic and traditions, myths and other abstract and mental activities are all part of the Zambian culture. These mentifacts are provided in the Zambian educational curriculum and are actively discussed in a number of teaching materials. For instance, the issue of religions in Zambia is discussed in religious education subjects in secondary schools while issues of folklore and magic are discussed in the history subjects.

(b) Zambian Sociofacts

Sociofacts refer to the way the Zambian society is organized in terms of the political structures

where the President is the head of the state and how the three wings of government work together. Sociofacts impinge on social relationships on how the Zambian people relate to each other and whether or not they are friendly. It also touches on family structures and sexual relations and asks questions such as: how do Zambians marry? Who is the head of the house? Who is responsible for rearing a child? Issues on what is considered a taboo or not and what is generally acceptable and not acceptable are discussed here. Sociofacts are those things that govern the society socially and these issues are discussed in different educational materials in schools.

(c) Zambian Artifacts

Artifacts are material manifestations of culture which are used to meet human needs such as food, shelter, clothing, transport and others. They are things to do with artifice or human made objects. The Zambian typical food include *nshima, impwa, delele, chiwawa, kalemba*, meat, fish, rice, beans, rape, cabbage and others. The nature and types of houses found in Zambia are part of this category. Part of the population especially in rural parts of Zambia today has maintained African traditional houses. The Zambian artifacts are equally included in the curriculum and are discussed at different levels of education especially in geography, history and home economics.

The current life style of people in the rural parts of Zambia has not changed significantly as they are still rearing animals, chickens, farming traditional food staff, hunting, fishing and other survival strategies. These aspects are included the Zambian educational curriculum so that learners from different social settings are well equipped with different life styles. Such an effort in the education system is certainly commendable.

Common forms of Culture in Zambia

There are many forms of culture that one can see in Zambia today. Some of these have traits common in the world while others are typical to Zambia alone. Amongst the cultures seen in Zambia today are:

(a) Dominant Culture which has to do with prominent and established aspects of the society such as language, religion, behavior, values, rituals, and social customs, (Marshall,1998). The description of dominant culture is always in favor of what the majority does and achieves. It usually dominates and controls social institutions such as communication, educational institutions, artistic expression, law, political process, and business. In terms of language, the dominant languages in Zambia include *Nyanja, Bemba, Tonga, Lozi, Lunda Luvale Kaonde, Tumbuka* and *Lamba*. *Nyanja* and *Bemba* are spoken in almost every town in Zambia and the rest are very prominent in some selected regions of Zambia. All these aspects falling under the dominant culture are very common in the Zambian curriculum. For instance, the preamble aims and goals of education are clearly stressing on good behavior, values, rituals, and social customs from graduates and that these values are expected to be taught across all subject areas in schools.

(b) High Culture in Zambia refers to educated elites with at least a car, a house and with a reasonable livelihood. These are relatively the rich families who can afford more than three meals a day and enjoy other luxuries. A few of the so-called rich people of the upper class such as the intelligentsia living high cost lives are part of the high culture in Zambia. These issues are mainly discussed in colleges and universities and have no place in the lower secondary curriculum.

(c) Folk culture is very prominent in Zambia as many people live in rural areas and practice traditional ways of survival with families' isolated from one another. Folk culture is a life style practiced by people in rural areas mainly organized in families and passed down historically from one generation to another through oral tradition. This form of culture is heavily taught in history and geography when looking at specific issues that define the Zambian life style.

(d) Popular culture is what is "popular," accepted and practiced by almost everyone at a certain point in time which within the Zambian context would include amongst other things, the eating of *nshima* and rice. The eating of *nshima* as staple food is practiced by almost everyone and this is an example. Listening to popular music, enjoying sexy dance styles, "immoral dressing" and "immature language" all constitute popular culture in Zambia. Some of these issues are not adequately addressed in the education sector. Gans (2008) notes that popular culture is the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes images, and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture. Popular culture is heavily influenced by mass media. This collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of the society.

(e) Sub culture is where people of the same or similar age group exhibit and identify themselves with the groups they are found. This is very common in Zambia and everywhere in the world. According to Nanda (1994), a subculture refers to a group of people within a culture that differentiates them from the larger culture to which they belong. These issues may be hard to adequately address them in the curriculum.

(f) Universal Culture or Culture universal refer to common behaviour, possessives and practices which every human being is expected to have or experience. Brown (1991) looks at culture universals as those features of culture, society, language, behavior, and psyche for which there are no known exception for humanity. Dressing, shelter, food and music are all part of universal culture which is mainly influenced by globalisation. There are other forms of cultures in Zambia such as the **Peasant culture** in which many working class men and women are found and **Mass culture** which is usually for educated people who can fit

into any culture of the world without major challenges. These forms of cultures are adequately discussed in different subject areas in the Zambian education system.

Communication and Representation in Zambian Cultures

Communication and representation plays a significant role in Zambia's multicultural education system in that it is a rubric of multicultural education. The emphasis here is that all the communication strategies, teaching and learning materials must represent student cultural backgrounds. They must provide learners with knowledge about the histories, values, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups in those classes. Therefore, the issue of communication and representation is a key factor as it helps the Zambian educational institutions to address multicultural classes with the seriousness they deserve.

Some of the teaching and learning materials in many Zambian multicultural classes are cultural insensitive. They do not adequately represent learner's interests and does not adequately address the needs and aspirations of the learners. In an ideal multicultural classroom, communication of teaching points to individual learners would entail understanding the content in relation to the lived experiences. The current trend of mere passing information from the teacher to the learner without any proper acknowledgement of receipt of this information might cause ethnologists in some learners whose cultures are not represented. Teachers handling multicultural classes must adequately communicate to the students in a manner that they will help them understand issues from their different cultural backgrounds. Communication takes different forms and some of them are hard to understand as they are restricted in cultural meaning and context in a group or setting. However, for multicultural teachers, there is a way they can convey their information to the learners without involving complex human communications which are symbolic in nature. For example, if a teacher is teaching on fishing, he or she might bring in visual images that would help different learners to think in a certain way.

Many times, classroom communications are verbal and allow meaningful conversations, speeches and practice of certain teaching points by learners. It is also a basic method through which humans interact and share thoughts, ideas, views and beliefs in different situations.

When discussing issues of communication in multicultural education, language becomes a crucial subject matter. If this is the case, then the question becomes; is communication the same as language? Or is language the same as communication? A person investigating the entire concepts of language and communication for the first time might conclude that the two are the same. Cultural communications or Communication in general is done in different ways and at times without using language. In an ideal multilingual classroom, a good teacher combines communication strategies to facilitate learning and initiate cognitive abilities in learners. While the issue of communication is broader and complex than language, teachers manage the two terms well in classes.

The Cultural Nature of Zambian society

All human societies are cultural in nature and people's interpretation and understanding of the world has to do with the values, beliefs, traditions and customs from their cultural background in the society. These values and ideals are transmitted from one generation to another through education and the interpretation of different issues in Zambia's education system is mainly dependent on our experiences and cultural backgrounds. Bate (2009:94) observes that "All human societies have a cultural dimension to them. The culture of a society has something to do with the way the society makes sense out of its world". This by extension suggests that if you are interested in knowing a particular society like Zambia, how it behaves, why it does things the way it does, you need to understand their culture and their education system. According to Bate (2009), there are mainly six major aspects which people commonly use when trying to describe people's culture and these are:

The first one is that 'culture is a way of life' to mean that the whole series of things such as design for life, plan for living and the behaviour of a group and all its activities are part of culture. Secondly, 'all culture is learned' to mean that nobody is born with it, but people are taught from childhood to death. The third view is that 'culture involves language' meaning that it is impossible to learn culture without interacting, analysing thought pattern processes and language is an entry point to enculturation process. The fourth one is that 'culture involves our rituals, symbols and myths' to mean that all cultures of the world have these aspects which speak to people inside the culture but do not speak so clearly to those outside. The fifth one is that 'culture gives meaning to our life' meaning that culture carries with it the experience of being unique. This is how culture give us our identity so that one person can say: I am Zambian, or I am catholic, massai and others. Lastly, 'culture is about communication between people both verbally and nonverbal'. Those within a culture will understand each other while those outside cultures will often misunderstand symbols, words, language and behaviour (Bate, 2009:96-101).

It is important to note that the way people from different parts of the world interpret the world is to a large extent dependent on many factors such as their educational orientation and background. Many times, even people from the same community may interpret the same subject matter differently due to variations in background experiences. People may differ based on personality factors which depend on our own individuality and consciousness different from what educationalist teach. Some people's personality is extrovert (social, vocal, outspoken) while others are introvert (resilient, emotional, self-image etc.). All these define our personality in Zambia and has a strong influence on the way we interpret our world.

Leadership and governance in Zambian communities

Issues of leadership and governance are adequately covered in the Zambian educational curriculum as there is a subject (civics) in secondary schools that deals especially with these issues. The terms leadership and governance are notoriously hard to define without inviting questions from academics. In ordinary times, leadership was associated with the ability to influence others, that if you can influence the next person to accomplish a certain objective and command them in some way, then you are a leader and then in leadership. These triggers a question on who is a leader? The roles played by leaders and governance issues are mainly transmitted through the education system. It is not the focus of this chapter however, to discuss the politics of leadership but what is important to note is that in traditional Zambian society, leadership and governance are almost synonyms and the education system played a critical role in this area.

A leader had everything to do with governing. The issue of governance is a broad field of academic scholarship that is studied at higher levels of education. Bevir (2013) contends that governance relates to processes and decisions that seek to define actions, grant power and verify performance in different sectors.

All issues to do with leadership and governance in traditional Zambian societies were entrusted in the hands of wise adults and this trend has continued to the present-day Zambia in different parts of the country. These values and trends are also imbedded in the curriculum to raise cultural literacy levels for students. The adult generation has a major role in determining people's ways of life, power, race, identity and inequalities in the society. While this trend may be prominent in almost all African countries, the degree of tolerance for the younger generation to take up leadership positions differs from one country to another. The emphasis of what issues need to be discussed in the education system also differs significantly.

The Zambian Cultural Topographies

The word topography is usually used in geography in schools to refer to the manner in which the landscape of is shaped. Topography has been applied in cultural studies to refer to the way of life of people in a particular geographical region, how they respond to the environment, how they survive, their belief, structure of their houses, farming arrangements, anything man made in that environment, technology, modern perceptions of various aspects including issues where they differ in opinions. The Zambian geography subject discusses these issues at length and looks at the factors that affects certain geographical locations. These issues are crucial for multicultural education as they impinge on individual learner's backgrounds and ethnic groupings.

Zambian cultural topography is appreciated in two main ways. Firstly, it is a determinant of farming activities that are expected to take place in those regions and generally, the Zambian topography differs from one region to another. Some towns like Kabwe are relatively high

and flat land while others like Chipata and Kasama are generally hilly. Others like Mazabuka are watery which allows people to grow food such as rice, sugar cane and bananas.

The topography of Zambia highly contributes to the variations in cultural practices that are hard to measure at times. Hume (2011:1) notes that there are two extreme reactions when it comes to cultural variations:

Firstly, to assert that cultural differences are to a great extent incommensurable (impossible to measure or compare). The more extreme caricatures of this position fall into the class of cultural relativism. Secondly, to assert that cultural differences are fundamentally superficial, and that all differences are easily resolvable through reconciliations of semantic confusions. The idea that all religions "believe in the same God" falls into this category.

Hume (2011) further notes that both of the above positions have grains of truth, but the deeper reality which we are confronted with is that the topography of human culture is not flat, nor is it randomly rugged. There are broad cross-cultural patterns over time and space which exhibit surprising synchrony even if they are from the same or similar region. Hume (2011) provides an explicit example that between the years 1000 BC and AD, human societies shifted away from practice of human sacrifice. The shift occurred in the West and the ancient Far East. Both the Classical Greeks and Chinese have memories of human sacrifice in their mythologies, and the archaeology and textual evidence does confirm this practice in both societies in the late Bronze Age (Hume, 2011).

Conclusion

Zambia to some extent values and pays attention to multicultural education issues within the education system but the state of affairs of cultural literacy in Zambia's multicultural education system is relatively mild. Aspects of Zambian culture that are included in the current education curriculum can be improved to cover needs and aspirations of learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. Issues of indigenous ways of life need to be further addressed in the curriculum to help uphold Zambian traditions through multicultural education. The education system must equip students with diversity of knowledge so that they can understand and appreciate the customs, values, beliefs and life styles of the unique local people in Zambia. To effectively teach these morals and values, school going children need to be enculturated into the local cultures with liberatory kind of education.

Diverse societies ought to promote multicultural education so that all cultures can feel accommodated rather than them being assimilated through the promotion of curriculum materials which are only focused on the mainstream cultures. Zambia in general has not reached the goal of being absolutely embracive of all the pertinent multicultural issues in its diverse and complex society, however credit ought to be given for all the efforts and initiatives which have been and continue to be made so that consequently all children in Zambia in the

spirit of humanism are able to learn equitably by having their cultures represented within the curriculum. It is not an easy journey but it is a journey which could be accomplished provided the people have the will to promote multiculturalism in the spirit of democracy and education for all.

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