THE IMPACT OF SIKENGE INITIATION RITE ON WOMEN IN WESTERN PROVINCE: A CASE STUDY OF MONGU DISTRICT.

BY

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Gender Studies.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
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1st June, 2006.
Approval

This dissertation by Grace Mikombe Chama is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Arts Degree of the University of Zambia.

Signed: Akhange Date: 2/06/06

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Date: 2/06/06
Abstract
In Zambia, women represent about 52 percent of the population, yet their inclusion in decision making, political and economic activities has always been limited. This is due to the negative stereotyping of female roles by society that has been made worse by some values taught through initiation ceremonies.

This study was undertaken against a background where in most African countries, Zambia included, human development as it concerns gender equality is more rhetoric than in practice. The main objective of the study was to investigate the effects of the Lozi people’s Sikenge initiation rite on women’s behaviour. The study was conducted in Mongu district of Western Province of Zambia. Data were collected using qualitative methods. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The in-depth-interviews involved interviewing 30 initiated women, 30 non-initiated women and 10 initiators. As a way of verifying the data collected through in depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions were also conducted. This involved two groups, one for the initiated women and the other one for the non-initiated women. Each focus group comprised of 8 members. Secondary data were collected through reading books from various libraries. The sample size of 70 was arrived at through Purposive and Snowball sampling method. The data were then analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) and through qualitative methods by means of Themes.

The results were analysed and findings discussed. The results indicated that Sikenge has an influence on women’s behaviour. Most women who go through the rite change their behaviour either negatively or positively. However, it was concluded that the rite should be continued but certain modifications should be made to enhance the rightful time and procedure of initiating the girls.
Declaration.

I, Grace Mikombe Chama, declare that this dissertation is a clear testimony of my own personal effort and experience during field research. The report is being presented to this University for the first time as it has never been presented elsewhere. All published work or materials used here in this report have been acknowledged and adequate reference given as well.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 01/06/06
Dedication.

To my beloved husband Edward, my daughter Kabaso and son Chama, my mother, my brothers and sisters, I joyfully dedicate this dissertation to all of you. May God bless you. I also dedicate this in loving memory of my father Mr. Shem Chama (Snr) and my elder brother Mr. Shem. K. Chama (Jnr). May their Souls Rest in Eternal Peace.
Acknowledgements.

I wish to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Y. Chondoka, Senior Lecturer, Department of History, and Dr. T. Kusanthan my lecturer and Head of Department for Gender Studies for their fatherly and professional expertise accorded to me before and during the writing of this report. I also wish to thank all the lecturers who offered courses at Masters level in the Department of Gender Studies for their professional lectures and advice. They include Dr. M. Milimo, Mr. R. Kalinda, Dr. P. Ndubani, Dr. F. Gadsden and Dr. C. Lumbwe, for their professional lectures and advice.

I acknowledge the assistance rendered to me by Mongu urban and periurban residents for their co-operation during the field research. I also wish to thank more sincerely Kambule High School administration and the Ministry of Education Western Province for sponsoring my studies.

This report cannot be complete without thanking my Research Assistant Mrs. Y. Masheke for her undoubted willingness and tireless effort to ensure that the questionnaires were translated and distributed accordingly. Last but not the least I thank my course-mate Patrick Sakala for his advice and assistance offered to me especially on the use of his computer.
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ACRONYMS.

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

E.C.Z. - Evangelical Church of Zambia.

F.G.D. - Focus Group Discussion.

F.G.M. - Female Genital Mutilation.

H.I.V. - Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus.

S.D.A. - Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

SPSS - Statistical Package of Social Sciences.

STD - Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

U.C.Z. - United Church of Zambia.

UNFPA - United Nations Fund for Population Activities.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background Information

Initiation is a rite that marks the passage from childhood to adulthood. Among the Lozi of Western Province of Zambia, initiation is undertaken in sikenge. This is defined as a girl’s initiation school or an institution of learning for girls where learning commences immediately after a girl has started her first menstruation. It is a school because at sikenge there are teachers, a structure where the initiates learn, a curriculum that is followed and practical examinations are set for the initiates at the end of the programme. Mukiti wa mwalango is the ceremony that concludes the school system.

Initiation rite for girls among the Lozi sets a basis for adult life by developing a new identity for a woman. An initiate, or a ‘novice’, locally called mwalango also spelt mwalyango enjoys the initiation ceremony as it enables her pass through the social boundary from childhood to adulthood. During this period, she is taught a vast body of social attributes that a woman is supposed to know and deal with throughout her life. At the end of the ceremony the mwalango graduates into an adult woman.

Similarly, in Zambia, most ethnic groups practice initiation rites for girls. The basic principles are the same with only a few variations. The Bemba of northern Zambia call the novice nachisungu, the Chewa in eastern Zambia refer to her as namwali, the Tonga call her moye. Before formal western education became very popular, this ceremony was usually conducted during the cold season. This was the time when crops grown were ready for harvest. Thus food was plentiful and beer could be brewed for the rites. However,
nowadays, the ceremonies are conducted during school holidays so that the initiates do not miss out in school. Equally, the respondents stated that generally, the duration is shortened from 3 to 6 months to a few weeks or a month. However, there are areas in Mongu district where sikenge can go up to beyond one month.

During initiation, the girl is instructed by some women under a leader or chief instructor locally called ma mwalanjo. All the women are well vested in this aspect of culture. The novice has to comply with whatever she is told to do, failure to which she is whipped or rebuked. Worse still if she has a reputation of being rude or disobedient, the whipping is done severely as a punishment designed to make her change for the better. Initiation emphasizes reproductive roles within marriage. These include domestic and agricultural duties, respect for elders and her future husband, observance of sexual and food taboos. The young girl is taught how to behave in marriage, how to run a home by performing most of the domestic duties in her mother’s home. Most of these cultural attributes concerning marriage are usually taught to girls. Boys in most ethnic groups in Zambia are not taught these things. This is because, like the Lozi, they have no initiation ceremonies. Thus, according to Geisler (1997:94), “African women have at times appeared as the custodians of tradition and thus agents of their own subordination.” Therefore, from this perspective, initiation ceremonies in Africa are seen as tools for women’s subordination.

1.1 The Study Area.

The Western Province formerly known as Barotseland is located in the western part of Zambia. The province has a very big flood plain, which stretches along the upper Zambezi River for 180 kilometres, from Lukulu to Sesheke. The flood plain is where three important economic activities are undertaken namely, crop farming, cattle rearing and fishing. This
study was carried out in Mongu, the provincial headquarters of Western Province. This place is located about 600 kilometers west of Lusaka and is situated on a highland facing the great Zambezi plain on its west.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study sought to examine the effects of initiation rites on female behaviour. Much research that has been done on this subject, sikenge, has not focused on its impact on values and norms of the mwalanjio but on other aspects of the rite. Therefore, this study sought to
investigate whether *sikenge* contributes to the change of behaviour of women that go through it.

1.3 **Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which values and norms that are taught during initiation benefit women. This study was done to discover those values that contributed to the infringement of women’s rights. The understanding of these values and norms will help in the designing of effective strategies that will be used to strengthen good values and amend those that negatively affect women. Therefore, it was imperative that this work be conducted since very little academic research has been done on the Lozi’s *Sikenge* initiation rite. Equally the positive and negative effects of initiation on women have not been scholarly assessed. Hence, this study was designed to clarify these issues.

1.4. **Objectives**

**General Objective**

To investigate the effect of the *sikenge* initiation rites on women’s behaviour and recommend strategies that can help make some amendments to the curriculum or negative values taught.

**Specific Objectives**

1. To assess women’s attitudes towards initiation rites.

2. To identify the content of what is taught during initiation.

3. To ascertain whether the *sikenge* initiation had indeed any positive or negative, physical or psychological effects on women.

4. To identify the behaviour pattern of Lozi women, which reflected values taught during initiation.
5. To find out whether the rights of women are respected or violated in the initiation process in sikenge.

6. To recommend strategies to the sikenge initiators where need be so that they can make some amendments to values taught.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are women’s attitudes towards the sikenge initiation rites?

2. What is taught during the initiation rite?

3. What are the differences in behaviour between those who are initiated and those who are not?

4. How are girls expressing their feelings once mistreated at the initiation ceremony?

1.6 Operational definitions of key concepts

Initiation  -  This is a process of learning about and entering into a new social status.

Initiator  -  The elderly person teaching the young girls who have become of age values and attributes of becoming adults. The chief initiator is referred to as ma mwalango in Silozi.

Mwalango  -  The girl who is being initiated. (This is a Silozi term.)

Novice  -  This refers to a girl that is training to become a woman or the girl who is being initiated. A mwalango is a novice.

Ritual  -  This is a set of fixed actions and sometimes words performed regularly especially as part of a ceremony.
Sikenge – Girl’s initiation rite which involves confinement prescribed to a girl during her initiation. This is practised among the Lozi in Western Province of Zambia.

Reproductive roles – Tasks related to child bearing, rearing and the general well-being of the family.

Control group – Women who have not been initiated.

1.7 Limitations of the study.

- Due to financial constraints it was difficult to go into the remote parts of the district to collect data. However, villages near Mongu Boma were visited instead.
- The initiators and some initiated women were demanding for money before they could be interviewed. This contributed to the difficulty of reaching the intended sample size. However, we managed through negotiations.
- Some initiators also thought it was taboo to disclose what is taught during the ceremony. After long discussions this was resolved and the required data was collected.
- In the control group, it was quite difficult to get the respondents since most of them are marginalized and feel ashamed and uncomfortable to disclose that they are not initiated. This is because the traditionalist, cultured people, look down upon the uninitiated women, more especially in rural areas.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been done on initiation ceremonies in Zambia and other parts of the world. This Chapter reviews books or documents relevant to this topic by a number of scholars. Jafarey (2004), in his work on initiation confirms that initiation is as old as human society and that the age at which one attains this stage varies from society to society and from one individual to the other. According to Jafarey, who wrote about the girl’s initiation ceremonies in some societies said that this is attained at the age of 9 years while in other societies this is only attained at the age of 21 years.

Stardate’s (2003), work is also relevant to this study as it provides insights on what goes on in the initiation of girls in other societies in the world. He emphasized on the rite’s promotion of group cohesiveness at the expense of individualism. He states that individuals end up becoming loyal to the initiation groups and remain loyal for the rest of their lives. He further stresses that if they have some sort of agenda, they are more likely to adopt that agenda as their own so as to maintain and promote the group and help it to work to achieve its goal. For Stardate, initiation is a tool for social unity of the people in the same cohort.

Another illuminating work to this study is the one by Murphee (1969), who states that initiation for girls is marked by observance of a number of taboos associated with the initial menstruation. Such taboos are there to teach the girl hygienic practices associated with menstruation. Rasing (2001), in her study on initiation dwelt on issues of reproductive health, marriage, domestic and agriculture duties, respect for elders, her future husband, sexuality and food taboos. Work by United Nations Fund for Population Activities
(UNFPA) (2005) collaborates with that done by Rasing (2001). This is because the UNFPA also looks at initiation as an institution that teaches girls how to deal with menstruation and how to be good sexual partners with their future husbands. For this reason, certain foods believed to affect fertility are prohibited and the instructress during seclusion teaches the girl the importance of good sexual intercourse in marriage and how this should be done.

Bruce (1981), in his work on initiation shares the same views as those of Stardate. He also confirms that initiation is a mark of solidarity in which women set themselves apart from men, affirming themselves and their differences from males around them. Rather than an act of oppression, initiation becomes an act of unity among women.

Sumbwa’s (1988) article on sikenge is very relevant to this study in that he gives the commencement of initiation among the Lozi as the attainment of puberty and says that it is associated with both the consolidation of previously learnt subjects and the learning of new things that are of special importance to females in adult life. The rite introduces learners to novel subjects such as sex education and it is also preoccupied with the consolidation of skills that its learners were exposed to in their childhood.

A study by Ocholla-Ayayo (1976) also argues among other things that girls learn at the initiation ceremony is the importance of being hospitable and generous to relatives and even to strangers. She is also taught virtues like avoid telling lies, abstaining from theft and aggressiveness. In his study on initiation ceremonies, Snelson (1970), brings out the economic benefits of the ceremony to the initiates as well as to the society. The novice is taught how to make household utensils and equipment. These are the ones the lady would
use in her home when she is married. Hence, that skill could be extended by making many more crafts for sell to the other people. Crafts made included things like mats, baskets, brooms, pots and many others. Snelson also argues that the education provided at the initiation ceremony is thorough and well balanced in the preparation of the girl for life. He points out that initiation ceremonies are a kind of traditional education that is regarded as one preserving the cultural heritage of the community. It also fosters obedience, unselfishness and endurance of hardship, encourages honesty and self-restraint and respect for the rights of others. All these attributes are inculcated in the young women that undergo initiation. The novice is assigned some difficult tasks that will help shape her into becoming a hardworking woman.

Bennetta (1976)'s study on initiation ceremonies focuses on the importance of practical demonstrations of all the teachings and instructions given to the novice at such ceremonies. She cites a few examples. For instance the instructor would demonstrate a cooking lesson by actually cooking beginning with the first part of the cooking process up to the end.

According to Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979), the girl is also taught endurance in life. For instance, the girl is asked to do very difficult tasks like lifting up a plate or moving plates from one position to another using her mouth (teeth). She may also be asked to pick up beads with her foot. The difficult tasks undertaken symbolize that she will have to do difficult things in life. She is taught that she has to suffer during the seclusion because she has to leave childhood. She is going to be married and marriage is difficult. It is concluded that she has to suffer now, when she is initiated. She will remember this, so that she won't give up on her marriage easily.
In line with the above argument, Mwanakatwe (1968) concludes that the whole essence of seclusion is to strengthen the individual at a time of crisis in her life. This will sanction her new status in society after a period of exclusion and instruction and also to assert the authority of society over the individual through the solemnity and rigour of the ritual.

Rasing (1996) argues that the high rates of teenage pregnancy in many modern societies are attributed to a lack of initiation rites. The girls do not know how to face the world and so they end up being prey to the vices in society. It is assumed that initiation rites may help prevent unmarried girls from participating in sexual relationships which can lead to pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases particularly HIV/AIDS.

Research by Mbozi (1998) and others on HIV/AIDS has raised a different dimension on initiation ceremonies. Their study raises concerns about the values inculcated into a woman with regard to sex and sexuality during initiation ceremonies. They believe that the emphasis placed on the submissiveness of woman to man in sikenge and on man’s sexual satisfaction partly accounts for the disempowerment of the woman. The woman fails to negotiate for safe sex in order to please the husband. The practice of ‘dry sex’ is emphasized. This is a practice which is regarded as another widespread culturally inspired sexual habit in Zambia. But with the advent of HIV/AIDS, concerns have been raised linking it to HIV transmission due to genital ulceration of both male and female organs during sexual intercourse. This in turn facilitates the exchange of blood agents including HIV.

The study by UNFPA (2005), already referred to above, also confirms that initiation rites reinforce gender stereotypes, encouraging young men to assume dominance and young
women to accept their lower status. The same source further states that after initiation, most girls take less interest in school. All they think of is marriage or simply having sex with men so that they can practice the skills learnt. Thus, this results into early marriages, unwanted pregnancies and increases on the number of girls who drop out of school.

Many negative practices still prevail in some societies including Zambia. One such practice at initiation ceremony is the female genital mutilation (FGM). In describing this practice O’connell (1980) accurately concluded that this practice destroys a crucial zone of sexual pleasure. The health risks associated with FGM are undisputed. These include immediate complications of haemorrhage, infections such as septicemia, tetanus, psychological distress, increased vulnerability of contracting HIV, damage to adjacent organs, violent pain which cause collapse and sudden death.

The studies reviewed have not provided us with the impact the initiation ceremony has on women, with regard to the psychological, social and physical effects, the attitudes and behaviour changes on women that go through initiation. This study therefore aims at looking at these variables and how they affect the women who have undergone the initiation ceremony with emphasis on the women of Western Province.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methods that were used during data collection for this research. It is divided in seven subsections namely, research design, research setting, study population, sampling method and procedure, research instruments, data collection, data analysis and finally ends by outlining the problems encountered in the collection of data.

3.1 Research Design

The research designs that were used were qualitative and quantitative designs. The qualitative approach was preferred because the study involved beliefs, attitudes and behaviours which are not easy to quantify. This approach also involved a systematic collection and presentation of data to give a clear picture of the situation. It was seen to be suitable because it is less costly and less time consuming considering the limited time in which to carry out the study. The quantitative design helped to compute statistical information collected from interviews.

3.2 Research setting

The study was conducted in Mongu urban and peri-urban areas. This comprised urban low density residential area and peri-urban high density residential area. The low density residential areas are places where people of high social economic status live, while the high density residential areas consist of people of different social economic backgrounds. This enhanced the equal participation of the two classes of people and also assess the different attitudinal changes of the two social classes.
3.3 Study Population.

The study population consisted of three categories of women, the first one is that of women in the age group 20 to 50 years old who are normally involved as initiators of the sikenge initiation rite. The second category is that of women of age group between 20 years to 45 years who have gone through initiation. The third category is the control group. This consisted of women in the age group from 20 years to about 45 years who have never gone through initiation rite. The control group was picked so as to help compare the behaviours and attitudes of the two groups of women so that we could assess whether initiation really has an impact on the behaviours of women. A sample of 70 females was studied, 10 women who are sikenge initiators, 30 women who have been initiated and 30 other women who have not gone through initiation ceremony.

3.4 Sampling Method and Procedure.

The methods that were used are cluster sampling technique, purposive non-probability sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The Cluster sampling was employed as it helped in dividing the households into two different groups, namely the low density and high density residential areas. Purposive, non-probability sampling was also employed. This helped target the samples of non-initiated, initiated and the initiators of the initiation rite.

3.5 Research instruments and data collection.

The two main data collection tools that were used were the interview schedule and the focused group discussion (FGD).
3.5.1. The interview schedule

This technique was preferred because it allowed respondents to express their views freely. This was appropriate for the study because most of the women especially the elderly ones are not very literate. Most of them are of low education background. Therefore, a research assistant was employed to help interpret the questions into Silozi the local language. This method also helped to clarify questions in order to reduce ambiguity. Thus, it provided an open discussion with the respondents. Face to face interviews were conducted individually, in privacy and answers to the questions were recorded in writing there and then. This was preferred to the questionnaire so as to avoid the low return rate of questionnaires.

3.5.2. Focused group discussion.

The FGD method was preferred as it was observed that participants felt more comfortable and secure about expressing certain views when they were in a group. People in a group tend to be less inhibited since they discuss issues generally without personalizing them. Thus FGD’s helped to get insights and attitudes of respondents participating in initiation ceremonies. Two focus groups were held, each group consisted of 8 members, one for the initiated women and the other one for the non-initiated. The answers or responses given were recorded by use of a cassette recorder. Later on the answers were transcribed. The FGD method was used so that it could supplement the information that was given by women sampled to answer the questionnaire.

3.5.3 Data collection.

The data for the study were collected using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through non-structured interviews and FGD’s. However, secondary data were collected from various written documents mainly, from the Library and from the
Internet facilities. The primary data were collected in a period of three months, from June to August. It involved interviewing the three groups of women involved in the research. These are initiators of sikenge, the initiated women and the control group consisting of non-initiated women. Different questionnaires were used for the three different groups.

3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analysed by themes, while quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11. This helped to produce frequency tables showing percentages and graphs that were used to present the results. The concepts used were transcribed from audio to written language. Furthermore, the recorded material was translated from Silozi to English with the help of the research assistant who is fluent in the local language.

3.7 Problems encountered during the study.

The observation method was not used although it was stated in the proposal as one of the methods to be used. The reason that hindered this was that the initiators could not allow the researcher to go in the sikenge where they were teaching the young girls. For one to be allowed to enter that place she has to be one of the initiators and a Lozi for that matter. Thus, the researcher was disqualified on those grounds.
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS.

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter discusses the results or findings of the field research. The results are presented according to themes which are based on the questions that were used in questionnaires and Focused Group Discussions. These were analysed and interpreted by means of tables and graphs.

4.1 Age of Respondents.

Table 1: Age group of Initiators, Initiated and Non-initiated women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>Initiators</th>
<th></th>
<th>Initiated</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-initiated</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 and above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that among the initiated women who were interviewed there were more in the age group between 30-34 years which is represented by 27% of the respondents. Therefore, we can deduce that the majority of the women that had gone through initiation are in that age group of 30-34 years. However, for the non-initiated group the dominant age group was between 20-24 years which is 77%, while the least represented group was between 35-39 years which is 3.3%. This is because the young people are not or delay
being initiated because their parents would like them to continue with their education. Thus, we find more uninitiated people among the younger generation. As for the initiators the results show that this job is usually done by elderly women. About 40% of the initiators fall in the age group between 40-44 years. These women have a lot of experience and are very much knowledgeable about the subject matter and other details that are taught in the sikenge initiation school. However, 20% of the initiators fall under the age group between 20-24 years. We can conclude that in earlier times all women were initiated. We can also deduce that age is not the only factor that determines who should be employed as an initiator. Experience and many other qualifications also matter.

4.2 Marital status.

Marital status has a great bearing on the attitude of women towards the initiation ceremony. Details of this are found in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Marital Status of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Initiated Women</th>
<th>Non-initiated Women</th>
<th>Initiators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The married women dominate the three categories of women shown in Table 2. We can see that for the initiated group 57% of the respondents were married, only one (3%) was divorced. This is indicative of the fact that sikenge is an institution that brings about some
stabilization of marriages. 26% are single and there is great hope that they will marry later on in life. Similarly, for the initiators 60% of the women are married, only one was single, and one divorced, which is 10% for each. We can therefore, deduce that in traditional society particularly in Lozi culture, marriage is regarded with high esteem. It also shows that sikenge helps to consolidate and stabilize marriage. Married women are always consulted and relied upon to initiate the young ones and advise other women. Married women are seen to have a lot of experience and knowledge about how to keep marriages. But for the non-initiated, 87% of the respondents are single. Only 13% of them are married. This is probably because the young generation to which they belong is modernized and does not value tradition so much.

4.3 Religious denomination.

Table 3: Religious Denomination of the respondents.

| Religious denomination | Initiated | | | Non-initiated | | | Initiators | | |
|------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
|                        | Frequency | Percent |          | Frequency | Percent |          | Frequency | Percent |
| New Apostolic          | 6         | 20.0     |          | 6         | 20.0     |          | 1         | 10.0     |
| S.D.A.                 | 4         | 13.0     |          | 2         | 7.0      |          | 1         | 10.0     |
| Catholic               | 7         | 23.0     |          | 12        | 40.0     |          | 3         | 30.0     |
| Reformed church        | 1         | 3.0      |          | 6         | 20.0     |          | 0         | 0.0      |
| U.C.Z                  | 4         | 13.0     |          | 0         | 0.0      |          | 3         | 30.0     |
| E.C.Z                  | 4         | 13.0     |          | 0         | 0.0      |          | 1         | 10.0     |
| Jehovah’s witness      | 2         | 7.0      |          | 1         | 3.0      |          | 1         | 10.0     |
| Total                  | 30        | 100.0    |          | 30        | 100.0    |          | 10        | 100.0    |

From Table 3 we can conclude that religious teachings have a bearing on the attitude of women towards initiation ceremonies. The denomination with the biggest number of respondents is Catholic. For the initiated, it is represented by 23%, 40% for the non-
initiated and 30% for the initiators. For the initiated and the non-initiated, the highest percentage is from the Catholic denomination. It is followed by New Apostolic Church while for the initiators, Catholic and U.C.Z. has the same percentage of representation. We can then conclude that Catholic is a common and dominant religious denomination among respondents in this study. However, when it comes to the non-initiated, we can conclude that the denomination also contributed to the girl’s inability to go through initiation. Some religions regard traditional ceremonies such as sikenge as barbaric and evil. Therefore, some women interviewed who happen to be Catholics said that they were prevented from being initiated due to their religious backgrounds and teachings.

4.4 How long do girls stay in seclusion?

Table 4: Duration of girls’ seclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of seclusion</th>
<th>Initiated</th>
<th></th>
<th>Initiators</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1- 4 weeks</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 months</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specific</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the results in Table 4 we can deduce that girls stay in seclusion for quite some time. In fact, field interviews revealed that previously all girls would be compelled to be in seclusion for a maximum period of 6 months. For the initiated, 43.3% were in seclusion for a maximum period of 3 months. However, nowadays because of education, girls can be in seclusion for up to a maximum period of one month. This is to allow them to attend school
by only going in seclusion during school holidays that are normally 30 days. The girls should be able to grasp all what is taught within the period of time they are secluded. During this short time emphasis is on dancing and waist wriggling skills that should be learnt by all girls as they cannot graduate without knowing these important skills.

4.5 Age at which girls are taken into seclusion.

Table 5: Puberty Age at which girls are taken into seclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of seclusion Puberty</th>
<th>Initiated</th>
<th></th>
<th>Initiators</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 –14 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 19 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and above</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from Table 5 prove that girls are initiated at very tender ages. Ten percent of the initiated women stated that they were taken into seclusion between the ages 10-14 years. As for the initiators 70% of them said that they take the girls into initiation when they just reach puberty this is at about 9 years old. The initiators revealed that, even the girls they teach are initiated at such tender ages because they feared that if they had to wait until the girl is old enough or wait until she is married they may miss out on the values of society. They may later on grow up without acquiring the rightful skills of womanhood. However, in the event where they indulged in sex they may appear to be inexperienced since they may fail to demonstrate the skills of dancing and waist wriggling during sexual intercourse. Hence they will not know how to appease or please their sexual partners who may later be their husbands. On the other hand, this has negative consequences on the girls in that they
are taught about marital issues at a very tender age when the girls are still teenagers. Focused Group Discussions and interviews revealed that some of the initiated girls cannot wait until marriage to start practicing what is taught in *sikenge*. Unfortunately, they end up indulging in unprotected sexual activities soon after initiation. Some girls become pregnant and even drop out of school.

### Table 6: Number of initiators teaching *Balanjo*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women initiators</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 or more</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.6 Content of *Sikenge*.

#### 4.6.1 The curriculum in *Sikenge*.

### Table 7: What is taught in *Sikenge* (curriculum)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Initiated</th>
<th>Non-initiated</th>
<th>Initiators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep marriage</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food taboos</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for babies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings indicate that a lot of values are taught to the girls when they are put in seclusion. However, the responses reveal that the major issues taught are as follows, how to keep marriage, represented by 21% of initiated responses, 31% of the non-initiated and 34% of the initiators. The other major issue taught is respect to the elders, husbands and in-laws. This is represented by 23% of the initiated women and 19% of the initiators. The other value taught is hygiene represented by 19% of the initiated women, 21% of the non-initiated women and 34% of the initiators. Besides the above mentioned values, other virtues and norms emphasized during sikenge are discipline, family planning, how to solve family problems, descent dressing, hospitality rendering to all people including strangers, food taboos and many others. Therefore, we can conclude that the major issue taught during initiation is how to keep a marriage. Information from the Focus Group Discussion revealed that they emphasized on teaching the novices how to take good care of their husbands and their husbands’ relatives. Additionally, sex education through active performance of erotic dances are strongly emphasized in the rite. Specific taboos and rules pertinent to marriage and family are also strictly taught. For instance, the women are told not to eat sugar-cane in the presence of in-laws neither are they supposed to give the latter relish mixed with groundnuts (ndongo). Three pieces of meat or any type of relish is not to be given to the husband or to the in-laws because the number three is a sign of insult since according to their tradition it refers to the male sex organs. Information from the Focus Group discussions also confirms this. One would have thought that what is taught at sikenge school is kept secret by the graduates. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Those who graduate from the sikenge school reveal to others what they learn. Data from the field revealed that many non-initiated girls know what is being taught in sikenge school.
4.6.2 Freedom of expression.

Table 8: Mwalando's freedom of expression in Sikenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freedom</th>
<th>Initiators</th>
<th></th>
<th>Initiated</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from Table 8 reveal that girls who are put in seclusion are not free to express themselves, complain or talk while they are in there. 90% of the initiators and 86.7% responses from the initiated stated that girls who are put in seclusion are not free to express themselves while in seclusion. Therefore, these findings are confirming that girls' rights of expression are infringed upon while in seclusion. The initiated women stated that besides not having freedom to talk the girls are whipped, beaten or rebuked bitterly especially if they were rude and disrespectful to others in society. However, other women mistreat the girls just as a way of revenging on how they were also mistreated. Hence, during seclusion girls are supposed to remain calm, bow down their heads, clap whenever someone talks to them as a sign of respect. This helps to instill subordination in the girls, showing them that even in marriage and society at large girls are taught to be submissive and obey whatever they are told to do by elders. However, there were a few exceptions, 13.3% of the initiated and 10% of the initiators said they were free to express themselves and further explained that girls while in seclusion are free to complain when they are mistreated. The main reason for this treatment is that these women who were by then girls were good to the initiators, people in society and had good behaviour.
4.7 Girls attainment of social maturity.

Despite the lack of freedom described above most women who were interviewed stated that initiation makes girls feel mentally grown up. This can be proved by the results showing that 60% of the women said that the sikenge made them feel mentally grown up and only 40% stated that they did not feel mentally grown up. Those who agreed to the assertion said that they learnt a lot of things that they did not know before being initiated hence they felt very knowledgeable and mentally mature. However, the other group did not see any difference, they did not take what is taught seriously and thus still remained immature.

![Bar chart showing determinants of maturity](chart.png)

**Figure 1: Attainment of social maturity**

From figure 1, it is clear that the initiated women looked at marriage as an important yardstick for maturity and mental growth for women. Of the initiated women, 50% said a woman is considered to be grown up after she is married, 20% said it’s when she has a child while only 10% said a woman can be considered to be grown up after reaching a certain age. However, for the control group the results are almost the opposite of the other,
56% which is more than half of the sample said a woman is considered mature after reaching a certain age. Others represented by 40% said it’s after initiation, while only 3.3% said after marriage. Thus, we can deduce that the main essence of initiation is to prepare girls for marriage so that they learn to keep and stay in marriage. Therefore, married women are regarded with great respect and can be consulted in solving problems that are encountered in society. Thus, they are considered to be more knowledgeable and mature than the single women. On the contrary, the findings show that the majority of the non-initiated said that a woman becomes grown up after reaching a certain age. We can then deduce that both mental and physical ages are important in helping to access the maturity and growth of a person. Marriage on its own cannot be a yardstick to measure maturity since even small, immature boys and girls get married but with very little or no wisdom at all.

4.8 Relevance of the rite to women’s lives.

The study also focused on whether the values taught to the girls are really implemented in their lives and are relevant to the societies they live in. The following were the results,

Table 9: The relevance of initiation in women’s lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Non-initiated</th>
<th></th>
<th>Initiates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Initiators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings indicated in Table 9 above we can deduce that values taught in initiation are really of great importance to someone’s life. This was stated by 73% of the non-
initiated women, who said that values like hardwork, hospitality, generosity, respect, hygiene and discipline really help young girls adopt well in society if they really put into practice what is taught. We can see the relevance of the rite because even the non-initiated women think what is taught is of great relevance to the lives of women. However, 26% of the non-initiated women said that the initiated women do not implement in their lives the values taught and that the same are not of any relevance to their lives. For the initiated women 90% agreed that they were relevant while 10% did not. The trend was the same even for the initiators. For them all those interviewed said the values taught in the ceremony are of great importance to someone's life.

4.9 How the rite affects the behaviour of women.

Table 10: The effect of Sikenge on women’s behaviour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Initiated Women</th>
<th>Non-initiated Women</th>
<th>Initiators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on individuals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misbehaves</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaves maturely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interest in education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot explore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop playing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three categories of women interviewed stated that initiation ceremonies affect the behaviour of girls who pass through the rite. A number of examples of behaviour were given. These are listed in Table 10.

The initiated and non-initiated women both stated that some values taught during initiation cause girls to misbehave and engage in promiscuous activities. This is all because of lessons taught about how to please men sexually. Just upon reaching puberty, the young girls are taught about erotic dances of waist wriggling which they are supposed to practice when having sex with their husbands. However, most girls become curious, they cannot wait to be married before they could start practicing them. Instead, soon after sikenge some girls engage in sexual practices. This was revealed by 43.3\% of the responses from the initiated women and 36.7\% of the non-initiated women. The other negative behaviour that goes with this rite is that some girls even lose interest in education, become pregnant and end up in early marriages. This was revealed by 23.3\% of the responses from initiated women. The point emphasized was that the behaviour of girls was not wholly dependent on what is taught during initiation. It also depended on just individuals and their personality.

23.3\% of the non-initiated, 10\% of the initiated and 10\% of the initiators said initiation has little influence on girls’ behaviour. In fact some change for the better while others change for the worse once initiated. 70\% of the initiators, 30\% of the non-initiated and 3.3\% of the initiated said initiation helps instill good morals and behaviour in the girls and women that go through it. They confirmed that initiated girls behave maturely, are responsible, respectful and end up being submissive to their husbands and to elders in society. In line with the above, 16.7 \% of the initiated women said that the behaviour of the initiated change drastically to the extent that they even avoid and stop playing or associating with the non-initiated. To them the non-initiated are outcasts (or just too young) and immature,
thus they feel the former can pollute and corrupt their minds. The other example of behaviour displayed is that the initiated become rigid, they are only guided by virtues and values taught to them at sikenge such that they fail to learn anything different besides what is taught during the initiation rite. This was stated by 3.3 % of the initiated and non-initiated. However, two (16.7%) respondents did not give any reason. Therefore, these results help us conclude that the sikenge has impacted positively and negatively on the behaviours of its graduates. Fortunately, the positive behaviours are more than the negative ones.

4.10 Difference in behaviour between the initiated and the non-initiated.

The interviews revealed that non-initiated women know that there is a difference in behaviour between them and the initiated women. This was confirmed by 80% of the responses as indicated in Table 11. When the initiated girls were asked whether there is a difference between them and the non-initiated, they responded that, generally, the examples of behaviour portrayed by them (initiated girls) show that they are better citizens than the non-initiated in the society.

Table 11: Whether there is difference in behaviour between the initiated and the non-initiated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference in behaviour</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12: Examples of behaviour change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of behaviours</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfy men</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change depends on individual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well behaved</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behave maturely</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see from Table 12 above, 40.6% of the respondents confirmed that initiated girls are well behaved and respected, 25% also said that they behave like women and not like girls, thus showing that they portray maturity in their actions and behaviour. However, some see the non-initiated as ignorant and inexperienced in many ways. This was stated by 6.3% of the respondents. Others said that there is no change in behaviour, they stated that behavioural changes depend on an individual and is not dependant on what is taught during sikenge, and this was represented by 9.4%.
4.11 Modifications of the curriculum.

4.11.1 Should values continue being taught?

![Bar Chart]

**Figure 2: Whether values should continue being taught**

From the results in Figure 2, it was discovered that 60%, 53% and 26% of the initiators, initiated and non-initiated women respectively said that the values should continue being taught. Conversely, 46.7% and 73.3% of the initiated and non-initiated respectively confirmed that not all values taught during initiation should continue. They felt that some should be reserved for post *sikenge* time when they are just about to get married. Hence, they suggested some modifications to be made to the curriculum.
4.11.2 Modifications to be made to the curriculum.

Table 13: Suggested modifications made to the curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modifications</th>
<th>Initiated Women</th>
<th>Non-initiated Women</th>
<th>Initiators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents involved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No torture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls to grow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include H.I.V. information</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No responses</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content the same</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A variety of suggestions were given on the modifications to be made to the curriculum. Table 13 shows that 26.7 % of the responses from the initiated and 59.3 % of the non-initiated suggested that the curriculum of the sikenge initiation rite should be changed by only teaching girls about hygiene at puberty. Marital issues of how to handle a man in bed and how to care for him should wait until one is about to get married. Most of the respondents stated that such lessons pollute the minds of the young girls once they are taught at puberty. Other reasons given were that the initiators should stop torturing the young girls. 10 %, 22% and 10% of the initiated, non-initiated and initiators stated this respectively. They also suggested that parents should be actively involved in the teachings so that they could monitor the learning process. Many other suggestions were made to the current sikenge curriculum. They included the following; to modify the curriculum, add lessons on HIV /AIDS, men to be initiated and that the lessons taught to the mwalanjio should be clearly explained so as to avoid
misunderstandings and misinterpretation. Information from the FGD revealed that the following should be implemented:

(a) Teaching hygiene to girls as soon as they start their monthly periods.

(b) Postponement of sex related issues until when someone is about to get married.

This was however rejected by 60% of the initiators who said that the curriculum should remain the same without making any changes to it. They felt the age and lessons taught were just right, as it had been planned from the beginning.

4.11.3 Who should modify the curriculum?

![Graph showing percentage distribution of who should modify the curriculum]

Figure 3: Who should modify the curriculum?

As we can see from figure 3 above the respondents gave different answers on who should be actively involved in the modification of the curriculum. The results were that 16.7%, 6.7% and 10% of the initiated, non-initiated and initiators respectively gave the option that the government should be responsible for the modification of the curriculum; while 36.7% of the initiated, 23.3% of the non-initiated and 90% of the initiators thought initiators and parents are the ones to make the modifications for the change of the
curriculum. However, 13.3% of the initiated and 13.3% of the non-initiated suggested that the novice or person being initiated should also be responsible for the change of the curriculum. Finally, we also discovered that 33.3% of the initiated and 56.7% of the non-initiated suggested that the church and/or the community should be the ones involved in the modification of the curriculum. We can then deduce that those who have gone through initiation wish the parents and initiators themselves who know what should be taught to be actively involved in making the amendments to the curriculum.

4.12. Summary

From the results presented above, we can conclude that a lot of things are learnt and taught in initiation rites. What is taught benefits all the different categories of women. However, it affects them differently. Most women who go through initiation rites change their behaviours. They tend to behave maturely, responsibly and become well disciplined. If they happen to get married they really make good and submissive wives. However, other women misuse the information got from the rite. They start practicing prostitution if they do not marry, some make professional prostitutes who end up destabilizing and/or destroying many people's marriages.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations on our study of the impact of sikenge initiation rite on women in Western Province. The conclusions are based on the objectives and the achievements of the objectives.

5.1. Conclusion

sikenge is an important traditional ceremony and a channel of information that stresses respect, no sex before marriage, hygiene, responsibility and support within the family context. Therefore, it is imperative that we conserve this traditional school for girls. Despite the practice being of great benefit to both the society and individuals, certain rules and ways of implementing sikenge have to be modified. For example, practices like the use of herbs for body warmth and dry sex can affect girls' sexual and reproductive health. Lessons on erotic sexual dances should also wait until later on in someone's life. Thus the stakeholders of sikenge, especially the initiators (the ma mwalango) should find ways of modifying the activities in this traditional school. For example, they can support that the mwalango waits until she is at least 20 years of age before she is taken into seclusion. Whether she is to be married at that age or not but at least she should be matured enough to digest what she is taught and know better how to implement the issues taught.

Therefore, this study concludes that sikenge should continue being practiced but a few modifications need to be made. These rites are good in that they help instill good morals in most women in the Lozi society.
5.2 **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions discussed above the following recommendations were made:

5.2.1 *sikenge* initiation rite should continue being practiced since it helps in preserving the culture of the Lozi of Western Province of Zambia.

5.2.2 Lessons on HIV/AIDS should be included in the curriculum of *sikenge* initiation ceremony.

5.2.3 Since women are taught a lot about marriage in *sikenge*, men’s (boys) initiation ceremonies should also focus on marriage issues if they are not already doing it.

5.2.4 Only good values should continue being taught at *sikenge*. Values that are considered to be immoral for the initiates should be discarded and eliminated completely from the curriculum.

5.2.5 The aspect of beating and torturing during training should be avoided or minimized.

5.2.6 The curriculum of the *sikenge* should be diversified. This means that they should include other aspects, which are currently not taught. For instance, they can include lessons on HIV/AIDS as it has been suggested earlier, focusing on how to prevent the disease.

5.2.7 In line with the above points, it is imperative that the lessons in the *sikenge* should be taught in stages. They should only teach the young girls (*balanjo*) about hygiene and how to look after themselves when they reach puberty. Later on as they grow much older and ready for marriage, they should then be taught about how to care for their houses and their husbands. All details of appeasing their husbands during sexual acts should be taught during this second and last stage. This should be perceived as a way of avoiding the corruption of the young girl’s minds at an early stage.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH TOPIC: AFFECT OF SIKENGE (INITIATION RITE) ON WOMEN IN WESTERN PROVINCE: A CASE STUDY OF MONGU DISTRICT.

Interview Schedule (For the non-initiated women of ages between 20-40 years)

1. Age
   (a) 20-24 years
   (b) 25-29 years
   (c) 30-34 years
   (d) 35-39 years
   (e) 40-44 years

2. What is your marital status?
   (a) Single
   (b) Married
   (c) Widowed
   (d) Separated

3. Level of education
   (a) Lower primary
   (b) Upper primary
   (c) Junior secondary
   (d) Senior secondary
   (e) College
   (f) University
   (g) No education

4. What is your religious denomination?

5. What is your occupation?

6. What do you understand by the term initiation ceremony?
7. What do you think is taught in the initiation ceremony?
8. Do you think the values taught during the ceremony are of any relevance to the community and to someone’s life?
9. When do you think a woman becomes a real (grown up) woman?
   (a) After she has been in initiation rite
   (b) After attaining a certain age
   (c) When she has a child
   (d) When she is married
10. Do you see any difference in behaviour between those who are initiated and you who is not?
11. If yes, illustrate by means of examples.
12. Do you have any specific reasons as to why you were not initiated unlike most of your Lozi counterparts?
13. That you are not initiated how does society perceive you in comparison to the initiated.
14. (For married women) what’s your husbands view towards your status?
15. Do you think initiation changes the behaviour of girls and women that go through it?
16. If yes, illustrate by means of examples.
17. Should all values taught in initiation rite continue being taught to those who become of age? Give reasons for your answer.
18. If no, what modifications would you suggest to be made to the curriculum?
19. Who should be actively involved in modification of the curriculum?
   (a) government
   (b) initiators / trainers
   (c) novice / person being initiated
   (d) community
20. What comments, questions or recommendations do you have to make?

End of interview. Thank you for your co-operation.
APPENDIX B

Interview questions for elderly women/ sikenge initiators.

1. Age
   (a) 35—39 years
   (b) 40—44 years
   (c) 45—49 years
   (d) 50 and above

2. What is your marital status?
   (a) Single
   (b) Married
   (c) Widowed
   (d) Separated
   (e) Divorced

3. Have you ever attended school?
   Yes...............................................1  No ...............................................2

4. If yes, what is your highest level of education?
   (a) Lower primary
   (b) Upper primary
   (c) Junior secondary
   (d) Senior secondary
   (e) College
   (f) University
5. What is your religious denomination?

6. What is your occupation?

7. What do you understand by the term initiation ceremony?

8. How long have you worked as an initiator of initiation ceremony?

9. How long do the girls stay in Sikenge?

10. When are they taken into seclusion?

11. What exactly is taught during initiation ceremonies?

12. What is the relevance of initiation ceremonies to women and society?

13. What are girls attitudes towards initiation ceremonies?

14. Are the girls able to express their feelings freely once mistreated at the initiation ceremony?

15. Does the nature of the attributes taught in Sikenge affect the behaviour of girls after initiation?

16. Do initiation ceremonies affect the attitudes of girls after the initiation ceremony or once initiated?

17. What do you think should be done to the content of initiation ceremonies?

18. If the initiation ceremonies are to be modified who should be actively involved in modifying the curriculum?

   (a) government
   (b) initiators / trainers
   (c) novice / person being initiated
   (d) community / church

19. Do initiation ceremonies help women to be good mothers and wives?

20. Do you have any questions, comments or recommendations to make?

   End of interview. Thank you.
APPENDIX C

*Interview questions for initiated women.*

1. Age
   (a) 15-20 years
   (b) 21-25 years
   (c) 26-30 years
   (d) 31-35 years
   (e) 36-40 years
   (f) 40 and above

2. Marital status
   (a) single
   (b) married
   (c) widowed
   (d) separated
   (e) divorced

3. Level of Education
   (a) lower primary
   (b) upper primary
   (c) junior secondary
   (d) senior secondary
   (e) college
   (f) university
   (g) no education

4. What is your religious denomination?
5. What is your occupation?
6. What do you understand by the term initiation ceremony?
7. When was the initiation ceremony performed for you?
8. Where did it take place?
9. How long did you stay in seclusion?
10. How many women helped the trainer (ma mwalanjō) during the initiation rite?
11. What is taught during the initiation rite?
12. Did you feel mentally grown up after the initiation rite / ceremony?
13. While in seclusion, were you able to express your views freely? Explain by giving examples.
14. When do you think a woman becomes a real (grown up) woman?
   (a) after she has been in initiation rite.
   (b) after attaining a certain age
   (c) when she has a child
   (d) when she is married.
15. Do you know of any grown up girls or women that had not been initiated?
16. If yes, how are they treated by society?
17. (For married women), What is your husband’s view towards values taught in initiation? Explain by means of examples.
18. Does the initiation rite affect the behaviour of girls once initiated or after initiation?
19. Are the values taught during initiation ceremonies implemented in your life after the initiation ceremony?
20. Should all the values taught during initiation ceremonies continue being taught to those who become of age?
21. If no, what modifications would you suggest to be made to the curriculum?
22. Who should be actively involved in the modification of the curriculum?
   (a) government
   (b) initiators / trainers
   (c) novice / person being initiated
   (d) community / church
23. Do you have any comments, questions or recommendations to make?

End of interview. Thank you.
APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR INITIATED WOMEN.

Time: 14.00 hours.
Number of participants: 8
Characteristics of participants: women who have gone through initiation.
Instructions to group facilitator:
- Great the participants
- Introduce yourself and note taker of the group.
- Facilitate the discussion without being involved in it.
- Keep all information confidential.

Questions

1. What occupation are you engaged in?
2. What is the importance of initiation?
3. What goes on in initiation rites, sikenge in this case?
4. What influence do the values taught have on the girls life afterwards?
5. How many women initiated you?
6. What is the future of sikenge?
7. Are you free to express yourself during initiation?
8. What values and norms do you think should be added or removed from the sikenge curriculum?
APPENDIX E
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR NON-INITIATED WOMEN.

1. What occupation are you engaged in?
2. What do you think is taught during initiation ceremony?
3. What is your attitude towards initiation ceremony?
4. What modifications do you think need to be made to the Sikenge curriculum?