

**EMERGENT LITERACY SUPPORT THAT CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO  
IN SELECTED HOUSEHOLDS IN DENGWE AREA OF  
KASEMPA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA.**

**BY  
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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of  
Master of Education in Literacy and Learning**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

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**Rose Kipepe 2016**

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I Rose Kipepe, declare that this dissertation represents my own work, that it had never been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other University and does not incorporate any published work or material from another dissertation.

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## APPROVAL

This dissertation by Rose Kipepe is approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of Masters of Education in Literacy and Learning of the University of Zambia.

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## **DEDICATION**

Sincere thanks to my father mr Yorum Kipepe and my mother Agness Kan'gongo Kipepe who yearned to see such fruits of their energy during my academic life, it is only befitting that this piece of work be dedicated to them. Dedication also goes to my beloved children Kabwita and Idah. The support I got from my children during the time of my studies cannot be ignored when a dedication is due over this Master of Education degree

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**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to establish emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in selected rural households in Dengwe area of Kasempa District. A sample comprising 52 participants (10 parents, 2 headmen and 40 children) were drawn from five (5) villages in Dengwe area, Kasempa District. The parents, children and villages were randomly selected with the help of the headmen, while the headmen were purposely selected for the study. This was done after permission was sought from senior chief Kasempa's place. The village headmen then introduced the researcher to the parents who had children aged 4 to 6 years old. The parents also introduced the researcher to the children before the research could commence. The researcher included the headmen and the children in the study so as to qualify the data that was collected from the parents. The headmen were also involved to help identify the households with children aged 4 to 6 years old from the villages. Information was obtained from participants using semi structured interviews, focus group discussions and observation check-list.

In order to achieve the study objectives, interviews were conducted with parents and village headmen to find out which emergent literacy activities were done by most children in the area. Interviews were also used to establish the form of emergent literacy support. Observations were done to determine which literacies were related to conventional school. Observations were also done to ascertain the households and community environmental print that supports the development of emergent literacy.

Focus group discussions were conducted with 40 children aged 4 to 6 years in order to qualify the data that was collected from the parents.

The study revealed that stories, games, reading to children, pretending to read and write, household and community prints supported the development of emergent literacy. The study recommends that parents should be taught how to read and write through adult literacy classes which should be introduced in the community of Dengwe. By so doing, they will become literate and be able to read to their children. The study also recommends that, the Ministry of General Education should review the early childhood education policy and curriculum to include aspects from emergent literacy support from communities around schools.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT .....	i
DECLARATION .....	ii
APPROVAL .....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
DECLARATION.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 OVERVIEW.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	2
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.4.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.9 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS.....	4
1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	5
1.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE.....	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.0 OVERVIEW.....	9
2.1 DEFINITION OF EMERGENT LITERACY AND ITS' ORIGIN.....	9
2.2 GLOBAL LITERATURE ON FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY SUPPORT.....	10
2.3 GLOBAL LITERATURE ON COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL AND HOUSEHOLD PRINT.....	16

2.4 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES DONE BY MOST CHILDREN.....	18
2.5 EMEREGNT LITERACY PRACTICES THAT RELATE TO CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL.....	24
2.6 SUMMARY.....	26
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.0 OVERVIEW.....	28
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	28
3.2 TARGET POPULATION.....	28
3.3 SAMPLE SIZE.....	28
3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE.....	29
3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.....	30
3.5.1 SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDES.....	30
3.5.2 OBSERVATION CHECKLISTS.....	30
3.5.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.....	30
3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENTS.....	31
3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE.....	31
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS.....	32
3.9 ETHICAL COLLECTIONS.....	32
3.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	33
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>34</b>
4.0 OVERVIEW.....	34
4.1 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY SUPPORT CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS.....	34
4.1.1 FINDINGS FROM PARENTS AND HEADMEN COLLECTED THROUGH ORAL INTERVIEWS.....	34
4.2 HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT THAT SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY.....	39
4.2 OBSERVATIONS IN VILLAGE “ A” .....	40
4.3 EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES DONE BY MOST CHILDREN IN THESE RURAL HOUSEHOLDS.....	43

4.3.1 FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATIONS DONE IN THE FIVE VILLAGES.....	43
4.4 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH CHILDREN.....	45
4.5 EMERGENT LITERACY PRACTICES RELATED TO CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL.....	50
4.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	51
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>52</b>
5.0 OVERVIEW.....	52
5.1 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY SUPPORT THAT CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS.....	52
5.2 HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT THAT SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY.....	54
5.3 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES DONE BY MOST CHILDREN.....	55
5.4 EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES THAT RELATE TO CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL .....	56
5.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE.....	60
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>61</b>
6.0 OVERVIEW.....	61
6.1 CONCLUSIONS.....	61
6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
6.3 NEW KNOWLEDGE GENERATED BY THE STUDY.....	64
6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES.....	64
6.5 SUMMARY .....	64
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>73</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Household Print on Containers .....	40
Figure 2: Print on Wall Supporting Emergent Literacy .....	41
Figure 3: Church Poster Sign.....	42
Figure 4: Emergent Literacy Activities done by Children.....	43
Figure 5: Emergent Literacy Activities Done by Children as Revealed in Focus Group Discussions.....	45

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 OVERVIEW**

Throughout the world emergent literacy activities are given to children through storytelling, riddles, songs and various games. These activities play a cardinal role of enhancing critical thinking and development of motor skills at a very tender age. The study commences with a background to the term emergent literacy and reading readiness element being prior to emergent literacy. Then it progresses to the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and specific research questions through which the objectives are addressed, the theoretical framework and the definitions of terms as used in the study.

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Emergent literacy as a term was initially used by a prominent researcher Marie Clay in 1966 in New Zealand. The term was used to describe the behaviours that are seen in young children when they use books and write materials to imitate reading and writing activities even though they cannot write in a conventional sense (Ramsburg, 1998 as cited in Johnson, 1999), (). After Clay's introduction of emergent literacy, many other scholars and institutions have added their voices to what emergent literacy is all about. For example, the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization UNESCO (2003), stated that the term emergent literacy goes beyond children's interaction with books and that it includes all literacy practices found in the surrounding environment where the children reside in addition to reading and writing. UNESCO further explained that emergent literacy involves the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written association with varying contexts. The definition of emergent literacy by UNESCO is similar to that of Beth. Beth (1982) viewed emergent literacy as the development of skills that occur in a child through participation with adults in meaningful activities that involve talking and print. The scholar viewed these skills as the building blocks for learning to read and write. It can be deduced from these definitions that emergent literacy covers a wide range of the things such as behavior that one sees in young children when they use books to imitate reading, interact with literacy practice found in the surrounding environment where the children reside and their participation with adults in meaningful activities that involve talking and print.

The importance of emergent literacy cannot be over emphasized. Serpell, R., Baker, L. and Sonnenschein, S. (2005) states that a rich – print environment enhances acquisition and continued development of literacy in children. Further, they stated that emergent literacy emerges due to exposure to language experience by the child in his environment, social context and linguistic context. For example, these scholars also state that children learn book language before they actually read and that is through songs, riddles, games, dances and other activities found in their environment.

Secondly, educationists and parents should realize that the concept of reading and writing starts with the emergent literacy skills and behaviours that children acquire before formal schooling. These skills and behaviours include children interpreting pictures in the books, narrating stories, flipping pages of books right side up, telling riddles, playing games as well as singing songs.

While a number of scholars have researched on emergent literacy, there still exist other areas which have not been exhausted. For example, Zimba (2011), studied classroom practices that support continuation of emergent literacy in preschools of Kasempa and Solwezi District. Kaunda (2012) also researched on emergent literacy skills among children aged 2 to 6 years in Mwense District. However, little is known regarding the emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in selected rural households in Kasempa district of North – Western Province of Zambia. Therefore, this study aims to ascertain whether the emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in Dengwe Kasempa do enhance emergent and relate to conventional school.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Emergent literacy activities or practices in communities have been conducted for the past four decades worldwide, in Africa and Zambia inclusive. It is not precisely known as to whether children in rural households in Kasempa district of Zambia are exposed to any emergent literacy support from the community in which they live and what form it takes. It was because of this concern that the researcher decided to conduct a study to establish the form of emergent literacy support children are exposed to in these households and community prints in Dengwe District of Kasempa and how these emergent activities relate to conventional school.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to establish the form of emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in rural households in Dengwe area, Kasempa District of Zambia.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the objectives that guided the study.

#### **1.4.1 Specific Objectives of the Study**

1. To establish the form of emergent literacy that children are exposed to in the rural households in Dengwe, Kasempa.
2. To explore which emergent literacy activities were done by most children in these rural households in Kasempa District.
3. To ascertain the household and community environmental print that supports the development of emergent literacy in Dengwe Kasempa District.
4. To determine emergent literacy practices that relate to conventional school literacy.

### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What form of emergent literacy support are children exposed to in rural households of Dengwe, Kasempa District?
2. Which form of emergent literacy activities are done by most children in these rural households in Dengwe, Kasempa District?
3. What household and community environmental print exist in the community that support children's emergent literacy development in Dengwe, Kasempa District?
4. How do the emergent literacy practices identified relate to conventional school literacy?

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings may help parents, guardians and the government as a whole to improve the forms of emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in rural households.

The study might also provide necessary information to parents' knowledge of emergent literacy and the level to which they should support children. This same information may



help the Ministry of General Education and curriculum designers (Specialists) make informed decisions as they develop the curricula for early childhood education.

### **1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was limited to Dengwe rural area in Kasempa District of Zambia.

### **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Since the study was a case study conducted in Dengwe area, Kasempa District, the findings of the study may not be generalized to elsewhere in the country.

The other challenge was that it was not easy to find the desired number of respondents in most cases. In some cases, the respondents were never at home since the study was conducted during the rainy season when most villagers were busy with their agricultural activities such as cultivation and planting. This led to the reduced total number of respondents to 52. However, even though the number of the sample was small, the results are representative enough to give an acceptable picture that can inform policy. Other respondents wanted to be given something such as money or food in order for them to be interviewed. In order to improve the quality of data that was collected, the researcher collected data from three different groups of respondents namely parents, children and headmen, as a way of triangulating the data sources.

### **1.9 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

Below are the definitions of terms.;

1. **Emergent literacy** - this refers to what children know about reading and writing before they can actually develop into conventional reading and writing.
2. **Conventional literacy**- this refers to the knowledge that children possess about literacy and the way in which they try to imitate the adults' reading and writing.
3. **Rural households** –these are families outside urban areas.
4. **Pretend reading** – this is when children imitate conventional reading in the way they hold the books as though they are really reading whilst they do not.
5. **Scribbling** – this is when children really pretend to write and that is by the way of holding the pen, pencil or just by painting.
6. **Reading readiness**- this refers to the moment when a child is ready to begin to read and write.

7. **Inverted spelling**- it refers to the individual process of developing reading and writing skills.
8. **Literate behaviour** – this refers to the behaviours portrayed as the child comes into contact with literacy materials and pretends to read and write.
9. **Literacy** – it is the control of the secondary usage of language proficiently in order to communicate orally and in writing with non – intimates in different circumstance and depending on different situations.
10. **Environmental print** –things surrounding the environment which children use to learn to read.
11. **Preschoolers** – little children who have not yet started formal school**Phonological awareness** – this is being aware of sounds that make up words.
12. **Scaffolding** \_ appropriate assistance given by the teacher or a more knowledgeable person to young one.
13. **Zone of Proximal Development** – the gap of knowledge between what the child knows and he/she does not know.

#### **1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study used the Social –Constructivism theory by Vygotsky. According to the social –constructivism theory, children construct new knowledge through utilization of their current knowledge structure to present experiences and modify them. Social constructivism is based on a child’s developmental stages and individual learning styles. In constructivism, the main way of learning is the senses, which causes the brain to build a full understanding of the surrounding world and this only occurs through doing and engaging which is the goal (Vygotsky, 1896).

Social constructivism postulates that the child accomplishes learning through interaction with others and outside experiences. In the case of this study, the interaction between the child and the people within the household and the environment is important. In constructivism, a child is supported to follow his instinct and create his own knowledge and strategies for understanding and learning. According to this theory, a child is engaged in an act by the adult and the learning experiences which enable a child to successfully accomplish new tasks while working in collaboration with an adult instead

of his own. Vygotsky (1978) points out that a child is involved in order to allow their mental representation to the external world to suit new experiences.

In this theory of constructivism, it is believed that social learning tends to precede development. This is so because children are curious and actively involved in their own learning by means of self – discovery and development of the new schema (Kaufman, 2004). The theory also emphasizes that each child is unique and special and needs attention and hence, the need for parents to assist the child through what Vygotsky called scaffolding. Through this guidance from the parent, the child's thinking is refined and starts performing effectively. The theory is related to this study because it acknowledges the role and support that parents give to children in households. The theory further mentions that the child develops positively through the idea of social and cognitive constructivism.

Matusевич (1995) also states that children are not passive and that they learn through adaptation. He further mentions that children construct their own understanding of the world we live in and reflect on the experiences and try to make sense out of the experiences. This theory is considered to be a child centered as it focuses on the knowledge of interpretation and experiences based activities. The concept of scaffolding which (Vygotsky, 1978) brought in, is related to the assistance that the child receives from adults to narrow the gap of what they know and what they do not know. Vygotsky adds that the children's progress in the environment is determined by what he called the Zone of Proximal Development where the child can exhibit only through social scaffolding. In this case, the child learns from known to unknown and this was emphasized by Bruner (1994).

As for (Vygotsky, 1978), the Zone of Proximal Development refers to the gap between what the learner knows and that which can only be achieved through the aid from knowledgeable adults, caregivers and their mates. Vygotsky believed that with proper aid children are capable to attain the Zone of Proximal Development and hence the need for serious scaffolding. This process of scaffolding requires the sharing of knowledge between the knowledgeable parents and the children in order to narrow the gap between what the children know and what they do not know. The notion drawn from both concepts is that suitable assistance from the parents and other caregivers can facilitate childrens' learning that is actually above their understanding.

Wood, (1998) and (Slavin, 2009), clarify that, if parents scaffold the children positively, it can result into competent communication in oral language. Vygotsky postulated that children's learning was only successful if caregivers came in to bridge the gap through what is referred to as scaffolding. This involves the sharing of knowledge that the parents have to their children. With proper guidance from more knowledgeable people, children will become competent especially in their own familiar languages. Full involvement of parents will enhance the quick development of the child (Santruck, 2002).

There is no specific age at which a child can start to learn literacy. A child begins with taking meanings from pictures, storytelling and listening to other people read to him or her. The children begin to see the difference between the printed page and picture, through the picture is what attracts them first. A good book feeds a child's sense of story, building up a repertoire of stories and rhymes, and develops an intuitive awareness of written language structures, (Foldaway, 1975). A real book does not have to be long or use a lot of words, but needs to have a story line. Vygotsky also said that activities are the basis for the learning and developmental thinking. This implies that literate- rich environment facilitates situations in children which prepares them for regular reading, extensive talking or writing, games and imaginations from the pictures.

The interpretation of constructivism theory is that, knowledge is constructed by children through self- discovery and develops novelty in life, new schema as they grow up and that it grows as society sharps them through interaction. The theory emphasises that children are unique, individually and severally, with independent needs that parents are expected to support through scaffolding as vygotsky explained. Therefore, this theory is very important to this study because children in Dengwe area are engaged into interaction by the older sibblings and the knowledgeable people. This interaction helps the children develop literacy skills even as they prepare to get into formal school (Bruner, 1994).

### **1.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE.**

The chapter has presented the introduction to the study by outlining the major features. The background to the study was given and the statement of the problem which stated that it is not precisely known whether the children in Dengwe, Kasempa were exposed to any emergent literacy, household and community print and to what extent these activities relate to conventional school.. The chapter has also presented the purpose of the study

followed by specific objectives and research questions. The significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study have also been presented. The theoretical framework which talks about interaction which takes place between the knowledgeable adults and young children has also been discussed in relation to the study. Definitions of terms were also explained. The next chapter presents the Literature Review.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 OVERVIEW**

The current chapter is a review of literature that is relevant to the present study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), reviewing related literature helps one to understand previous works which help the researcher to develop a significant problem which provides further knowledge in the field. It also helps in portraying what has already been done and what would be useful to focus on the current study.

The literature is reviewed by firstly defining emergent literacy and discussing its origin. Literature relating to forms of emergent literacy support at global, African and Zambian level has been discussed. Further, literature review relating to emergent literacy activities and environmental print at global, Africa and Zambian level has also been reviewed. Finally, literature relating to how emergent literacy relates to conventional literacy has been reviewed too.

### **2.1 DEFINITION OF EMERGENT LITERACY AND ITS' ORIGIN**

Hodgskiss (2007) defined emergent literacy as behaviours that children exhibit such as pretending to read and write, interpreting pictures in the books, narrating stories, flipping pages of books right side-up, telling riddles, playing games as well as singing songs. Emergent literacy also fosters children to develop the skills of listening and speaking, singing using objects, pictures, gestures or any combination of ways in which a child understands and interprets experiences. Emergent literacy activities are also viewed to be the building blocks for learning to read and write. Further, emergent literacy play a cardinal role of enhancing critical thinking and development of motor skills at tender age.

Emergent literacy is a broad theoretical framework in which childrens pre-conventional reading and writing behaviours may be developed during home and school experiences with oral and written language and can be considered as the foundation of later conventional literacy skills (Welsch 2003). Emergent literacy which developed prior to age of five strongly predicts achievement in later literacy learning and many other fields throughout life. This implies that if emergent literacy skills are expanded and promoted in little children, they may stimulate and enhance achievement of formal conventional skills and serve as a basis for future formalized instruction in reading, writing and speaking (Fischel, 2007).

According to (Joy, J and Rohl, M. 2005) emergent literacy consists of atleast two distinct domains which link the childrens emergent literacy environment and the development of emergent literacy skills. These are inside out skills such as the phonological awareness, later knowledge and the out-side in skills such as language, conceptual knowledge. The two distinct domains do not originate from the same experiences though they are influential at the point in time during acquisition.

When emergent literacy activities are enhanced in a home, they contribute to young children's emergent literacy as it is the primary situation in which language and literacy are confronted (Purcell-Gates, 1996). Home environment effects on emergent literacy and language skills because within the home environment children have chances to become familiar with literacy activities, investigate literacy activities individually, engage into joint reading and writing behaviours and actions with caregivers. Therefore, opportunities that parents provide and expose their children with enhance literacy skills in children before they get into formal school.

## **2.2 GLOBAL LITERATURE ON FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY SUPPORT**

Many scholars have reviewed literature regarding the forms of emergent literacy support that is given to children. One of them is interactive dialogue during story book reading. Story book reading is one aspect that may facilitate literacy acquisition and it has been suggested that how adults read to the child is also important (Morrow et al, 1990). It is also mentioned that a child who begins to read at an early stage in life also quickly develops an ability to make associations between abstract concepts and think through various situations in a logical manner. This in some way allows the development of critical thinking and decision- making skills also tend to develop later in life. Many scholars have agreed to the fact that adult education plays a key role in literacy growth (Mason & Allen, 1986). Morrell, (2008) states that language and social interaction between a parent (or sibling) and a child during shared book experiences may help developing language skills, familiarizing the child with conventions of print and serving as a model of reading. Therefore, it is important to nurture these skills. It is cardinal for parents to provide books to children because these (books) are the building blocks for a better future. Not only do they offer humanity a great platform upon which to understand the world we live in but also nourish our imagination, empower and comfort those who appreciate them, and indeed fuel on ever- increasing love for learning. An adults' one to

one interaction with a child can stimulate the young person's reading skill, language acquisition and literacy development in general.

It was also found that the quality and quantity of interactions, not just the presence of reading materials and a story time routine shaped early reading development (Morrow et al, 1990). It is understood that reading to young ones early indeed, helps to lay a foundation for effective language learning. In fact, reading to them as some people do in the form of bed- time stories in early childhood, helps them learn to associate the sounds that they hear and letters which they see on a page. Reading some good material containing well- structured sentences, a wide vocabulary and correct words is one way in which children learn how to replicate. This is so because any good writing results from reading a great deal, as well as continuously practising writing.

Van Kleeck and Schuele, (2010) also emphasized that engaging children in storytelling lays good foundation for higher levels of language skills that rely on vocabulary and syntactic skills, which includes inferencing, narrating abilities and familiarity with features of written language. The study also revealed that telling and listening to stories is valuable since it exposes children to rich complex form of language. Ntuli & Petrorius (2005) clarify that, through storytelling children unconsciously gain the discourse skills of how to tell a story, and how it functions in their particular culture. It is also agreed that narrating of stories or events are not only a language expression but they are also a socializing activity and require the deployment of linguistic, cognitive and cultural knowledge.

The scholars also accepted that the use of oral traditional stories empower the children to recount life's experiences, recast stories that have been told to them and then share with others in a wonderment manner. St. Amours, (2003) further explains that naturally stories are a vehicle on what children build on oral language skills to develop literacy. Hence, allowing children listen to stories enables them to gain the insight about their knowledge, creativity, and language ability and strengthen their thinking processes. The scholar also stressed that the story to which the child is exposed to at home also prepares the child for structure and development of narratives. This implies that storytelling furnishes children with knowledge and skills that are believed to enhance literacy. The study also clarifies that encouraging children to participate in storytelling may expand the child's language to literacy and make him/her become good at the time they get into



formal school. Van Kleeck (2010) also proves that children who receive most attention in storytelling through adult – child interaction emerge good in their phonemic and metalinguistic awareness and vocabulary growth.

In the study which (Morrow et al, 1990) carried out, it was sought to compare the effects of verbal interactions between early readers and non – early readers. It was found that early readers talked more frequently about literacy with family members. Due to the fact that story telling is a social activity, children encounter an interpretation of the author’s words, which is ultimately shaped by the interpretation and social interaction of the child and the adult reader.

It is believed that exposing children to books will result into children becoming good readers. This only happens as the children observe the way their caregivers or parents read activities and this enhances the development of literacy skills at an early stage. This also attracts and encourages the children to be attentive hearers to stories and they in turn become capable of extracting meaning from the wordings. Powell, Douglas & Karen Diamond (2013) also said that for a child to build strong literacy skills during infancy in early childhood and beyond there was need for parents or guardians to talk and read with infant, toddlers and preschoolers.

Echol, West, Stanorich & Zehr (1996) attest that exposing children to print has a substantial effect on the development of reading skills at the time when children begin to read at formal school. They believe that when children listen to stories aloud, they learn how to orient their bodies and mind to the technicalities of books and print which results in children’s early reading, communication and larger development of oral system. By so doing children will be enabled to realize that speech and print are two significant things of life.

Singing to children and allowing them to listen to music helps to promote phonological awareness. According to Sonnenschen et al, (1996), rhymes which are a characteristic of songs are also an important feature in phonological awareness which also contributes to reading success. A study conducted by Bryant et al, (1990) found that knowledge of rhymes and alliteration contribute to reading both by increasing sensitivity to phonemic differences and by preparing a child to recognize the similar spelling patterns shared by words that rhyme. Bryant et al (1990) also found that there is a strong relationship between knowledge of rhymes at age 3 and success in reading over the next 3 years , a

relation that appears to be mediated by higher levels of phonemic awareness that are fostered by rhymes.

The finding was agreeing by the position taken by Serpel et al (2005) who also found that preschool children's knowledge of nursery rhymes was found to be a strong predictor of word recognition. McMahon (1996) recommends the reading of books that have rhyme, rhythm, or repetition to children since the sound of the language is important to children who cannot yet focus on pictures very well.

The research has also supported the relationship that exists between play, and cognitive development in play – based curricula in 2001. Pretend play is one important aspect of emergent literacy. Due to the fact that pretending involves language use and takes place in social contexts. Findings from recent studies on pretend play have shown the importance of this emergent literacy skill for school success. According to a research conducted by (Church, 2010), he found that pretend play provided children with a microcosm for life that encourages them to take the skills they have learned in classroom, lessons and apply them to meaningful life activities. While the studies reviewed above discussed the forms of emergent literacy support that can be given to learners, this study is different because it wishes to establish the forms of emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in rural households.

#### **(a) African Literature on Forms of Emergent Literacy Support.**

There are a number of studies which have been conducted in relation with the forms of emergent literacy support. In 2016, Sarline Gertruida Roux conducted a study in South Africa on the role of family literacy programmes to support emergent literacy in young children. The purpose of the study was to establish the quality of interaction which parents promote among young children in South Africa. Sarline's study was very cardinal since it indicates that supporting children through a play – based, teaching and learning promotes the holistic development of children. It also points out that high quality, well – planned and developmentally appropriate experiences play a cardinal role in learning. This fact is in line with the views of (Pramling – Samullsson and Carsson 2008) who state that, in play a child is always above his age, above his daily behaviour and the head is taller than him. This implies that the child's thinking in life is more important than anything else and this is what makes a child become curious in wanting to do things the way they view them.

One other significance of this study is that provision of young children with many varied opportunities to express themselves can lead to perceptual motor behaviours and sensorimotors which are visible pathways to literacy (Hill, 2006). The study further emphasized that interaction and relationship of children with parents or guardians is a factor in the development of emergent literacy skills. The study also clarified that quality interactions between young children raised in homes with more stimulating books and objects also foster acquisition of language skills in young children. The research further mentioned that consistent interaction of children and parent in homes is a serious predictor of early language development and literacy skills. The study also revealed that reading to children exposes them to vocabulary in context. This fact happens only when there are usually positive interactions with parents and who in turn provides children with scaffolding learning experiences. This was supported by (Vygotsky, 1978) who created the phrase Zone of Proximal in which he said that, children function at a higher level than they do during everyday activities which are fostered by the parents. Vygotsky said that both adult and more skilled children can nurture learning through explaining and extending their experiences.

Another important factor is that through play, children and parents demonstrate verbal communication, high levels of thinking skills, create use of play materials, imaginative and divergent thinking and problem – solving capabilities which lead to increasing complex forms of knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in the cognitive and social domains. This is so because while children are having fun, they are at their most receptive to taking sensations, and refining their fundamental motor skills, and establishing perceptual – motor behaviours which are building foundations on the road to literacy (Wood, 2009).

The study was important because it brought out the fact about quality interactions between children and parent while ours was different because it sought to establish the form of emergent literacy children receive in rural households of Dengwe, Kasempa.

Various studies have also been conducted in Botswana and one of them is what was conducted by Mathangwane (2006) about the attitudes of parents towards reading in rural Communities. The purpose of the study was to explore the attitudes of families on reading in rural communities. In this study, literacy has been defined as a way of thinking learned through communication in family literacy. In this research important

concepts which are vital in acquiring emergent literacy were brought and they added value to the study.

In this study, it was revealed that many parents or guardians did not promote reading to their children for good long hours nor did they provide necessary print materials for their children or encourage their children with literacy activities at their convenient time (Snow, 1991). The study indicated that the majority of parents who tried to read to the children were female because they promoted literacy among the children's economy, education and socio- political affairs. The study also found that some parents or guardians did not manage to read to their children due to their very low levels of education and this made them fail to respond to questions when their children needed clarification on anything to do with education. Due to that fact, the parents or guardians did not know how to encourage their children since they had no idea of what the material was all about while others also found it challenging because of their daily busy schedules which they were engaged into. Others were not just interested with issues to do with emergent literacy for they thought it was of no value and hence, they could not even check on what their children were doing (Thomas et. al 1999).

The study added that, the parents who did so did it in fulfilment of their religious purposes. The study also indicated that some children were willing to be read to but they were frustrated by their parents' negative attitudes. The study further mentioned that some parents failed since they did not have print materials to provide for their children. The research also points out that some children were discouraged to read as their parents or guardians did actually not encourage them to do so.

The study was very relevant to our study because it brought out the fact that parents' role in enhancing emergent literacy in children was very cardinal since the parents were the first teachers that children have for a longest time before they get into formal school. The study also mentioned that play as an activity plays a big role as it highlights parents or guardians on the significance of reading to their children so as to ensure the adequate development of children within their families ( Well, 1986). The study was also imperative as it mentioned that reading as one of the necessary elements for the development of emergent literacy should include a variety of popular texts, stories, plays, picture strips, religious and adventures. The study further emphasized that parents

encouragement of literacy skills were a powerful tool that ensured literacy harmony in the home and should be reinforced at all means.

The study was important to the research being conducted as it brings out the value of play, reading for children, stories and other major emergent literacy skills which the parents should reinforce in order to assist their children. The study also mentioned oral language which is the basis of literacy learning and the strongest predictor to the children's later achievement in reading.

**(b) Zambian Literature on Emergent Literature Support.**

There are also some studies which have been conducted in Zambia on forms of emergent literacy support. Zimba (2011) also conducted a study in which he wanted to examine emergent literacy support in Early Childhood Education. The study focused on preschool childhood practices. Using 26 preschool teachers, 8 preschool administrators, and 680 preschoolers from Kasempa and Solwezi Districts constituted the sample. Using questionnaires, naturalistic observations, the semi structured interviews, the findings were that the preschools investigated had low literacy support as a result of limited language and literacy opportunities for the children and paucity of learning and play materials. Lack of the pre-school teachers' appreciation of emergent literacy rendered them unable to fully support emergent literacy. While Zimba (2011) focused on emergent literacy support in Early Childhood Education, this study is different because it focuses on the emergent literacy support children receive in rural households.

While the literature reviewed has discussed emergent literacy support that can be given to children in general, our study is different because it sought to establish forms of emergent literacy support given to children in rural households.

**2.3 GLOBAL LITERATURE ON COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL AND HOUSEHOLD PRINT.**

Many scholars have identified a number of prints that have enhanced emergent literacy in many households outside Zambia. Among the many activities is pretending to read environmental prints. According to (Kassow, 2006) environmental prints are those prints that surround the children in their daily lives. Many advocates have argued that these skills demonstrate children's ability to derive the meaning of text within context. These include symbols, words, numerals or letters which are found in a certain context and they

fulfill real –life functions. The prints can also be community logos, household logos and they can be combinations of colours, words found on packaging, on clothes, shop signs or images. Therefore, continuous exposure of children to print even when they cannot read will enhance reading and writing in children when they start formal school. This is due to the fact that the children will continue seeing and relating the similar print in their community to what they will find when they are in formal school. This will make reading and writing easy for them.

Barbra Bush (1995) also accepts that children who have access to print environment learn to read more easily than the ones that do not have the access. This is due to the fact that favourable environment is quite necessary if reading and writing has to be achieved in children. The noticing of print is all about knowing how to handle a book and how to follow the words on a page. This involves knowing that writings are done in a chronological order and that without these skills children will have difficulties in how to read and write (Tealse & Sulzby, 1987).

Environmental Print is necessary because it assists the children to notice what written language looks like and how it is used in everyday life. Nutbrown (2005) mentions that print can only lead to the development of emergent literacy if parents participate in scaffolding their children. When children are scaffolded by parents, print becomes meaningful as they view and use it in their everyday lives. This implies that young children begin reading immediately they become aware of environmental print prior to formal school (Horner, 2005). Print is also considered important since it fosters children fulfill real life purposes and achieve their goals and needs such as knowing that a specific label on a particular item means something (Neuman et al, 2011).

Ferreiro (1985) points out that environmental print help children to understand their environment, build their knowledge, select and attend to important features such as written language. This includes the growing of awareness of the forms and functions of print which commences long prior to formal school. Horner (2005) states that, the identification of environmental print does not involve conventional reading, but rather, the interactions between the child and the knowledgeable persons around her/him. Therefore, it is not the mere exposure of children to environmental print but rather it's the attention which children are engaged into by means of scaffolding.

Environmental print can also enhance emergent literacy in children as they try to imitate the writing which they see or notice that their elderly siblings are written to. Through these daily experiences from the moment the children are born help them to develop early literacy development. Purcell- Gates (2004) adds that children are able to construct critical emergent literacy ideas which enable them to become effective readers and writers. This is due to the fact that for any child to acquire the knowledge of either phonological features of words or letter sounds, they need exposure to print. Lonigan (2004) emphasizes that extending children attention to environmental print is important as it assists them to analyse words into small units of sounds and link them to letters.

Gough & Walsh (1991) explains that children who have better phonological recording ability have higher levels of reading achievement. Environmental print enables children to understand that print is a non- linguistic representation of an object such as a picture. Purcell – Gates (1988) further stress that environmental print is cardinal as it helps children understand that there is a one to one relationship between print and the language that results from reading. What is important is to understand that emergent literacy is facilitated by the social cultural system that the children are engaged into. This socialization encompasses the environment in which the child is found and brought up. This implies that understanding things such as print, riddles, games, and oral language enhances the child’s literacy development. Anderson & Stokes, Purcell \_ Gate (1996) has agreed that home literacy environment is associated with the development of other components of emergent literacy.

The discussions in this literature reviewed the environmental print that fostered the children’s emergent literacy while the study under discussion hinges on exploring the various forms of household and community environmental print that facilitated emergent literacy support in the rural households of Dengwe, Kasempa.

## **2.4 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES DONE BY MOST CHILDREN.**

### **(a) Global Literature**

Various scholars who have conducted researches on emergent literacy have clarified on how necessary the activity of play is in the development of emergent literacy in children. Some scholars have confirmed that play encompasses various

forms of activities and this causes the challenge in trying to define it (Sutton – Smith, 1973). Some researchers’ attest that play is cardinal in children’s lives as it allows children to internalize new ideas and skills, and then integrate them with other knowledge which they begin to use in their daily lives. Other scholars clarify that literacy activities to children include any reading and moments where a child assures him/herself as a reader by holding or playing with a book or telling himself or herself a story using the print around and then sees what he/she does with it (Bruce – Heath, S. 1983).

Young children really need to be encouraged to acquire the skill of writing because it will assist them to read and they need reading for them to learn about oral language for them to be able to acquire both. It is believed that through active engagement with books and writing opportunities, children reconstruct their knowledge by re – reading their favorite books and also the invented spellings. Ninjo & Bruner, (1978) explains that shared reading is cardinal since it exposes young children to reading and fosters the development of vocabulary in the young children.

According to (Whitehurst, et al 1998) they explained that games that include songs are necessary as they foster the development of literacy skills through provision of opportunities that allow the development of listening & speaking skills which later enhances the development of vocabulary and their phonological awareness. Boon (2010) also mentions play as the principal childhood in which a child equates his/her work to that of the world of the adult. The study signifies that play has a central point in the development of literacy due to the role it plays in the young child’s development by enhancing the growth of sensory capacities and the physical skills as well as the new found intellectual skills.

Play provides excitement & pleasure to children through the affiliation it makes with older siblings, peers, tension release and advancement of cognitive development & exploration. This view is supported by (Santrock, 2002)) who emphasizes that if children are engaged in play; they will practice their competencies and acquire skills in a more relaxed manner. The scholar adds that play is vital as it allows children gain control of their bodies and muscle coordination with what they view and do. This implies that allowing children in



play or games enables them develop their motor skills, strengthen their muscles and also become better in language proficiency.

Pretending to read is yet another important activity which children exhibit and enhance the development of literacy skills. Foldaway (1975) explains that pretending to read fosters children's reading by themselves as they concentrate on re – telling the story by means of pictures. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) attributes that it is cardinal for children to be aware of written language and noticing that writing is actually from left to right and from top to bottom as in reading. This includes the manner in which the child holds the book. The scholars agree that as children progress from telling about each individual story they shift to picture using language that sounds like reading or writing. This indicates that from pretending to read children will get to what (Clay, 1975) called mock writing or weavy scribbling. Ferreiro & Teberosky (1986) further explains that children who have less experience with books prior to formal school tend to develop at a lower pace. In order to help the children not to develop literacy at a lower pace, parents or guardians should allow their children participate in literacy activities that will facilitate the development of literacy. It is through shared book reading that children familiarize themselves to conversions of print (Morrow et al, 1990).

Another significant activity that children exhibit is pretend writing. Clarke & Ehri (1988) explains pretend writing as the writing which is in a pictographic sense that includes using drawing as writing or using scribbled like markings with meaning only to the child and represent different things. It is these forms of writing that invented spellings which eventually become developed into standard letters when children begin to write in a conversional sense. The children will then read their scribbled work using the language that sounds like reading in order to share the pretend messages.

One other important activity that children do is riddle session. Morrow (1989) clarifies that riddles are important in children's lives as they facilitate the development of vocabulary which is required for the child to communicate with curiosity intake sense of the world. This is due the fact that language is key and lays the foundation for later reading and writing. Dickson & McCabe (2001) also testifies that riddles and stories can enhance the child's literacy development prior

to formal school. This can happen only when parents engage their children in more enjoyable conversations. As the children hear more language and practice it, their skills in communication will develop because talking and interacting is the most cardinal element that builds the language skills in children. Vygotsky (1962), agrees that exposing children to oral language environment such as riddles, songs, storytelling and other several games may enhance the development of emergent literacy skills in young children. The scholar clarifies that this is dependent on the positive social interactions that children receive from their older family members. This is in line with the social constructivism theory by Vygotsky which mentioned that if a child is engaged in an act by knowledgeable parents or older siblings, they will successfully accomplish their task.

This study indicated that the children in this case revealed strings of letters for their written print with regard the sounds represented by the letters. When children are allowed to do this, they will use the pictures to produce the invented or phonetic without real knowledge to letters as viewed by (Snow et al, 1988).

Various literature reviews which talk about emergent literacy activities that preschooler's exhibit have been discussed. The study under discussion is different as it focuses on investigating the various forms of activities that most children are engaged into the rural households that support emergent literacy.

#### **(b) Zambian Literature**

Matafwali and Munsaka (2011) confirmed that local traditional games such as Kiyenga which children are familiar with can be useful in the transmission of knowledge and literacy skills. The study further revealed that these games are categorized into several groups such as socio – emotional, cognitive, psychomotor, and self – help skills and language. Games such as Kiyenga which are attached to psychomotor domains foster the children's psychomotor development skills. The study also justifies that the implication of such games are worth considering cognitively as they enhance computation abilities, manipulation, organization, reasoning, planning as well as improving attention and fostering motor skills which are important in the writing skill under conventional literacy. Through acquisition of self help skills related to games children are assisted to take care of their environment and themselves.

When children get into formal school the local games enables them to become more effective in multi – sensory and active learning. This signifies that games are viable medium for perceptual – motor & cognitive learning. This in itself has a lot of significance to emergent literacy and being necessary to this study under discussion.

Other local games that enhanced emergent literacy in Musonda’s study of 2011 were waida and kidunu. According to this study games facilitated the development of the skills of counting and numbers which exhibited in children.

In 2010, Musonda conducted a study in which she investigated emergent literacy preschoolers – exhibited. The study focused on literacy behaviours which preschoolers exhibited. 21 preschoolers, 15 caregivers comprising parents and guardians and all women from Lusaka constituted the sample. The study employed qualitative and quantitative methods and used semi – structured interview guides, observation check lists, documents and tests as instruments. The findings showed that print and scaffolding of these literacy behaviours in these children by parents were limited. Not only that, but that language was also a challenge and that the only activity that was practiced mostly even more than reading was arithmetic and that was through the games. In this study singing was yet another activity that was enjoyed most though televisions and radios had more influence on the literacy behaviours preschooler exhibit in acquisition of literacy by means of songs and advertisements.

The findings also revealed that most parents could not encourage children in emergent literacy activities because they were always busy working as houseservants elsewhere or selling food stuff to sustain their families. While Musonda (2010) concentrated on literacy behaviours which pre scholars exhibit, this study concentrated on emergent literacy activities that were done by most children in the rural households of Dengwe, Kasempa District.

Kasonde (2012) also conducted a study on whether the games or play that children engaged in before they started school in Zambia had some skills, knowledge and attitudes that could lay the foundation of conventional literacy. In this study the sample included 30 children (16 girls and 14 boys) aged one to six years and their

parents. The study employed the qualitative method. An observation scheme and interview schedule was used to collect data.

The study revealed that about half of the games that were recorded involved the manipulation of things with fingers. The findings further revealed that scribbling forms the greater part of emergent writing in pre-schoolers play.

In 2012 Kaunda also conducted a study to establish emergent literacy practices and skills of children aged 2 to 6 years in Mwense District. In this study 20 children and parents, caregivers or parents comprised the sample. Then the study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods, semi – structured in – depth interviews and participant observations. The findings in this study indicated that many children generally exhibited literacy skills and that they also engaged in literacy related games as well as other practices which facilitated the development of literacy skills. The study also revealed that songs in their familiar language, tongue twisters, with scaffolding by parents lead to development of emergent literacy skills.

The study also found out that most parents did not provide emergent literacy support to their children and that the only people who seemed to do so were the school going siblings. The study also revealed that the only activity that the parents exposed their children to was storytelling because this was one of the activities that parents found easy to do in their villages and it enables children's oral language which also leads to development of literacy skills such as comprehension and narrative.

The study further revealed that most children participated in rich oral language contexts like folktales, riddles and provided them with stories and this enabled them to develop in their vocabularies which they could use in real life situations. This study also indicated that most parents did not have time to read books to their children reason being that school was only necessary when children were in formal school and that the parents had busy schedules rather than helping children to read and write. It was also discovered that most parents did not read to their children because they themselves were illiterate and did not know the value of shared reading to children.

The study also cited that most parents did not encouraged their children to pretend to write and those who did scribble on the walls were stopped and even those writing in the ground were told that they were making themselves dirty. The parents did not take advantage of their children pretending to read and scaffold them; instead they discouraged them when they played with books. The only activities that parents seemed to let their children do were riddles sessions, folktales, songs and various games.

In view of the above, among his recommendations is that parents must be made aware of the fact that they can participate in the learning of their children by encouraging them to develop interest in literacy and numeracy activities long before they start formal school. Although Kaunda's study had some similarities with our study but the usage and the practiced games and stories were different. Kaunda looked at practices and skills children have, this study looked at the support that parents give their children through emergent literacy activities. Therefore, we wonder whether their findings would be similar to ours.

## **2.5 EMEREGNT LITERACY PRACTICES THAT RELATE TO CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL.**

### **(a) Global Literature**

It is imperative that emergent literacy practices are related to formal conventional school. This may demand that some emergent literacy practices be figured out and be given clear explanations of how they relate to formal conventional school. This, if realised, shall help to provide value to the need for parents to support emergent literacy to pre-schoolers. This is due to the fact that, home is the first place where a child is exposed to a language and has opportunity to observe, discover, and engage in literacy- related activities to explore the development of literacy skills (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008).

In this case, scribbling on walls can be related to the writing skills in formal schools, for instance, holding of pencils, tracing and drawing at Grade 1. According to (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), they believed that, if children are exposed to pretend reading, scribbling or writing and to oral language in their home by their parents or older sibling in early age, they may develop and get exposed to social contexts in which literacy is an important phenomenon when

they are in formal school. The scholars explained that, if parents build a strong literacy home environment that persuade childrens' learning and communication, children may find it easy to communicate when they get into the new environment in formal school.

It is also true to state that, if children are exposed to things such as books, magazines, newspapers, and environmental print may influence on their development of learning to read. This is due to the fact that children with better home literacy environments show higher levels of reading knowledge and skills when they get into formal school. According to (Whener, 1999) when children pretend to read they learn that print carries meaning and has functions which enables one to understand life.

Stories and other narratives relate to the listening and speaking skills taught in schools children who would have had opportunities to listen to stories and retelling some, tend to be advantaged when they get into formal education in that they shall be better and faster learners compared to their friends who might have had no such chances. Hoff- Ginsberg, (1991) showed that childrens' home language and literacy environment before beginning formal school was strongly associated with their literacy skills. In this case childrens' vocabulary and narrative production were predicted by their exposure to rare words, extended discourse, and literacy experiences at home. This implies that children who receive direct instruction on non formal activities may contribute to the higher scores on the vocabulary test when they get into formal school. This is in line with the social cultural theory of (Vygotsky, 1978) where he stated that quality of adult- child interaction and home environment have a powerful influence on the development of a child's emergent literacy skills.

Zhou, (1994) also identified the relationship between children's emergent literacy achievement and their home literacy activities which are associated to children's literacy success. The scholar explained that, home literacy direct activities that included music or songs and telling stories had a significant relationship with children's emergent literacy development which is also an active literacy environment which is as well a vital tool in emergent literacy skills.

Therefore, it has been hypothesised that children's vocabulary growth is responsible for children's growth in phonological representations. As a result, children who have a rich language environment through input or book reading at home are expected to develop vocabulary, which in turn stimulates growth in phonological representations (Metsala & Valley, 1998). This implies that children with larger vocabulary tend to have more highly developed phonological awareness when they get into formal school.

Another relation is seen through games and play that children are engaged into. Games and play have rules that can be related to formal school such as the don'ts and do's which relate to some rules in writing too. For instance, through games and play, a child may learn that consonants and vowels can be combined to form syllables, and that syllables can combine to form words and yet, words stand aloof but can be put together to form sentences. This is to say that there are spaces between words of a sentence and that such spaces are equal or consistent. According to (Tunmer & Hoover, 1992) they said that for children to develop phonological awareness they must be exposed to certain language and activities- rhyming and sound analysis, games, letter games, and shared reading interaction- that focus their attention on the structural features of language. Furthermore, through games and play children can be exposed to activities such as scribbling on walls which can be related to writing skills in formal school.

In addition, some physical actions in some plays and games can be related to pre-writing skills such as sitting posture and figure manipulations that support good handwriting. In this way emergent literacy has very high correlation with formal school in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In most cases children play games that are exploratory and are rule governed just as it is observed in formal education. For instance, in schools teachers would always give children the rules which guide them on what to do while they do the activity. This is exactly what happens when children play games at home. In both situations adherence to rules is very cardinal if the goal is to be achieved.

## **2.6 SUMMARY**

In this section, the term emergent literacy and its origin has been discussed. The study has also reviewed some related literature worldwide on relationship between children's

emergent literacy achievement, effects of verbal interactions between early readers and non early readers. It has as well reviewed the attitudes of parents towards reading in rural communities. On the Zambian perspective the study has reviewed literature on whether children's games contained skills, knowledge and attitudes that could lay foundation of conventional literacy. The study has also reviewed whether emergent literacy support in early childhood education can enhance development of literacy in children and whether the literacy behaviours which pre-schoolers exhibit can foster development of emergent literacy, and also what emergent literacy practices and skills among children aged 2 to 6 years hold. Our study was different because it brought out the emergent literacy support that children are exposed to by their parents.



## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 OVERVIEW**

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study. According to Khotari (2004), research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It can be viewed as a science of studying how systematically research is done. In this study, the methodology includes the research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure; data collection instrument aspects such as the reliability and validity of the instruments have been explained.

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Khotari, (2004), a research design is a conceptual structure writing which research is constituted; it provides the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. This study was qualitative and used a Case Study design. According to Leedy and Omrud (2005), a case study is where a particular individual, program, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time. One of the reasons why a case study was used in this study was to establish if children in Dengwe, Kasempa district were receiving emergent literacy support from their parents. The other reason was to answer the question of the study.

### **3.2 TARGET POPULATION**

According to Kothari (2004) a population is defined as a group that a researcher wishes to generalize the study to. The target population in this study comprised all headmen, all the parents and the children between 4 to 6 years of age in these households in Dengwe community in Kasempa District of Zambia. The children were the informants to validate the data provided by the parents and guardians in the study in Dengwe, Kasempa District.

### **3.3 SAMPLE SIZE**

Leedy and Omrud (2005) define a sample as a subset of a population. According to Khotari, (2004), he states that a sample of a research should be truly representative of population characteristics without any bias so that it may result into valid and reliable conclusions. In this study, Fifty two (52) participants were drawn for the study. Forty (40) children drawn from 5 villages were randomly sampled to participate in focus group

discussions in order to qualify the data that was collected from the parents. Ten (10) parents and two (2) headmen were sampled for the study for interviews. The parents were also sampled randomly by the researcher just as children. The headmen were sampled purposively. The role of the headmen was to act as contact persons between the parents and the children before the researcher could conduct any research in the selected villages of Dengwe Kasempa District. Apart from that, the headmen also helped in deciphering the knew information on what was prevailing in Dengwe area in Kasempa District about emergent literacy support that children were exposed to.

### **3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Simple random and purposive sampling procedures were used in the study. Simple random sampling was used to come up with the number of children, parents and villages. According to White (2003), simple random sampling is a selection technique that provides each population element an equal chance of being included in the sample. To begin with the researcher had to seek permission from Senior Chief Kasempa through his Induna (Kitumbafumu). After permission was sought, the researcher was allowed to interact with the village headmen, parents and the children in the villages. The children were sampled by getting a list of children in each village and conducted a ruffle to come up with a list of eight for each focus group. In this study a qualitative method was employed since the researcher just required a sizeable number of participants to answer the objectives (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). The children were evenly selected that is 22 boys and 18 girls. Among the 40 children, 20 were 6 years, 12 were 5 years while 8 were 4 years old. 36 out of 40 children were preschoolers while only 4 attended preschool. The reason for including children was to qualify the data that was collected from the parents. The same process was followed by the researcher for the parents and villages to come up with the list of 10 parents and the 5 villages. Purposive sampling was used to come up with village headmen because they knew the villages well and were in charge of the selected villages. According to Khotari, (2004), purposive or deliberate sampling involves the deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe. The researcher used purposive sampling because in this method, the researcher was targeting a group of people believed to be reliable for the study (Khotari and Tromp, 2006).

### **3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

Data was collected using semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, interview guides and observation check list.

#### **3.5.1 Semi Structured Interview Guides**

Semi structured interviews were used by the researcher on the ten (10) parents from the five (5) villages to gather information on the forms of emergent literacy that children were exposed to in rural households and the community of Dengwe area. The research was conducted in five weeks and the information was recorded in writing while the parents were talking. They were also used to find out which emergent literacy activities were done by most children in these rural households. The reason behind using semi structured interviews was because, according to ( Kombo and Tromp ,2006), they are flexible and they both consist of both open and closed ended questions. While open ended questions enabled the researcher to ask follow up questions, closed ended questions where aimed at getting in – depth information. Using both open closed ended questions enabled the researcher to get complete and detailed understanding of the issue under investigation.

#### **3.5.2 Observation Checklists**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) define an observation as “a tool that provides information about actual behavior.” Observation was conducted to establish the household and environmental prints that support the development of emergent literacy. Five (5) observations were conducted in five villages. They were done to find out which emergent literacy activities were done by most children in these rural households and also determine which literacies were related to Convetional School. These observations were structured and only those aspects which were appearing on the observation check list were recorded and translated

#### **3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions**

A focus group discussion was used on the children to find out which emergent literacy activities were done by most children in these rural households of Dengwe area.. These focus group discussions took a period of five weeks. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a focus group is usually composed of 6 – 8 individuals who share certain

characteristics, which are relevant for the study. . Each focus group discussion was made up of 8 members. In total, five (5) focus group discussions were conducted and the information was recorded using a recorder and the data was later translated into writing by the researcher. Focus group discussions were used because they can produce a lot of information quickly and are good for identifying and exploring beliefs, ideas or opinions in a community (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

### **3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENTS.**

Khotari (2004) defines validity as “the extent to which differences found with a measuring instrument reflect true differences among those tested.” Khotari (2004) also states that a reliable instrument is one that provides consistent results. To ensure that the instruments and study are reliable, the following were done. The observation check – list and interview guide were first discussed with the supervisor to ensure their appropriateness. Secondly, multiple uses of data collection strategies and data sources or triangulation were used by the researcher in order to obtain a more complete picture of what was being studied and for cross – checking information. A pilot study was conducted before the actual study was undertaken. According to (Cohen, 2007) a pilot is a test conducted to discover any unanticipated flaws before the implementation of the main scheme.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) define data collection as “the gathering of specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts”. The purpose of collecting data was to help the researcher clarify the facts and prove the research objectives and research questions.

Permission was sought from relevant authorities (Kitumbafumo) at the palace of chief Kasempa in Kasempa District to carry out the research in Dengwe villages. Later on, the participants were briefed about the nature of the study by their village headmen. The researcher then started collecting data using interviews with parents to determine the forms of emergent literacy that children were exposed to in rural household and community. Focus group discussions were also used to collect data on which environmental print and households support emergent literacy. Secondly, the researcher started collecting data using observation check – lists. The purpose of using observation

check – lists was to establish the households and community environmental print that support the development of emergent literacy. Finally, focus group discussions were conducted with 4 to 6 years old children to find out which emergent literacy activities are done by themselves (children) in these rural households.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) define data analysis as ‘examining the information collected in a research and making inferences and deductions. Qualitative methods of data analysis were used in this study. Verbal information obtained from focus group discussions and interviews from children and parents respectively were analysed using a qualitative approach. From the interviews and focus group discussions, data gathered was grouped into identified themes and categories. Based on objects, explanations and discussions were made based on the identified themes and categories. Some of the direct quotations from respondents’ responses were included in the text. The observation notes were also transcribed and presented verbatim. This helped to find out which emergent literacy activities were done by most children.

### **3.9 ETHICAL COLLECTIONS**

Whenever human beings are a focus of investigation, it is important to closely look at the ethnical implications of what we were proposing to do (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Ethical issues mostly aim to establish how participants are going to be protected from harm, informed consent and right to confidentiality. In order to uphold ethics, the researcher asked for approval from Chief Kasempa’s representatives, village headmen and parents to collect data. Ethical issues such as confidentiality, informed consent and participants’ right to confidentiality were upheld. The information collected was in verbal and researcher transcribed into written while the participants were speaking. Codes were used and not real names to maintain confidentiality. The data collected was not exposed to unauthorized persons and participant’s names or personal details were not captured as the interest of the study was the information. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the research and that those who wished to withdraw at any time were not going to be forced to change their minds.

### **3.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

An in –depth overview of the research methodology used in the study has been given in this chapter. The research design, target population, sample size, data collection procedure, data preparation, data analysis and ethical considerations have been presented in this chapter. The research design was used to establish if children were exposed to emergent literacy in Dengwe rural area. The target population was all headmen, parents in the selected villages and children between the ages of 4 to 6 years old. The sample size was 52 participants, 10 parents, 40 children (20 boys and 18 girls) and 2 headmen. Observation checklist and focus group discussins were used to collect data from children. The data collection procedure was followed by first seeking permission from Senioir chief Kasempa through the representative (Kitumbafumu). Data that was collected was analysed thematically. The next chapter provides the research findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS**

### **4.0 OVERVIEW**

The previous chapter discussed the methodology which was employed in this study. This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings of the study are presented in accordance with the research objectives. These were the objectives:

- i. To establish the forms of emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in rural households.
- ii. To explore the household and community environmental print that supports the development of emergent literacy.
- iii. To ascertain which emergent literacy activities were done by most children in these rural households.
- iv. To determine emergent literacy practices related to conventional school.

A summary of the chapter will be given at the end of the chapter.

### **4.1 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY SUPPORT CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS.**

The first objective was to establish the forms of emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in rural households in Dengwe, Kasempa, Zambia. To answer this question, interviews were conducted with parents. The interviews were recorded through writing by the researcher while the parents were speaking. Observations from children interaction were also done for purposes of triangulating the information given by parents during interviews. Findings from observations were also presented in writing. The findings presented below present two sets of data from interviews and focus group discussions.

#### **4.1.1 Findings from Parents and headmen Collected through Oral Interviews:**

##### **(a) Story telling**

One of the forms of emergent literacy support that children were exposed to in rural households was story telling. Eight out of ten parents who were interviewed mentioned that they told stories to their children and thereafter asked them to narrate these stories. One of the parents (Parent A) interviewed said:

*'Kimye kya mvula tujima majimi ne kupotesha bijimwa, mino kisalo tuwamisha mabanza. Kimye kya mabanga twikala kumujilo ne kwisaamba na kisemi. Nshimikizha baana bami mashimikila amu baibolo ne kwimbba nyimbo. Baana ne babacheeche bekala nakuteleka mino inge papita kimye bakunuka mini twashalatu na bakomako aba baji na myaka itanu ne itanu na umo (During the rain season, most of our time is spent on cultivating, and during summer, we clean up our surrounding. But during night time after our evening meals, we gather around the born fire and chat with my family. I tell my children Bible stories which are accompanied by songs. During the early stages of the folklores sessions, even the three (3) to four (4) years children remain awake and listern to the narrations. Later, only those children between the age of 5 and 6 years try to keep awake and listen to the stories and songs for some time.)'*

One headman mentioned that he taught his children how to behave and cultivate good morals through stories. He further mentioned that after narrating the stories to his children, they were asked to answer specific questions to find out if they had understood the stories. He said:

*'Amiwa mfunjisha bana bami byubilo byawama kupichila mu mashimikila. Mumashimikila momo mfuunjshila baana bami kuubula kwikala nalwiso mambo lwiiso lwatama. Kabiji ngipuzha ne meepuzho ku baana bami pakuuba amba moone inge baana baumvwa. (I teach my children how to cultivate good morals and character through stories. In stories, I teach my children to guard against vices such as jealousy. After I have told them these stories, I normally ask questions to find out if they have understood.'*

Another parent (Parent C) commenting on the teaching of moral values in stories said that children were taught how to behave through stories. He mentioned that through story telling, the children were also developing story telling skills. He further mentioned that his children were great listeners and after telling stories, he was surprised to hear them narrating the same stories to their friends.



## (b) Writing

Two out of the ten parents interviewed also mentioned that writing was one of the emergent literacy support that children were exposed to in their households. One parent (Parent D) mentioned that when it was time for applying mud on the walls of the house and decorate it with writing patterns, he normally asked her children to help though the work was not done perfectly. She mentioned that she even asked her children to write the same patterns on the ground. The children did not manage to do it perfectly but they tried to imitate. Below is the verbatim in Kiikaonde from the parent:

*'Inge kanshingwile mazubo ne binzaanza baana nabo batoola maloba kebaleenge biintu byo bayuka kabiji byo beena kumona buloongo abo beene. (When I am smearing and decorating the walls and the floors of the houses or huts, my children also get the mud and make things that they understand and like. The children scribbled in the mud to make different patterns of their own. Some are very clear whilst others are just visible to themselves)'*

Another parent (Parent E) who did not know how to write said that although she was illiterate, she used pictures in a Bible story book to explain to her children about the story. She further mentioned that the children would sometimes pick the same books and start copying the words in the books despite not knowing how to read them. She said:

*'Amiwa kechi nayuka kutanga bulongo ne. Mino jimo jimo ntolatu mabuuku a Lesa aji na bikope ketutaambemo pamo na baana bami. Nebepuzha baana pa bikope biji mu mabuuku. Baana bakoomako bakonsha kuyuka bikope bimo ne kukoonsa kuluumbulula. Aba baabacheche ne baluumbulwila. Nanchi baana balabijila byone babuula. Lukeelo monatu nabo batoola mabuuku aji na bikope kebaluumbulwile bakwabo byonka byo nebabuuujileenga bulongotu. Kimo kimwe, nebataana ke bakopolole ne byanembwa panshi. (Personally I am not able to read and therefore, I do not manage to read to my children everyday, I do just get the christian materials*

*which have pictures and then explain to my children on what the pictures are all about. Surprisingly! I just see them pick the same books on their own and then begin to teach and explain to others just in the same manner that I do to them. One time, I found them pretending to copy words from a book.)'*

### **(c) Reading for Children**

Reading for children is another emergent literacy support that children were exposed to in the rural households. One of the parents (Parent F) who was a Jehovah's Witness mentioned that she read to her children especially from the Watch Tower track magazine. She mentioned that despite her children being young and being unable to read, they had an opportunity to hear the word of God. The facts regarding this assertions are indicated in the verbatim below:

*'Byonji kamonyi wakwa Yehoba nebafuunjisha ne kwi bataangila baana bami kimye kyo nebafuunjisha byambo bya Lesa. Nguba bino pakuuba amba benengezhe ne kuyuka bya kukuumbulapo kimye kyotuya na kupwila kukipwilo. Byonguba kekwiba taangila baana mino apa naeseka ne kwibepuzha mepuzho. Ntwajijilaatu kanatu bayuka bya kukuumbula. Nguba bino kila muluungu saka tukyangye kuya ku kipwilo. Kino kileengela baana bami kukeba kutaanga nangwatu baji buunke bwabo. Batoola mabuuku ne kweseka kutaanga. Kimo kimye beseka kusombolola byonka byonaji kwiba fuunjishanga. Ngyuka namba baji kumvwanga inge bakoonsha kukuumbula mepuzho onaji kwibepuzhanga (Being one of Jehovah's witnesses, I do find time to read to my children when I am teaching them the word of God. I do this in order to prepare them to answer some questions which are asked during the church meetings. I do this until I am sure that they are able to answer the questions. I do this every week before we get to the Kingdom Hall. This system makes my children pretend to read even when they are alone. They do this in trying to imitate the way I read to them. I am able to know if they understood when I ask them questions and they manage to answer correctly.'*

#### **(d) Playing games**

The playing of games such as ‘Kiyenga’ which promote numeracy skills is yet another form of emergent literacy support that is given to children in the rural households of Dengwe community. One of the parents (parent G) mentioned that she taught her children how to play ‘Kiyenga’ and when they had known how to play the game, they started playing on their own. She further said that the children had improved in counting things as the game involves adding and subtracting stones. Another parent (parent H) also mentioned that she taught games for purposes of entertainment and to find out if children could do difficult tasks. She said:

*‘kimye kimo nguba ne bisela bya kishaakulu na baana bami. Bino bisela byonguba na baana bikebewa ke kisela kya kayangana basela. Kino kisela ke kisela kyubiwa akwe sawimba lwimbo. Mukino kisela mfuunjisha baana kwimba akwe saka babeena kupuusankanya maboko. Nebamwasha byakuuba mino apa ne babuula kweseka kusoombolola. Baana bakoomako beseka mino aba bakepeesha balubankanya kya kinekine pa kupusankanya maboko. (Sometimes I do traditional games with my children. These games involve the use of songs as well as hands. I do sing the song whilst I am also crossing the hands at the same time. I teach them this game to see if they can coordinate their hands whilst they are also singing. After I have demonstrated, I see that the older children are trying but for the youngest, it is really challenging to do the game.)’*

#### **(e) Telling Riddles**

Some parents who were interviewed mentioned that they told riddles to their children in homes. He mentioned that after supper, he would sit with them and ask them riddles. He further said that riddles made children think very much because the meanings of these riddles were hidden. Normally, riddles and puzzles show that children are thinking critically. Like the other parents, the parent said:

*‘Javula mabaanga inge twapwisha kuja bya kuja twikala kukyoto mino apa kenebepuzhe bichomeko. Baana bateleka kubichomeko ne*

*kukumbula. Inge bakankalwa nebaluumbulwila nekwibabuula kine kintu kya panyiwa yeo mukuumbu. Kashika baana bamweka nobe kechi babeena kumvwa ne, mino umonatu lukeelo bebuungizha pamo ne kuteendeka kwikyombesha. Baana bakyombesha bakwabo babujiileko buloongotu kabiji bebakwasha ne kwibabuula mikuumbu ya kine. Most of the time after super, we do sit near the born fire and I conduct the riddle session with the children. I divide the children in two categories, the youngest alone and the oldest also on their own. I do this because some riddles are abit challenging and need to be answered by those who are abit older. Those which are very simple i give them to the youngest so that they are able to answer something at least before the end of the session. Some riddles are a bit challenging and I take time to explain how I arrived at the answer. Little do I realize that the children are grasping whatever we are discussing. Amazingly! The following day, I just observe the children gather and conduct the riddles with others from different families and they are able to convince others very well'.*

From the answers given by parents, we can tell that telling stories, folktales and singing songs are some of the forms of literacy support that children are exposed to mostly in the rural households. Parent eight (8) out of ten (10) parents who was interviewed said that they told their children folklore such as folktales, riddles, song and stories. Of the ten (10) parents interviewed, only two (2) said that they read books to their children.

#### **4.2 HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT THAT SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY.**

The second objective sought to explore the household and community environmental print that supports the development of literacy. To answer this objective, observations were conducted by the researcher in five villages. From the observations conducted, important information pertaining household and community environmental print was captured. The findings of the observations are presented below-:

## 4.2 OBSERVATIONS IN VILLAGE “ A”

### (a) Household Print

Some of the household print that was seen in Village A included empty labeled plastic bags, labeled bags of empty sacks, labeled food containers, labeled salt containers, labeled lotion containers, pieces of news papers, labeled shilts and religious posters. Some of the items that portrayed household print are shown in the figure below.



**Figure 1: Household Print on Containers**

As shown in figure 1, print on labeled food containers such as salt and sugar were the commonest household print that was in this village. Words such as ‘sugar’ and ‘salt’ were written on these containers. In one household, it was observed that a container clearly labeled panadol was placed in the kitchen and when the owner of the house was asked to state what was in the container, the response was that it was sugar. The owner of the house further stated that she was given the container by a nurse at the nearby clinic when she asked for it. She further stated that she asked for it so that she would keep sugar safely. When an attempt was made to find out if children in these households were able to know what was in the container, the owner of the house said that children were aware since she told them that sugar was put in that particular container. In one household belonging to an elder of a local

congregation, a poster of Jesus Christ was seen hanging on the wall. The poster had inscriptions on it stating, ‘Jesus Christ’

Another man in this village was seen wearing a shirt labeled ‘*I love Jesus*’. Some people in these households were seen wearing campaign shirts for various political parties and when asked, they mentioned that they were given during campaigns. There were also empty sacks which were labeled differently depending on the milling plant it came from. However, the bags were mainly bought from those that came from town and were used for taking maize to hammer meals around the community.

### **(b) Community Environmental Print**

The figure below is a school which depicts some of the community environmental print that was found in Dengwe community.



**Figure 2: Print on Wall supporting Emergent Literacy**

There were a number of community and environmental print that supported the development of literacy in village A. These included school posters, Village poster signs, campaign poster signs, church signs, farm posters, shop poster signs, and road signs.

Dengwe area is located near the Solwezi –Kasempa road and has some schools within the area. What was observed was that the schools had made a big sign post that was visible and was clearly labeled. On the sign post, the name of the school, the motto and

the mission statement were clearly written. The writing on the sign post is an example of community print that supports the development of literacy.

While some villages did not have sign posts, others had. Some villages had made sign posts that had names of the village on them. These sign posts were helpful in that the researcher was able to know the name of the village even before reaching it. Some of the villages were famous for certain things such as beer brewing and sign posts were some of the features people were using to locate such villages.

There were also some campaign posters that were seen on shops and even trees. These posters were labeled with political party symbols and names of the candidates. Some of the campaign posters were almost fading but those which were made of cloth and hanged on top of trees were still looking okey and the print could easily be read. The writings and labels on these campaign posters support literacy in that, in the absence of books, children can attempt to read.

There were church signs and farm posters in the community as well. Some church signs displayed information about the name of the church and sometimes the times congregants meet. Sometimes, church posters were very key in the identification of certain places in the community. There were also a few farm signs in the community.

**The figure below shows a church poster sign.**



**Figure 3: Church Poster Sign**

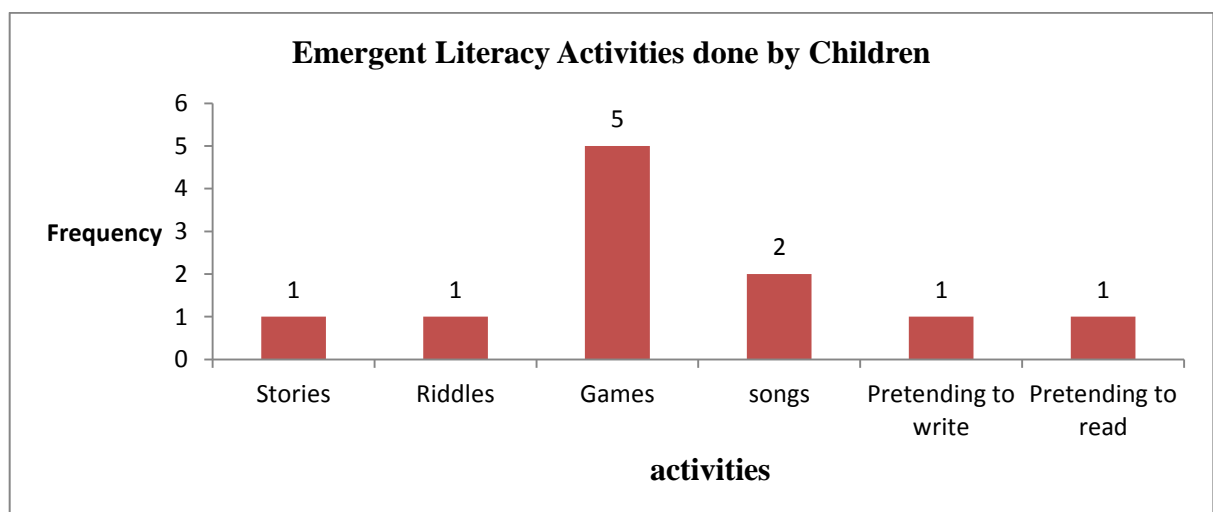
Shop poster signs and road signs were also seen in the community. Names of shops were written on them and there were also posters of some goods which are sold in the shops. The posters were labeled and the print on them supported the development of literacy. The Solwezi – Kasempa tarred road passes through Dengwe community and it has road furniture. There are road signs signaling to drivers that they were schools near and to slow down. Most of the road signs along this road are written in English. It was also observed that most of the pupils going to Dengwe primary schools were aware of the meaning of these road signs.

### **4.3 EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES DONE BY MOST CHILDREN IN THESE RURAL HOUSEHOLDS.**

The third objective sought to ascertain emergent literacy activities done by most children in rural households of Dengwe community. To answer this objective, observations were done in all the five villages and further, focus group discussions were conducted with children for purposes of triangulating the information arising from observations made by the researcher. The observations were recorded in Kiikaonde according to their frequency and then translated into English by the researcher. The findings presented below presents two sets of data from observations and focus group discussions.

#### **4.3.1 Findings from Observations done in the five villages**

Figure 4 below shows the frequency of emergent literacy activities done by children as observed by the researcher – over many days in the five villages sampled for the study.



**Figure 4: Emergent Literacy Activities done by Children**



### **(a) Games**

As shown in figure 4 the most popular emergent literacy activity done by children which were observed were games. Games were played by most children in all the five villages which were sampled in the study. One popular game which was done by the children is '*Kidunu*' or hide and seek. This game involves the mentioning of the person who has been seen and counting up to ten. In the case of '*Kidunu*' or hide and seek, the skill of emergent numeracy is acquired by children unconsciously. Another common game that was observed was that of '*Kiyenga*'. This game was mostly done by girls. Small stones were gathered in the middle of a circle and players were expected to remove a particular number of stones from the circle and then back. This game also promoted the acquisition of emergent literacy by children unconsciously.

### **(b) Songs**

Singing of songs is yet another emergent literacy activity which was done by children. Some of the songs were incorporated in games. The songs were accompanied with actions such as clapping and lifting of legs. The clapping of hands was done in a specific fashion and it promoted the acquisition of emergent literacy in children unconsciously.

### **(c) Stories and riddles**

Story telling is another emergent literacy activity that was done by children. However, story telling was only observed in one village and this may be attributed to the fact that observations were done during day time. One child was seen and heard narrating a story to her friends. The story was narrated during the course of play.

### **(d) Pretending to write and read**

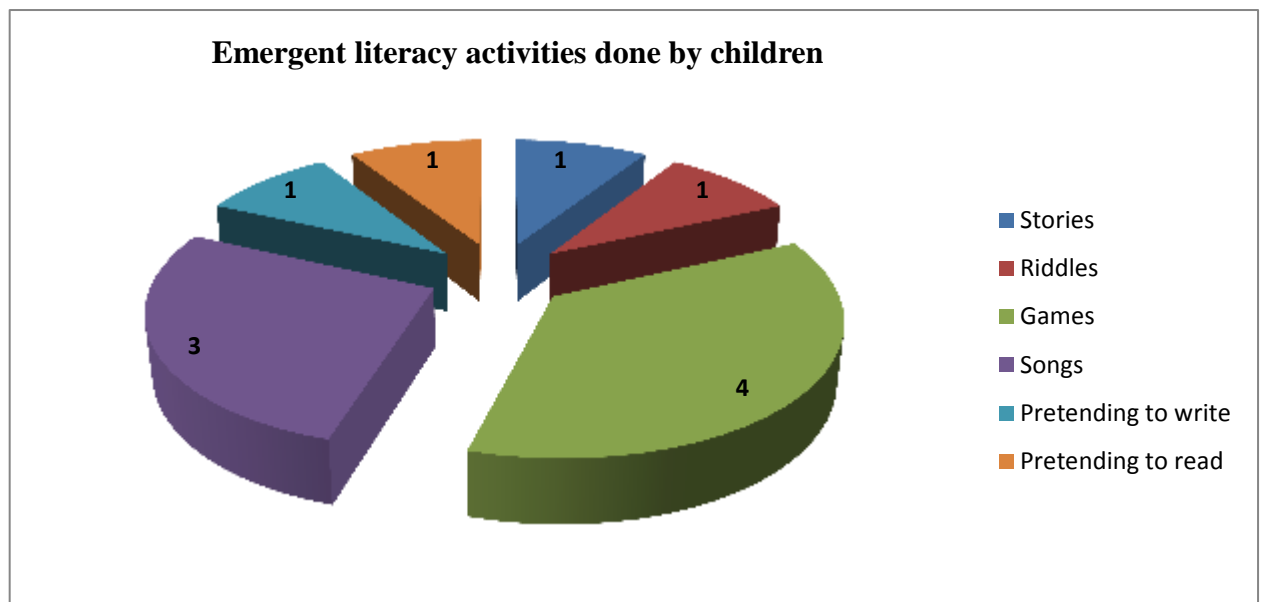
Pretending to write and read was also observed in children although it was only observed once. In one village (Village A), one child was seen trying to write the words which were written on the walls of the house. The words on the wall were written in mud as the owners of the house had written the words in clay as some sort of decorations. The child was seen copying the words on the ground using fingers. Even though, the words written by the child were not clear, the child was unconsciously being oriented to the concept of print awareness. Further, some

children were heard using riddles. One child was heard saying, ‘*Nzubo ya mukupa umo*’ (meaning a house with one leg.) The friend right away got the meaning as he was already exposed to the meanings. I later on learnt that the riddle meant a person cannot be perfect without the help of other people.

In all, emergent literacy activities that were observed being done by children were the playing of games, singing of songs, telling of riddles and pretending to read and write. Of these, the prominent activities were playing of games and singing of songs.

#### 4.4 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH CHILDREN

The figure below (pie chart) is a summary of emergent literacy activities which most children do as revealed in focus group discussions conducted with them. The researcher asked children to mention activities that they did and she picked only those that qualified to be related with emergent literacy. A good number of children mentioned games which they played and this was followed by songs and then riddles, stories and pretending to read and write. The discussions were meaningful because the researcher only used the familiar language (Kiikaonde) which the children are very much used to. The researcher took notes of children’ discussions while they were speaking.



**Figure 5: Emergent literacy activities done by Children as revealed in focus group discussions**

As shown in figure 4, emergent literacy activities which were done by most children as revealed in the focus group discussions were playing games, songs, stories, telling riddles and pretending to read and write.

**(a) Games**

Games were mentioned as one of the emergent literacy activities that were done by children. One of the children who participated in the focus group discussion in Village A said that he had participated in a game known as ‘*Kidunu*’. He said:

*‘Ateba tukaya kisela kya Kidunu. (we play the game called Kidunune)*

*Twikalamo bavula pakukaya twabika (we are many when playing)*

*Byanyike byaluba kunyema kechi twibibikamo ne (slow runners are not involved)*

*Tuteya na kifumpa kyotulenga (we play using local ball)*

*Umo ukukwata pameso bakwenu bafyama ( one covers your face while others hide)*

*Babwela bakulekako pa meso (they let your face and you need to trace them)*

*Tupenda mino twabijika amba kidunune (tupenda mino twabijika amba kidunune)*

*Inge waluba kupenda ke bakubikapo ne (you are not allowed if you cannot count)*

*Pano wapantamo mu kifumpa (then you kick the ball)*

*Wakakeba ne bakwenu kobafyama (you go and find your friends where they are hiding)*

*Bakwita amba kileya inge kechi wibasolola ne (you are called a fool if you do not trace them)*

Another child mentioned in one of the focus group discussions said that she and her friends participated in a game known as ‘*kiyenga*’. She mentioned that the game was played even by school going children. In this game, the aspect of emergent literacy was seen in the counting of stones. Kiyenga as a game helps stimulate the vision-

motor integration which is a very key skill in writing and also improves the literacy skills of counting. She said:

*'Ateba babakazhi twatemwa kukaya kiyenga (as girls we like playing kiyenga)*

*Tupoya ka kiimbo kaselebala (we dig a shallow hole)*

*Tubikamo baana twatucheche mu kakiimbo (we put small children in a hole)*

*Inabo yetuteyelako (we use the bigger stone called mother to play)*

*Tulupula mabwe pangye ne kubwezha mukachi (we scoup stones in and out)*

*Tubala mabwe pa kutwezha (we count stones when we are playing)*

*Kafwako kuponesha inabo pakuteya ne (no dropping of the bigger stone)*

*Inge waluba kupenda kechi uteyako ne (you cannot play if you do not know how to count)*

*Inge wakankalwa bakufumyako (you are removed if you fail)*

Another game which was revealed by the children during the focus group discussion was *'nkwaampa'*. This game involves counting which should correlate with the movement of legs. One of the girls who participated in the focus group discussion held at Village D said:

*'Tukaya nkwaampa inge tuji buunke (we play nkwaampa when we are alone)*

*Twikala basatu pa kukaya nkwaampa (we are always three when playing)*

*Babiji bakwaampa umo na kutoloka (two skip and one jumps)*

*Ukena kutoloka wimba ne kupenda (the one jumping also sings)*

*Pa kupwisha unyanta pantambo (when you are done you step on the rope)*

It can be concluded that the games which children mentioned during the focus group discussions contribute to the development of literacy. Most of the games mentioned involved counting which was developing the skill of emergent numeracy.

## **(b) Songs**

Another emergent literacy activity which children revealed during focus group discussions were songs. Some children who participated in the focus group discussions mentioned that songs were sometimes sang when narrating certain stories and also involved activities such as jumping. One child in one focus group discussion conducted in Village E said:

*Ateba twayuka twimba ne nyimbo (we sing the songs)*

*Twimba ya kukaya ne ya Lesa (we sing game songs)*

*Ikwabo ya mutushimi (we also sing story songs)*

*Ikwabo ya Lesa (twimba ne nyimbo ya Lesa)*

*Pakukaya tutolauka namukupa umo (we jump on one leg when playing)*

*Inge wabiika kuulu panshi bakufumyamo (when you put the leg down you fail)*

Another child in one of the focus group discussion also said singing is one activity that was done especially during play time. Describing the song that was famous among young children in the area, she said:

*'Lwimbo mukwabo ye kwimba ke kitoombwe toombwe (we also sing this song...)*

*Twikala bavula pa kwimbwa (we are usually many when singing)*

*Twivwanga babalume ne babakazhi ( we mix as boys and girls)*

*Tulenga kizhingu pa kwimba (we make a circle when singing)*

*Twikwata ne kumaboko pa kwimba (we hold hands when singing)*

*Pakwimba tuzhokoloka (we go round when singing)*

*Inge wachiba bakubika mukizhingu (you sit inside when you break the chain)*

The songs which these children stated were very cardinal to the development of emergent literacy. The rhymes and alliteration in the songs contribute to reading both by increasing sensitivity to phonemic differences and also prepare a child to recognize the similar patterns of words that rhyme.

**(c) Riddles**

Another emergent literacy activity done by children which was revealed during focus group discussions were riddles. When riddles are asked, listeners tend to give themselves chance to speak. Further, critical thinking is required for one to give the correct feedback. In describing this particular emergent literacy activity, one child said:

*'Ateba tuba ne bichomeko ( we also do riddles)*

*Twambila bakwetu mba choo ( can we ask)*

*Bakwetu amba chiika ( they respond and say let it come )*

*Twivwanga babalume ne babakazhi (we mix as boys and girls)*

*Twikala mubipanyi bibiji (we are grouped in two groups)*

*Twipuzha mepuzho (we ask them questions)*

*Inge mwakankalwa kukumbula bemupa ziilo (you get a ziilo when you fail)*

*Twipimpula pa kukaya bichomeko (we exchange turns later)*

**(d) Pretending to read and write**

The other emergent literacy activities that were done by children in focus group discussions were pretending to read and write. Some children mentioned that they wanted to write on the walls of houses because they did not have books and they were quick to mention that their parents discouraged them. One child mentioned that he wanted to imitate the handwriting of his brother who went to school by writing on the mud wall of the house.

She said

*: 'Ateba tukeba kuunemba. Pano kechi betupotelapo bya kunembelakopo ne. Tunemba na mashaanga nangwa twanembatu paanshi (We Want to write, but are not bought what to use. So we use charcoal on the walls and we write on the soil with fingers or sticks. )*

One child who was a participant in the focus group discussion mentioned that her parents sometimes read books for her. She further stated that after the parents read for her, she sometimes attempted to read the same book but it was difficult.

From the findings from observations and focus group discussions, the emergent literacy activities which were done by children were games, songs, riddles and pretending to read and write.

#### **4.5 EMERGENT LITERACY PRACTICES RELATED TO CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL**

The fourth question sought to determine the emergent literacy practices related to conventional school. To answer this question, observations were done to determine which of the practices were related to conventional school. Findings from the observations were transcribed and presented in verbatim. Some of the literacy practices that were observed to be related to conventional literacy are pretending to read and write, singing and games.

##### **(a) Pretending to read and write**

It was observed by the researcher that literacy practices done by children such as pretending to read and write were greatly related to conventional literacy. It was observed that some of the children in these villages were pretending to write and draw on the ground. When children get older and are ready for school, emergent literacy is observable in them through demonstrations. Just as it was observed in this community, some of the children were writing number models and scribbling some things close to figures such as 0,3,2,m, u,t and many others. This literacy practice is related to conventional literacy because it prepares the child to know about numbers before starting normal school.

It was also observed by the researcher that there were a few children who were pretending to read. Some of the children were pretending to read labels and signs on shops even if they did not fully know how to read. This literacy practice observed among a few children is cardinal because as they attempted to read, they were unconsciously becoming aware that words are read from left to right. This knowledge is very important to a child who is starting school.

**(b) Singing of songs**

Another emergent literacy activity that was considered to relate to conventional literacy is the singing of songs by the children. It was observed that as children sang songs during play, they unconsciously started recognizing the sounds which rhymed. Even if they did not recognize that, the knowledge they had acquired unconsciously was going to become important when they began formal school.

**(c) Games**

Some games such as '*Kidunu*' and '*kiyenga*' did relate to conventional school. Through observations, it was revealed that the games mentioned above involved an aspect of counting which are strongly related to conventional school. By continuously participating in these games, children in these communities were mastering the art of counting even before they started school. By listening to older peers, children were getting better at counting.

**(d) Story telling**

One emergent literacy practice which was observed in children and is related to conventional school is story telling. As children were playing in the community, some of them were telling stories they had heard from their parents. By retelling the stories they had heard from their parents, these children were unconsciously building both speaking and listening skills. Macro skills such as speaking and listening are related to Conventional School especially in comprehension.

**4.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In this chapter findings regarding forms of emergent literacy that children are exposed to by parents and headmen through oral language such as story telling, games and riddles have been presented. Furthermore, household and community environmental print that support the development of emergent literacy such as labeled plastic bags, labeled sacks, church sign posts, political posters and village sign posts have been presented. The chapter has also presented emergent literacy that are mostly done by children and are related to conventional school such as games, songs, stories, riddles, pretend writing and pretend reading have been presented. The next chapter provides the discussions of the research findings.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.0 OVERVIEW**

The chapter discusses the findings on the emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in selected rural households of Dengwe area. The discussion was guided by the research objectives which were:

- i. To establish the form of emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in the rural households of Dengwe, Kasempa.
- ii. To explore the household and community environmental print that supports the development of emergent literacy.
- iii. To ascertain which emergent literacy activities were done by most children in these rural households.
- iv. To determine emergent literacy practices that relate to conventional school.

### **5.1 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY SUPPORT THAT CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS**

The study revealed that children in rural households of Dengwe, Kasempa, were exposed to emergent literacy support in form of storytelling, to writing, being read to by parents, being helped to play games and telling riddles.

Regarding storytelling, it was revealed in the study that parents and guardians in Dengwe area would narrate stories in the evenings. The stories had a moral aspect and were aimed at teaching children to refrain from vices such as fighting, stealing and jealousy. The children were also retelling the same stories heard from their parents to friends. Since children were able to retell the stories they heard from their parents to friends, it means that they had developed the skill of listening and speaking. The findings of the study are in line with Gunn et al (1994) who states that when preschool children are exposed to oral language, they develop the skills in listening comprehension and vocabulary which they also find when they get to conventional school. Since most parents were narrating stories to their children, the implication is that these children were going to start school with well-developed listening and speaking skills before they entered school.

The study also found that there were a few parents who were reading to their children in these households. This may be because most of them were illiterate while others did not

know the value of reading for their children. Reading to children is important because it creates a desire in them to be able to read and write when they start formal school. Further, it is through reading for children that helps them to develop phonemic awareness. The implication of this finding is that most children in Dengwe area were not going to develop quickly in phonemic awareness. The results of this investigation also contracts Morrow et al (1990 *op cit*) who states that language and social interaction between a parent (order sibling) and a child during shared experiences may help develop language skills and familiarise the child with conventions of print. It is through shared reading that children familiarize themselves to conventional print. Further, Metsala & Valley (1998 *op cit*) stresses that those children who have a rich language environment through input or book reading at home are expected to develop vocabulary which in turn stimulates growth in phonological awareness.

A few children in this community were seen pretending to read and write. However, most of them revealed that their parents were against the idea and that if parents found them writing on walls, negative remarks were passed on them. Some children mentioned that since they did not have books, they would scribble whatever they wanted to write on the ground. The behaviour of these children is encouraging. This is because just mere attempt of writing on the ground was going to help children understand the concept of print. The action of the children is supported by Echol, West, Stanorich & Zehr (1996 *op cit*) who stated that exposing children to print has a substantial effect on the development of reading skills at the time when children begin to read at formal school. Bush (1995 *op cit*) also states that children who pretend to write and have access to a print environment learn to read and write easily than those that do not have access.

Most of the parents allowed their children to play games. It was revealed in the study that children in Dengwe area play games such as 'Kiyenga,' 'Kidunu' and 'Nkwampa'. Most of the games which the children took part in had some aspect of counting thus supported emergent numeracy. The participation of children in these games has some implications. One of them being that as children participated in these games; they were unconsciously acquiring numeracy skills before starting school. The findings of this study are supported by Woods (2009 *op cit*) who states that when children are having fun as they participate in games, they are at the most receptive in refining their fundamental motor skills and also establish behaviours which are building foundations of literacy. Further, Santronk (1988 *op cit*) also states that if little children are engaged in play, they will practice their

competences and acquire skills in a more relaxed manner. Further, the findings of our study tie with that of Matafwali and Munsaka (2011 *op cit*) who confirmed that local traditional games such as Kiyenga which children are familiar with can be useful in the transmission of knowledge and literacy skills.

This shows that children in rural households of Dengwe, Kasempa were exposed to some emergent literacy support. The forms of emergent literacy support that these children were exposed to are critical to the development of literacy.

## **5.2 HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT THAT SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY.**

It was revealed in the study that labelled food containers, labelled plastic bags, labelled plastic containers, school sign posts, church sign posts and shop sign posts were some of the household and community environmental print that supported the development of literacy.

Food containers and plastic bags in some households visited were labelled. The labels on these containers and plastic bags enabled people to know the contents of the containers even though it was not always that the labels depicted the exact content in the containers. Scholars such as Kassow (2006) defines environmental prints as those prints that surround the children in their daily lives and he mentions that household and environmental print enhance emergent literacy. The presence of household prints in the rural households is in line with Bush (1995) who accepts that children who have access to print environment learn to read more easily than those that do not have access. The implication of this finding is that since children in Dengwe households were exposed to both household and environmental print, they were going to know how to read easily.

It is also worth mentioning that the presence of environmental print in any given community assists children to notice what written language looks like and how it is used in everyday life. What was observed in this study was that Dengwe area had a number of environmental prints such as church posters, school posters and farm sign posts. It was however, not established whether parents were helping the children to read such print as Nutbrown (2005 *op cit*) mentions that print can only lead to the development of emergent literacy if parents participate in scaffolding their children. However, it was necessary for the children to keep familiarising with these prints even when they could not read them. The implication is that children will be able to associate the writings of

the environmental print to conventional ones when they are in formal school. Therefore, even though the community, where the study was conducted had both household and environmental print, as long as parents did not assist their children to derive meaning from such, they served no purpose. As Horner (2005 *op cit*) states that the identification of environmental print does not involve conventional reading but rather, the interactions between the child and the knowledgeable persons around her/him.

It was observed in the study that some of the children were trying to copy some of the writings written on walls. This was good behaviour and is in line with Lonigan & Shamahan (2004 *op cit*) who states that extending children attention to environmental print is important as it assists them to analyse words into small units of sounds and link them to words.

### **5.3 FORMS OF EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES DONE BY MOST CHILDREN**

It was revealed in the study that the forms of emergent literacy activities done by most children were games, singing of songs, telling riddles and pretending to read and write. The forms of emergent literacy activities that were done by children in Dengwe were quite adequate to promote the development of literacy.

The presence of play activities such as games is very critical in the development of literacy. It was revealed in the study that children participated in games such as ‘Kidunu’ and ‘Kiyenga’. By playing such games, learners were unconsciously building up the skill of emergent numeracy. What was found in this study agrees with Bruce-Heath (1983 *op cit*) who states that play is cardinal in children’s lives as it allows them to internalize new ideas and skills and then integrate them with other knowledge which they begin to use in their daily lives. It was also found that while children were playing games, they were also singing. This practice is in agreement with Whitehurst, et al (1998 *op cit*) who states that games that include songs are necessary as they foster the development of literacy skills through provision of opportunities that allow the development of listening & speaking skills which later enhances the development of vocabulary and their phonological awareness.

It was also revealed in the study that some children were seen writing on the floor. Young children really need to be encouraged to acquire the skill of writing because it assists them to read and write. It is also believed that through the active engagement with

books and writing opportunities, children reconstruct their knowledge. What was found in the study was that a few learners wrote on the ground and the implication of this finding is that the many children who did not take part in this literacy activity were going to start school without knowing the concept of print.

There were also a few pupils who were pretending to read. Pretending to read is very important to children because it enhances the development of literacy. As the children attempt to read, they become aware of the fact that one reads a book from left to right. What was found in the study is in agreement with Foldaway (1975 *op cit*) who explains that pretending to read fosters children's reading by themselves as they concentrate on re-telling the story by means of pictures. Pretending to read leads children to what Clay (1975 *op cit*) called mock writing or scribbling. Further, children who have less experience with reading prior to formal school tend to develop at a slower pace.

#### **5.4 EMERGENT LITERACY ACTIVITIES THAT RELATE TO CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL**

It was observed in the study that literacy activities such as pretending to read and write, writing on the ground, singing, stories and playing games were related to conventional literacy.

It was revealed in the study that some children in Dengwe community were involved in activities such as pretending to write what they had seen on the ground and walls. The activity of writing on the ground or wall is related to the writing skills in conventional schools. This assertion is supported by Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998 *op cit*) who believes that if children are exposed to pretend reading, scribbling or writing and to oral language in their home by their parents or older sibling in early age, they may develop and get exposed to social contexts in which literacy is an important phenomenon when they are in formal school. What was also found was that some parents were not building upon these literacy activities. One of the Children who participated in a focus group discussion said that his parents were annoyed when they found him scribbling something on the walls. Parents instead should build a strong literacy environment by allowing children to scribble what they see in the environment since this is what they will meet when they enter conventional school.

The study also revealed other literacy activities that relate to conventional school such as story telling which enhance the skill of logical sequencing. It is evident that when

listening to their parents' stories children begin to realise that many tales have common orders of presentation from starting to end parts. This also enable the children realise that there is the manner in which stories start which is uniform too. For instance, 'Once upon a time...' is used in most cases as the opening style of African and other racial tales. Even among the Kaondes say 'Kala kene...' the endings also have a common way such as "Here is where it ends..." "Popapela kashimi..." In this way a relationship can be deciphered from these tales when children enter formal school and that teachers can take the same course during a lesson on listening and speaking or oral work. This implies that the skill acquired by children tend to be applied by the children when their teacher starts and ends a lesson of that nature. It is this knowledge that the children will use to ensure that they listen attentively to what the teacher delivers in the lesson stage by stage from start to the end (St Amour 2003) In view of the above, Children in this community were telling stories to each other

Some of the stories the children were telling their friends were first heard from their parents. This is in line with (Van Kleeck, 2010, *op cit*) who approved that children who receive most attention in story telling through adult- child interaction emerge good in their phonemic and metalinguistic awareness and vocabulary growth. In this case, it should be mentioned that stories and other narratives relate to listening and speaking skills taught in schools. Children who had opportunities to listen to stories tend to have an advantage when they get into formal education in that they become better and faster learners compared to their friends who do not have such chances. This is in agreement with Hoff- Ginsberg, (1991 *op cit*) who also states that children's home language and literacy environment before beginning formal school was strongly associated with their literacy skills. In this case children's vocabulary and narrative production are predicted by the child's exposure to literacy experiences such as story telling at home. Hence, emergent literacy skills can be used by learners to learn better when they get into formal schools especially at Grade 1.

The study also revealed that games played by children at home before formal school have a bearing on learning better. According to the findings of this study, it was revealed that children who were engaged in various traditional games before getting into formal schooling, for example, games such as "Kiyenga" which required knowledge of 'Nsolo, helped children to know that the movement was always from left to right. This is the same application used to read and write when children are in formal school. In this way

children acquire these skills faster because of the background from the participation in traditional games at home before school. This is justified by (Wood, 2009, *op cit*) when he stated that games enhance high levels of thinking skills, create use of play materials, imaginative and divergent thinking and problem – solving capabilities which lead to increasing complex forms of knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in the cognitive and social domains. This also refines the fundamental motor skills, and establishes the perceptual – motor behaviours which are building foundations on the road to literacy. Other than that, it is also worth mentioning that games and play have rules that can be related to conventional school. The study also revealed that most of the children who were participating in one game or the other, learnt how to sequence logically before entering into formal school. In this case children also apply the same or similar rules in the lessons delivered by their teachers. The implication of this is that children would know that without such rules confusions may arise thereby spoiling the work in an activity which they get involved in during school time. As children played games with peers, they unconsciously acquired numeracy skills such as counting. In addition, physical actions in games are related to pre- writing skills such as sitting posture which can help the child develop good handwriting.

The study further indicated that riddles helped children to become critical thinkers, a skill which applies well to science and other subjects that require synthesis things. Other than that the study also showed that children whose parents conducted riddle sessions at home became critical thinkers because riddles were like puzzles that challenged the listeners. Consequently, the children had to think very hard in order to find the correct solutions or answers. The clues used in the riddles acted like the knew information in a lesson at school on which the exercise would be based on.

Apart from the above aspects, children learnt that there are times in school when learners need to take turns to do certain things. This was clarified by (Morrow, 1989, *op cit*) who explained that riddles are important in children's lives as they facilitate the development of vocabulary which is required for the child to communicate with curiosity intake of the world. This social skill is very key due to the fact that during riddle sessions the one speaking first is given an opportunity to explain or put up the puzzle without interferences. By so doing children will get into conventional school with the skill of listening to the teacher or classmates and learning may be very easy since children would have already been familiarised to the necessary trait of taking turns.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that there was a revelation that oral languages used in rural households improve their vocabulary when they speak and listen to stories from their parents. This has an implication in the sense that, by the time children enter formal school, the children's vocabulary is said to be around or higher than (1,500) words in a particular dialect. This is in agreement with (Wells, 1986, *op cit*) when he explained that oral language is a basis of literacy learning which is a strongest predictor to the children's later achievement in reading. It is believed that certain phenomena mentioned by parents in the stories could be heard by children for the first time and thereby compelling them to ask what such are or mean. This implies that by the time the learners get into conventional school, the environment there becomes very friendly since the same common or familiar language is used at Grade 1 to 4. This is true about those countries whose languages of instructions from Grades 1 to 4 are in their familiar languages. This scenario is also true about Zambian children whose revised curriculum demands that teachers use local languages or familiar languages to impart knowledge, skills morals and values in the children at conventional school. The revised school curriculum, therefore, has direct relevance of oral language that emergent literacy would have established in children before conventional school starts. In this way the acquired vocabulary from stories told orally by parents, help children pick out familiar concepts used at formal school thereby, making learning very easy and enjoyable.

Additionally, the study also revealed that children and parents interacted at home and in their community, did a lot of activities together and this in turn made the children to value others when they got into conventional school. Anderson et al, (1996, *op cit*) agreed that socialisation of children through riddles, games and oral language enhances the child's literacy development. This implies that the socialisation that children had amongst themselves in their community helped them to freely perform certain activities together in formal schools despite the school being a new environment. The implication of their mingling in their homes and community enabled them to be active participants easily when they get into conventional school. Children who socialised at home and in their community tend to enjoy doing so even in formal school. This fosters learning better- with their new friends or classmates including the teacher. The children in a certain school catchment area may even have common songs, games, riddles and language too. This socialisation through common activities would link homes with school when children start formal education.



## **5.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE**

In this chapter the findings regarding emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in Dengwe Kasempa District were discussed. The findings did reveal that some parents in Dengwe area did narrate stories to their children and this had a moral aspect which helped the children to refrain from immoral behaviours. The finding also showed that many parents did not manage reading to their children due to their high levels of illiteracy and that had a bearing when children started formal school. Furthermore, the study revealed that labelled containers and church sign posts were some of the household and environmental print that were available and helped children to pretend to read. Besides that, the study also indicated that children spent most of their time playing games and this enhanced the development of literacy. The study also showed that some children pretended to write by scribbling in the ground while others discussed riddles which fostered their thinking and improved their vocabulary. The next chapter presents conclusions and makes recommendations.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.0 OVERVIEW**

The previous chapter discussed the findings. This chapter consists of the conclusions drawn from the research. It further makes recommendations.

### **6.1 CONCLUSIONS**

A number of conclusions were drawn from the discussions of the findings basing on the four objectives.

The first objective looked at the form of emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in Dengwe area. The study established that parents in Dengwe did narrate stories to their children. The conclusion of the finding was that, since the parents supported their children in story telling, the children were going to develop literacy skills such as listening and speaking at a very tender age even before they could get into conventional school. The study further found that a few parents did not share reading with their young ones due to high levels of illiteracy, while others did not just see the significance of shared reading. This means that, if the children are not read to, they may not develop the literacy skills as compared to those with rich language environment.

In addition, the study also revealed that children in Dengwe area pretended to read and write although their parents rebuked them harshly when they found them scribbling in the soil or on the walls. It is recommendable that such children should be encouraged to read and write because this will enhance the concept of print in them even before Grade 1. The study also discovered that parents in Dengwe did encourage the children to engage in play. Therefore, it is recommended that if play is fostered in children, they were going to develop in numeracy skills easily since the proposed games enhance the acquisition of numeracy skills and refine their visio and motor skills.

The second objective looked at exploring the emergent literacy done by most children. The study showed that games, riddles, stories, songs and pretending to read and write were done by children. The conclusion was that children should be encouraged to play various games by parents since games help children reconstruct their knowledge.

The third objective looked at household and community environmental print in Dengwe area which support the development of emergent literacy. It was discovered that labelled food containers and sign posters were available in Dengwe area. The assumption

therefore is that there is need for parents in Dengwe area to assist their children to use these household and environmental prints which in turn will help them learn to read easily when they start formal formal.

The last objective looked at emergent literacy activities related to conventional school. The research revealed that pretending to read and write, singing, story telling and playing of games were some of the activities that were related to conventional school. The conclusion was that parents should engage children in these activities as they help expose the children to the social context which is a phenomenon when they get into conventional school. The study also found out that some parents discouraged their children to scribble in the soil or on the walls. Regarding that, parents should encourage children to do these activities because this is what children would find when they begin formal school.

Apart from that, the study also indicated that activities such as stories relate to listening and speaking skills which children learn when they get into formal school. This means that parents should continue narrating these stories to their children so that they develop literacy skills even prior to formal school. The study further mentioned that the children in Dengwe area played games such as nsolo, Kidunu, Nkwampa, Kiyenga and several others. The conclusion was that parents should support their children play these games as these games may help give direction to children and also enable them understand that reading and writing is always from left to right.

Finally, the study observed that riddles were also conducted in Dengwe area. These riddles should be encouraged because they act as puzzles which stimulate critical thinking in children and help them manage subjects such as mathematics and science when they start formal school.

Literary items such as labelled food containers, labelled plastic bags, labelled clothes, church poster signs, road signs and school poster signs were also some of the household and community environmental print that supported the development of literacy. Generally these prints were readily available but parents were not effectively using them to help children benefit fully.

In fact conducting riddles with children in rural households could help them get ready for subjects that required critical thinking such as mathematics and science. Other activities such as plastering of house walls and floors did contribute to emergent literacy acquisition

by children. Children who took part in buying and selling small merchandise such as vegetables and mushrooms in rural households did in a small way acquire emergent mathematics and literacy skills that had direct relationship with these subjects found in conventional school.

It can also be concluded therefore, that although most parents in Dengwe were not supporting their children in emergent literacy, however, they provided enabling environment by allowing their children interact among siblings.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations arising from the study are based on the conclusions discussed above and are as follows:-

a. The study revealed that stories, games, reading to children, pretending to read and write, household and community prints supported the development of emergent literacy. Hence, Government through Community Development should build recreation centres where parents in Dengwe area should be encouraged to use such things with their children.

b. Since labelled food containers, plastic bags, church sign posts and school sign posts were some of the household and environmental print that supported the development of literacy, it is recommended that, the Ministry of General Education through teachers around Dengwe school should encourage parents in Dengwe area of Kasempa to make use of any print material available to enable their children develop literacy skills prior to conventional school.

c. Since only few literate parents were reading for their children, it is recommended that the Ministry of General Education through Distance Open Learning Programs (DODE) should establish adult literacy classes in Dengwe area so that parents can be taught how to read and write. By so doing, they were going to start reading for their children.

d. The study also recommends that, the Ministry of General Education reviews the Early Education Policy and Curriculum to include aspects from emergent literacy support from communities around schools

e. The Government through the Community Development, should train Community Leaders in Dengwe area on the value of using traditional stories, games and songs so that

in turn they will encourage the parents in their area to use them with their children and this will enhance the development of literacy skills at a tender age.

### **6.3 NEW KNOWLEDGE GENERATED BY THE STUDY**

The study has informed us that, there is Emergent Literacy in Dengwe area and that parents do support their children. It was evident that some of the proposed games in Dengwe such as nkwampa (skipping), kidunune (seek and hide) and mulwelwe (hopping on one leg) were unique in nature when compared to those in previous studies such as Kaunda's in Mwense in 2012.

### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES.**

**The following are possible topics for further studies:**

1. How can teachers make use of knowledge that pre-schoolers exhibit from rural households?
2. Why do children of the same age from rural households perform differently when they enter formal school?
3. What is the role of folklores in enhancing emergent literacy among children between 3 to 6 years?
4. What are the effects of using English on pre-schoolers in rural areas?
5. Is emergent literacy necessary for children before formal school?

### **6.5 SUMMARY**

The chapter discussed the four objectives of the study and these were; to establish the form of emergent literacy that children are exposed to in Dengwe households, explore which emergent literacy activity were done by most children, to ascertain household and community environmental print that support the development of emergent literacy and then determine the emergent literacy practices that relate to conventional school literacy.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Informed Consent Form

#### Dear Respondent,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your participation are explained. Finally, you are being asked to sign this form to indicate that you have agreed to participate in this exercise.

Thank you in advance.

#### *1. Description*

This exercise is an educational research; the researcher is a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a degree in Literacy and Learning. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete her programme. Thus this exercise is purely academic.

#### *2. Purpose*

The researcher wishes to establish the emergent literacy support that children are exposed to in rural households. The researcher is interested in determining the literacy activities that relate to conventional school.

#### *3. Consent*

Participating in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline or withdraw your children from participating in this exercise.

#### *4. Confidentiality*

All data collected from this research is treated with utmost confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

#### *5. Rights of Respondents*

All effort will be taken to ensure that the rights of participants are protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants (parents) are free to ask for clarification

at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

**6. Declaration of Consent**

I have read and fully understood this document. I therefore, agree to participate in this exercise.

.....

.....

Signature

Date

## **Appendix II: Consent Form for Parents /Village Headmen**

### **Self Introduction**

My name is Rose Kipepe and I work for the Ministry of General Education at The Curriculum Development Centre and currently I am a student with the University of Zambia studying Literacy and Learning. I am conducting a study on Emergent Literacy that children are exposed to in Dengwe area. I need information on your views, opinions, feelings and general attitudes regarding this. Therefore, I request you/your children to be part of the study. Any information you provide will be kept in confidentiality. I will be willing to answer any questions you may have regarding this study.

**Thank you.**

**I consent to participate in the study.**

**Signature;**.....

**Date;**.....



**Appendix III: Parents' Interview Guide and Headmen**

**The University of Zambia  
School of Education  
Department of Language and Social Science Education**

This interview guides is scheduled for parents, guardians or caregivers in the rural area. It is meant to ascertain what emergent literacy support children do receive, the activities that most children are engaged into, the community environmental print and household print and how it benefits the lives of children and also how it helps to prepare children for the formal schooling. The data that will be collected will be used for academic purposes only and confidentiality will be upheld regarding the respondent.

Name of site:..... Village: .....

Name of parent:..... Sex: {M/F}.....

Age:.....

Level of Education of the parent

.....

Date of interview .....

1. What activities do you spend your time on in this village?

.....  
.....

2. What activities do you do in the evening with the children?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. Do you try to read for your children during day time?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you see your preschool children play with books?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Do you buy any books and pencils for your children?

.....  
.....  
.....

6. What materials do your children love to read?

.....  
.....

7. Do your children read loud or silent?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you encourage your children to write?

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Are things written by your children visible?

.....  
.....

10. Are your children read for school?

.....  
.....  
.....

11. Which community environment enhance your children to read?

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Do you have schedules to help children to read and write?

.....  
.....  
.....

13. Are your children able to identify pictures in the books?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. Which books do you read to your children?

.....  
.....  
.....

15. Do you find time to see what the children read or write?

.....  
.....  
.....

16. How do you know that children understand when you teach or tell them?

.....  
.....  
.....

17. Are your children able to speak your language?

.....  
.....  
.....

18. How do your children react to the stories, riddles and songs that you teach them?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix IV: Village Observation Sheet

Village Name : \_\_\_\_\_

### Observation Component

1. List some of the household print that is supporting the development of literacy.

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

(d) \_\_\_\_\_

(e) \_\_\_\_\_

2. List community environmental print that is supporting the development of literacy.

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b). \_\_\_\_\_

(c). \_\_\_\_\_

(d). \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which emergent literacy activities are mostly done by children in these rural households.

(a). \_\_\_\_\_

(b). \_\_\_\_\_

(c). \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix V: Children’s Focus Group Discussion guide

### Focus Group Discussion Guide for Children

1. What activities do your parents or guardians engage you into during the day?  
.....  
.....
2. Which activities do you do most during the day when you are on your own?  
.....  
.....
3. Of the activities you have mentioned which ones do you get engaged into most?  
.....
4. How many are supposed to participate in this game at a time?  
.....  
.....  
.....
5. Which other activities do you do?  
.....  
.....  
.....
6. Among the activities you have mentioned which ones do you like doing most?  
.....  
.....  
.....
7. Which other activities do you do when you are alone?  
.....  
.....
8. Do your parents do any reading with you?  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. Which activities do you do in the night with your parents or guardian?

.....  
.....

10. Are there people that you imitate in reading and writing?

.....  
.....

11. Which people help you to read and write?

.....  
.....

12. Between books containing pictures and those that do not, which ones do you love reading when you are alone?

.....  
.....

13. What things do you want your parents or guardians buy for you?

.....  
.....

14. Do your parents allow you to play?

.....  
.....