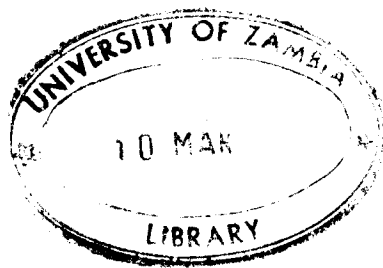


AN INVESTIGATION OF INITIATION  
CEREMONY TEACHINGS AND ATTITUDES  
OF WOMEN TOWARDS THEM THAT MAY  
CONTRIBUTE TO THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS



*WENDY KABWE KALUNDE*

NOVEMBER, 1992

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By

WENDY KABWE KALUNDE  
(88150062)

Thesis submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
degree of Bachelor of Arts (DEMOGRAPHY).

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DICATION

To my beloved mother and sister, Sheila, without whose love, care and support I would not have reached this level of academic excellence.

I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH!

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**GOD BLESS YOU ALL!**

## ABSTRACT

The research looks at the teachings given in initiation ceremonies and attitudes of women towards them that may contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

A sample of 50 resident under-graduate University of Zambia students were picked for this study using systematic random sampling. The sample comprised female students only from all years of study. their mean age was 22 years. Of these, 68% said they had knowledge about the teachings given in initiation ceremonies.

The study reveals that there are a lot of teachings concerning sex practice and behaviour given to novices in these ceremonies. It was found that half of the respondents were neither for or against these teachings. Some of the teachings were seen as channels through which attitudes influencing risk behaviour <sup>may be</sup> born could enhance the spread of HIV/AIDS. The conclusion therefore was that some teachings given on sex which may result in regrettable consequences should be revised.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a disease that seems to be a major threat to the existence of humanity at present. With no cure or vaccine yet available the situation may be worse.

In Africa, "Sub-Saharan Africa has been the hardest hit region with seven million adults and children infected since the start of the pandemic" (W.H.O, 1988:1). In this region, the virus is spread mainly through homosexual contact.

Africa's diverse cultures, religious languages and socio-economic conditions shape the people's attitudes, beliefs and these may have an influence in the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which cause AIDS. Highlighting some of these factors that may be posing a danger to the society will be helpful in the control and prevention of the disease.

Zambia, the country under study has one of the fastest growing populations in the world with an annual growth rate of 3.5 percent. It's population is estimated to be 7.8 million (C.S.O., 1990). The country is divided into nine provinces each with different ethnic groupings. The population of the capital city, Lusaka, has been drawn from the nine provinces, such that there has been a lot of interaction among people of different tribes. Western education and culture coupled with improved infrastructure have all contributed to the steady breakdown of indigenous traditional practices, beliefs and values. There are, however, some traditional teachings and practices in women's ceremonies (i.e. initiation and marriage rites) which continue to influence the urban society. For instance, some teachings in initiation rites such as male dominance in sexual matters are still being observed.

Some of these may prove to have serious repercussions on the population that adhere to them, especially with the advent of HIV/AIDS in Zambia.

## 1.2 IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Most Zambian tribes, if not all, observe various rituals concerning child-birth, abortion, puberty, marriage and death. Some of the practices inherent in these rituals which involve sex activities can facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS infection. Very little is known by researchers about the kind of information passed on to women during these ceremonies or how knowledge of such practices is acquired in social realities. Teachings on gender roles in many cases encourage both male dominance and female subservience which may entail condoning and perpetuating of certain risk sexual behaviour in our society.

The study was therefore directed towards determining the sources and type of information given to women in initiation ceremonies. In addition, the researcher wanted to find out the attitudes of women towards these teachings.

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

### General Objective

The study was aimed at investigating and documenting information passed on to women in initiation ceremonies concerning sex practice and behaviour, as well as investigating their attitudes towards these teachings.

### Specific Objectives

1. To determine what women are taught in initiation ceremonies on sex-practice and behaviour.
2. To investigate the attitudes of women towards initiation ceremony teachings.
3. To determine if teachings in initiation ceremonies concerning sex-practice and behaviour could contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.
4. To determine if attitudes of women towards sex would contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

### JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The problem of AIDS needs to be extensively addressed, hence the main area of focus in the fight against AIDS should be on its prevention and control. In Zambia, like other sub-Saharan countries, it spreads mainly through heterosexual contact thus affecting both men and women including children (Kapita et al, 1991:1). The Southern African Economist observes that since AIDS was first diagnosed in Zambia in 1985, it has spread at a frightening rate. As in most African countries, the HIV infection is prevalent among the 15-49 age-group. Out of a population of eight million, some 250,000 are currently HIV carriers with the infection rates in cities reported to be 20 percent". (1992:19).

It is hoped that the information gathered in this study, will be used as a data base to help change some of the harmful teachings/instructions female and male initiators give their novices. The findings of the study could be incorporated into curriculum of women initiators, non-governmental Organizations (NGO's) and Government agencies in various fora.

The study also hopes to provide health educators, AIDS counsellors and all those involved in the fight against AIDS, with information that would help them advise people on sex practice and behaviour that may enhance the risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 1 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Initiation Ceremonies - These are puberty rites performed for girls who have reached menarche. These girls are usually between the ages 12-15 years.

Ritual Cleansing - Traditional practice of cleansing a widow/widower through sexual contact with a male/female relative of the deceased spouse.

Dry-Sex Practice - Drying of the vagina to remove normal vagina secretions before or during sex.

Risk Behaviour - In terms of sexual behaviour, this is the risk of HIV infection which is increased by the number of sexual partners a person has and by the degree of risk each of them carries.

Women Initiators/Instructors - Women that teach other women and girls traditional values and norms in women's ceremonies.

Attitudes - Refer to one's views or feelings towards teachings and conceptions about sex-practice and behaviour which are put forward by society in traditional ceremonies.

Ethnicity - Refers to tribe one belongs to.

### CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Chisungu - Local name used to refer to initiation ceremonies among the Bembas of Northern Province.

Cimbusa - Women initiators/instructors as known among the Bembas.

ombola - Local name used to refer to woman initiator/instructor by the Luvalas of Northern Zambia.

ali - This is the girl who is receiving instructions from the Chilombola.

rice - Refer to the girl being instructed in the initiation ceremony.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Due in part to the sensitive nature of the topic, few studies have been focussed on sexual practices, beliefs and behaviour in Africa as a whole. Therefore, documented literature is limited.

Initiation rites at puberty are observed everywhere in Zambia. The extended family institution plays an important role in these rituals. These ceremonies are in many cases quite elaborate in teaching as well as ritual performance. For many tribes, initiation and marriage rituals are an essentially element of culture as they to some extent preserve the existence of clans. "Culture is defined as, all learned behaviour which is socially acquired, that is, the material traits which are passed on from one generation to another." (Nida, 1963:23).

With the advent of AIDS, elements of culture must be revised. Ritual cleansing of widows and widowers, for instance, a practice commonly observed by the Tonga of Southern Province carries a risk of spreading HIV. Furthermore, some instructions given to girls and young women in initiation ceremonies may have to be done away with as they may be enhancing risky behaviour.

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Note: All terms underlined in this section have been defined on page 4. (Conceptual definitions)

In many tribes, first exposure to intercourse is specifically related to the girls puberty rituals, where instructions pertaining to sexual techniques are given. As will be elaborated later young women and girls are instructed on how to perform sex, how to please a man sexually, especially through the use of traditional medicines, to be submissive to the husband even in matters to do with sex and so on.

Anita Spring (1976) observes that among the Luvala of North-Western Province, the transition to adult sexuality occurs during girls puberty rituals. "During the seclusion lasting two months to two years, instruction is given in dancing, medicinal and vital techniques." This late phase of the puberty rituals is concerned with inculcating the proper attitude and procedures for being a woman and mother. (Spring, 1976: 123,124). It appears that no practical advice on child-bearing or child-rearing is transmitted, nor are instructions given concerning domestic matters. The woman initiator or Chilombola as locally known, has numerous tasks of which is "to make the mwali a sexually viable woman both ritually and medicinally. During these private phases, the young woman is personally introduced by the instructress for the first time in her life to women's therapeutic techniques for sexual enchantment, reproduction and ailments. The chilombola teaches the mwali sexual techniques and must satisfy herself that her pupil will perform adequately." (Spring, 1976:125). The author further explains that the novice is expected to have sex after this, whether married or single as this is considered part of the ritual and essential for her subsequent fertility.

Research carried out at the University Teaching Hospital (U.T.H.) in Lusaka has shown that the traditional medicines that the Luvala and other tribes use to ensure dryness during sex in order to enhance sexual pleasure "though beneficial to the user, may be poisonous because of their acidity, irritating and erosive effect on vagina mucosa and their bacterial content" (Nyirenda, 1991:13).

Read (1976) observed that among the Ngoni of Eastern Province, elements in age-set systems were, the private nature of puberty ritual and the absence of 'initiation schools'. "Ngoni girls in contrast to their brothers, as they showed signs of approaching puberty were guarded

structed further in correct behaviours..... There were clearly defined aims in the care after puberty, including instruction in personal hygiene and pre-marital sexual relations" (Read, 1956: 149).

In contrast to the Luvales who expected a girl to engage in sexual relations after the puberty rituals, whether she was married or not, a Ngoni girl was constantly examined to see if she was still a virgin after puberty as this was a requirement for marriage. This is definitely a common practice among the Ngoni's such that if it is strictly adhered to could have an impact on the health of marriage pregnancies and even in the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's). It must therefore be noted that not all instructions are negative.

In pre-European days, between the private puberty ritual and her marriage, the Ngoni girl went through pre-marriage rite. The Ngoni made a practice of referring to genital organs and sexual intercourse in veiled language and during these ceremonies, girls are given instruction concerning sex by older women. (Read, 1956:149). Details of teachings given to the girls, however, are not documented.

The Chewa, who also emerge from the Eastern part of Zambia, at the maturity ceremony teach the young girls how to behave in every way, i.e. towards elders, their husbands to be, social behaviour and so on. The young girls who are initiated in groups or individually, are included and during this time are visited by elderly women and mature girls who instruct them on how to carry out domestic chores and caring for the relatives of the husbands to be. The instructions are normally taught in song and dance. Most of Chewa dances which are performed by girls and women only emphasize a body language that speaks of sexuality. Teachings given to the novices include "how to enjoy sexual encounters and sexual intercourse. Even if sexual intercourse is forbidden for the unmarried girl, young people come together from an early age and intimate relations are considered part of life for the young. (Skjonsberg, 1989:130).



Among the Bemba speaking people of Northern Province before a girl marries she goes through rites somewhat similar to those observed by the Ashanti of Ghana. Puberty rites, sungu, are a mobility ceremony performed for one or two or three girls at a time. They are preceded by a short puberty ceremony the purpose of which is to relight the fire in the girl, which her menstruation blood has cooled down. During this ceremony, "the girls learn a secret language or secret terms and also the secret language of marriage". (Richards, 1932:52).

The nachimbusa (woman initiator) is the main organizer of the ceremony. She is usually aided by other respected elderly members of the society in leading songs and dances. The instructions given to the novice(s) are concentrated on removing fears that surround married life. The Bembas express open pleasure in sex relations.

The rites observed in the various tribes have a number of effects on tribal instructions and structures. they keep alive and hand down the traditions of the tribes.

In all the tribes mentioned previously and in many other tribes in Zambia there are virtually no initiation rites for boys. Fathers and other older men in society are expected to tell the boys in many instances those preparing for marriage, about the role as men in the home and in sex relations. The role that is spelt out to them is that of being in charge or having an upper hand in all affairs. This type of instruction has various consequences. This will be elaborated later on in the discussion.

Anthropological studies carried out among the Ambo show that girls are taught important principles on sexual behaviour during maturation rites. "They are concerned with the behaviour of a married woman, especially towards her husband" (Stefansiszyn, 1964:99). Tonga and Ambo people have been observed to behave similarly in sexual matters, until puberty and married. It is interesting to note that Tonga youths are hardly given any instructions at puberty. Initiation ceremonies do not exist among them.

From the on-going discussion, it is observed that there are many important issues that raised in these ceremonies which are reflected in the way sexual relationships or matters concerning sex practice are handled in society at large. In other words, bana chimbusa termine or influence the sexual behavioural patterns of the society. It is with this view in mind that in May, 1992 the Society for Woman and AIDS in Zambia (SWAZ) organized a workshop with bana chimbusa where the problem of 'AIDS versus culture' was discussed. At this workshop, "traditional child-birth, ritual cleansing, initiation ceremonies, washing of dead bodies and looking after AIDS patients" were recognized as problem areas. (Mining Mirror, 1992: ). The proceedings of this workshop are still being compiled, however, secondary sources reveal that some aspects about instructions given to novices include: 'dry-sex practice'; never say no when a man asks for sex unless one is menstruating; the use of medicinal herbs to enhance sexual pleasure; the use of herbs as 'love potion'; personal hygiene; politeness and hard work.

Like many parts of Africa, the "reality of sexual relations in Zambia is that in any heterosexual relationship, custom and tradition dictate that the male is the dominant partner ..... The sexual subordination of women is not confined to the bedroom, but it is institutionalized in the wider society" (Longwe et al, 1990:3).

Sylvia Mudenda (1992) concluded that "female youths appear to have less information about the AIDS virus, how it is transmitted and how it can be prevented". Furthermore, the survey also revealed a difference in attitudes about sex for boys and girls, with more respondents saying it was okay for boys to have pre-marital sex than girls, because males are expected to be more sexually active than females. This kind of situation has various implications on the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Finally, volumes of traditional rites observed, may be written about the Zambian people. However, the common element in these ceremonies is that instructions pertaining to sex are given at initiation or marriage rites. Unfortunately this information is not adequately documented.

### Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated.

#### First Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)

Mothers' level of education may influence their views on initiation ceremonies.

#### Second Hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>)

Ethnicity may influence the teachings in initiation ceremonies.

#### Third Hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>)

The type of school one attended may have an influence on their attitude towards sex.

#### Fourth Hypothesis (H<sub>4</sub>)

Religious inclination may be having an influence on attitudes towards initiation ceremony teachings.

#### Fifth Hypothesis (H<sub>5</sub>)

One's background may influence one's attitude towards initiation ceremony teachings.

CHAPTER THREEMETHODOLOGYObjective of Study

The study was an explorative one whose objectives were to investigate instructions given women's traditional ceremonies (puberty rituals); attitudes of selected women towards these teachings (this includes novices and those that are not) and whether or not they may contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

SAMPLEStudy population and characteristics

The population consisted of female students from the University of Zambia, Great East Road campus. These students were selected regardless of year of study and the school they belong to. The sample consisted of women from this population ranging from ages 19-28 years with the modal age being 22 years. This particular group was selected because they are likely to have been exposed to some traditional teachings and practices on sex.

Sample size and Selection

Fifty respondents were selected from the University of Zambia students listing which was used as a sampling frame. The respondents were selected using systematic random sampling. In this method, every nineteenth student was selected from a population of 980 female students.

$N$  = total number of female student (980)

$n$  = total number of required respondents (50)

To arrive at a systematic way of picking the respondents you divide the number of required respondents ( $n$ ) into the total population ( $N$ ).

$$\frac{N}{n} = \frac{980}{50} = 19.6$$

### Collection Techniques

One method of collecting data was used. In this method, a scheduled questionnaire comprising both closed and open-ended questions was administered to the selected students in their respective halls of residence. Upon collection the questionnaires were then checked for reliability, validity and consistency of the responses. Where information was incomplete or appeared inaccurate, follow-up was made in which the respondent was asked to complete it. This ensured completeness. All the questionnaires were collected and as such there were no missing cases.

### MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

#### TEACHINGS IN INITIATION CEREMONIES

In order to obtain information on the teachings given in initiation ceremonies the respondents were asked if they had knowledge about the teachings given and if they did, they were asked to list them. Questions 15 and 16 were asked to this end.

Q15 : Do you have any idea as to what is taught during initiation ceremonies?

Q16 : If answer to Q15 is Yes, what sort of teachings are given?

To probe further especially on the subject concerning sex, respondents were asked the following questions:

Q17 : Do you know if there are any teachings about the opposite sex?

Q18 : If answer to Q17 is Yes, what sort of teachings are given as regards the opposite sex?

### ATTITUDES

In terms of attitudes, respondents were asked to give their parents/guardian's views on teachings in initiation ceremonies. Variables such as education level of mother, religious inclination of both mother and respondent, education background of the respondent were seen as factors that could contribute to the attitudes of respondents towards initiation ceremony teachings. Various questions were asked to yield the above mentioned information.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme, at the University of Zambia Computer Centre. The first part of the analysis consisted of frequencies and percentages which were used to give a general overview of the study. The second part of analysis consisted of cross tabulations of variables found in hypothesis to see if there was any relationship between them and in what direction it is.

Correlation coefficients are of two properties of a relationship: the magnitude and direction. The magnitude indicates degree to which variables vary, while coefficients indicate direction of the variables, as shown below:

- +1.0 (perfect positive correlation)
- 0.0 (no correlation)
- 1.0 (perfect negative correlation)

The level of significance for acceptance of the hypotheses being tested was set at  $<0.05$ .

To test the research hypotheses, correlation coefficients were calculated for the various relationships in  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$ ,  $H_4$  and  $H_5$ .

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In this section, the results that were found are reported. Of the 50 respondents, it was discovered that 36% (18) belonged to the other tribes that were not mentioned in the questionnaire such as Bisa, Lala, Chewa and Lungu.

It was interesting to note that to the question of whether they would follow the traditional customs, 50% (25) of the respondents stated that they had a neutral view while 4% (2) said they would strongly follow them.

To the question on whether the students discussed sex with friends 62% (31) said they did, 32% (16) said they did not, while 6% (3) did not state whether or not they discussed sex with friends. When asked about what their mother's/guardian's views were about initiation ceremonies, 36% (18) respondents felt their mothers/guardians were supportive, 34% (17) felt they were neutral while 16% (8) felt they were strongly opposed to the idea of initiation ceremonies.

ADHERENCE TO TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS

Asked whether they would follow the teachings given, of the 50 respondents. It was interesting to note that 50% (25) they were neutral, while the lowest responses with 4% (2) each of those who simply disagreed and those who strongly agreed to adhering to the teachings.

The table below show these results.

Table 3

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	4%
Agree	12	24%
Neutral	25	50%
Disagree	2	4%
Strongly Disagree	4	8%
None (Do not respond)	5	10%
TOTAL	50	100%



### ATTITUDE TOWARDS INITIATION CEREMONY TEACHINGS/INSTRUCTIONS

Information concerning attitudes towards the traditional teachings was obtained by asking various questions. For instance, Q22 would you, as a mother, give teachings/instructions concerning sex practice and behaviour to your children, was asked. The majority of the respondents 62% (31) answered positively while 32% (16) answered negatively.

#### Table 4

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	62%
No	16	32%
None	1	2%
TOTAL	50	100%

### BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

It seemed important to find out one's background as this could influence their views on initiation ceremonies. Of all the 50 respondents, 62% (31) lived with both parents, 4% (2) lived with their fathers only, 14% (7) lived with their mothers only, while 20% (10) lived with other guardians. To the question of where their parents lived, 76% (38) of the respondents revealed that their parents lived in urban areas while 25% (12) said their parents lived in rural areas.

### TEACHINGS IN INITIATION CEREMONIES

Other important findings of this research were obtained through the open-ended questions that were asked concerning general teachings given in initiation ceremonies as well as those specifically pertaining to sex-practice and behaviour. The results show that certain teachings are prevalent in most tribes while others are not. Listed below are some of the teachings the respondents gave.

CONCERNING SEX PRACTICE AND BEHAVIOUR

1. That a man expects a woman to be 'dry' during sex. (not producing vagina secretions)
2. That a woman is not supposed to sleep with a man when she is menstruating.
3. That a woman is not supposed to sleep with a man who is not her husband.
4. Not to mix freely with the opposite sex.
5. Not to sleep with a man until one is married (upholding virginity).
6. Being submissive to your husband in matters concerning sex.
7. How to perform the sex act (e.g. dancing in bed during sex).
8. How to satisfy your husband sexually by use of traditional medicines.
9. How to clean your sexual partner after sex.

Other Teachings listed include:

1. How to take care of one's home.
2. How to care for one's husband.
3. Behaviour towards elderly people.
4. Personal hygiene.
5. Importance of hard work.
6. Behaviour towards husband's family and relatives.
7. Secrets of the tribe (these were not mentioned by name).
8. Keeping oneself attractive.
9. How to be a responsible person.

ISSUES DISCUSSED WITH FRIENDSCONCERNING SEX PRACTICE AND BEHAVIOUR

1. The pleasure found in love-making (sex).
2. The relevance of dryness of the woman during sex.
3. How to please a man sexually.
4. That sex outside marriage is forbidden.
5. Sexual experiences one has encountered.

6. Various traditions concerning sex.
7. Sexual attitudes of peer-group.
8. The use of traditional medicines to enhance sexual pleasure and their effects.
9. Protection against Sexually Transmitted Diseases (S.T.D.s).
10. Inadequacy of sexual education given to youths.
11. Sexual dissatisfaction.
12. The dangers of having sex with just anyone.

### ANALYSIS OF THE HYPOTHESES

In this section, the results of the testing of the hypotheses using person product moment correlation analysis are reported. Table 5 provides the summary of the correlation coefficients of the tested relationship for the hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$ ,  $H_4$  and  $H_5$ .

Table 5

HYPOTHESES	INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	DEPENDENT VARIABLES	PEARSON'S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION
$H_1$	Mother's education level	Views on Initiation ceremonies	0.8022
$H_2$	Ethnicity	Teachings in Initiation ceremonies	0.99877
$H_3$	Type of School Respondent attended	Attitudes towards sex	0.00072
$H_4$	Respondent's religious inclination	Attitude towards initiation ceremony teachings	0.34899
$H_5$	One's Background	Attitude towards initiation ceremony teachings	0.00012

H<sub>1</sub>. MOTHER'S EDUCATION LEVEL AND VIEWS ON INITIATION CEREMONIES

The above hypothesis depicting the relationship between parent's/guardian's level of education and their views on initiation ceremonies was tested. This relationship achieved an ACCEPTABLE level of significance. The relationship also appears to be in the POSITIVELY hypothesized direction.

H<sub>2</sub>. TEACHINGS IN INITIATION CEREMONIES

The following hypothesis of the relationship between one's ethnicity and teachings in initiation ceremonies was tested. H<sub>2</sub> achieved an ACCEPTABLE level of significance and appeared to be in the positively hypothesized direction. The magnitude of the relationship is very strong.

H<sub>3</sub>. ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEX

The third hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>) was tested with regard to attitudes towards sex. The result of this test showed that the relationship between type of school the respondent attended and attitudes towards sex did not exist as the hypothesis was REJECTED.

H<sub>4</sub>. ATTITUDES TOWARDS INITIATION CEREMONIES

The hypothesis showing the relationship between religious inclination and attitudes towards initiation ceremony teachings was tested. This relationship was however, REJECTED.

H<sub>5</sub>. ATTITUDES TOWARDS INITIATION CEREMONY TEACHINGS

The hypothesis showing the relationship between one's background and their attitudes towards sex, was tested. The results showed this hypothesis was REJECTED. The correlation coefficient is zero signifying that one's background does not affect their attitudes towards sex.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section is based on the tested hypotheses. The results of these hypotheses show that the first two,  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  were accepted while  $H_3$ ,  $H_4$  and  $H_5$  were rejected. The achievement of an acceptable level of significance in  $H_1$  implies that mother's level of education has an influence on their views about initiation ceremonies. The acceptance of the second hypothesis which is based on the relationship between ethnicity and teachings in initiation ceremonies reveals that ethnicity does have an influence on teachings given in initiation ceremonies. The correlation between the two variables was very strong, implying that the relationship is very strong.

The result of the test for the third hypothesis,  $H_3$ , revealed that there is no relationship between the type of school the respondent attended and attitudes towards sex. The evidence for the rejection of this hypothesis is shown by the 'zero' correlation coefficient which was obtained.

$H_4$  and  $H_5$  were both rejected after being tested. This signifies that there is no relationship between the variables contained in these hypotheses. The rejection of  $H_4$  implies that respondent's religious inclination does not have an influence on their attitudes towards initiation ceremony teachings, similarly the rejection of  $H_5$  reveals the non-existence of a relationship between one's background and their attitude towards initiation ceremony teachings.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the limitations of the study was the sample size and scope of study. The findings are based on views from University of Zambia students and as such could not be generalized to the rest of the population. The sample size was also not big enough to generalize the findings of the study.

Secondly, the nature of the subject was a major constraint which affected reliability and accuracy of the information obtained. As has been mentioned already, the subject of sex is regarded as private and sensitive in most African societies and as such views concerning sex practice and behaviour are not openly or freely shared. In order to overcome this, the researcher did not ask directly for opinions on sex, but asked questions like; 'What sort of teachings are given in initiation ceremonies as regards the opposite sex.' The inaccuracy of some of the information given could be attributed to the fact that in most if not all initiation ceremonies, novices are told not to tell anyone of what they have been taught. Therefore, the creative aspect was a constraint as some respondents simply refused to complete the questions.

Documented literature on the subject of sex is very limited. In addition, little or no research has been carried out concerning cultural practices and behaviour influencing the spread of AIDS, therefore making comparisons an almost impossible task.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In order to serve the first objective of this study which was to determine what women were taught in initiation ceremonies, responses to open-ended questions were examined. This indicated that various teachings concerning sex practice and behaviour were given in initiation ceremonies. Some of the teachings mentioned include: maintaining a dry vagina during sex; how to satisfy one's partner sexually by use of traditional medicines; being submissive to one's husband in matters concerning sex; not to sleep with a man until one is married and how to perform the sex act. Other teaching given which were not related to the subject of sex include: personal hygiene; behaviour towards elderly people; how to care for one's home; importance of hand work; keeping oneself attractive; being a responsible person and so on. The first objective was therefore achieved.

The second objective of the study was aimed at investigating the attitudes of women towards initiation ceremony teachings. The frequency of the responses to the question of whether or not if as a mother, the respondent would give their children teachings on sex practice

and behaviour, implies that they uphold <sup>Some of</sup> these teachings or consider them as being of some value. The most common teachings mentioned are: abstinence from pre-marital sex; the importance of remaining faithful to one partner; while the use of traditional herbs and medicals for purposes of enhancing sexual pleasure was not supported by all the respondents that mentioned it in this context. These results show that the women consider certain teachings useful while rejecting others. It was also observed that half of the respondents neither supported nor rejected the teachings. They stated that their attitude towards the teachings is neutral. It can thus be suggested that with external pressure from elderly people, husbands to be and even peer-groups, these women can end up a more definite attitude towards the teachings.

The rejection of the hypotheses of the relationships between religious inclination and attitudes towards initiation ceremonies; type of school attended and attitudes towards initiation and the relationship between one's background and their attitudes sex implies that there is no relationship that exists between the variables. There could be other variables that were not mentioned that could be influencing the attitudes towards teachings of sex practice and behaviour. Western Education and culture which has penetrated in many societies and which the population selected has been exposed to could be having an influence on their attitudes.

After examining the various teachings on sex practice and behaviour listed by the respondents, it is observed that some of them may contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. The teaching on 'dry-sex' practice for enhancement of sexual pleasure may facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS. This is confirmed in the findings of a research carried out at University Teaching Hospital (Nyirenda, 1991). It is also important to note that what is taught to young people, determine their behaviour. This is observed in the responses given to the question on what the respondents discuss with their friends. An examination of the responses reveals that the women do not only have knowledge, but that they also put it into practice. The evidence for the above is contented in responses given such as: first sexual encounters; how to please a man; how to dance during sex; how long to enjoy sex; most interesting sexual experiences and so on. This therefore implies that women do engage in sexual relationships which could be risky before entering into marriage. Assuming that they sleep with more than one partner before they enter marriage, this type of risk behaviour may contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

## CONCLUSION

It could be said that even though half the respondents revealed that they were neither for or against the teachings given in initiation ceremonies, other evidence reveals that they are more inclined to following these teachings. Generally, the respondents expressed views of disseminating information to do with sex practice and behaviour to their younger ones. Most of them made mention of the fact that they would instruct them to obtain from pre-marital sex. This view which is also upheld by some Zambian tribes, namely Chewa and Nyanja of Eastern Province if strongly emphasized with stern disciplinary measures for defaulters would not only be in the control and prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS, it could also help reduce unwanted pregnancies, other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (S.T.D.'s) as well as strengthening good moral standards.

Some aspects of culture, relating to sex definitely must be revised. It would also be important to re-educate people, so that they can discuss sex without reservation.

The results of this research are to a certain extent representative despite the small sample, mainly because cultural beliefs, traditions and norms <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ the same everywhere regardless of the place. The only difference is in the teachings across tribes or ethnicity.

In conclusion, it has been observed in this study that some teachings on sex have a negative impact on society as they bring about risk behaviour, hence facilitating the spread of HIV/AIDS.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The results revealed that most tribes, with the exception of the Tonga, introduce the subject of sex to the girls and young women (aged 12-15 years) at puberty. Since these girls are exposed to this subject at an early age, it is likely that they would endeavour to practice sex before entering into marriage. For this reason, the researcher recommends the following action: (clauses 1 and 2)



That women initiators, elders as well as parents should emphasize the importance of a girl remaining a virgin until marriage. This must be ensured by severely punishing defaulters (both the girl and boy).

Certain teachings concerning sex practice and behaviour should not be given in puberty ceremonies, but should be given in pre-marriage rites.

There is need for a change of the view that women must be submissive to men in sexual matters. Women's groups and other NGO's must work towards the eradication of such attitudes.

The study also recommends that AIDS counsellors, health workers and all those involved in AIDS education should come together with women initiators and other elderly women to re-examine some teachings passed on to novices that may be posing a threat in the wake of AIDS.

More workshops, seminars and lectures should be held to revise cultural norms, beliefs and practices concerning sex.

It is also proposed that the subject of AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases be included in the curricular of women initiators so that such information is based on to girls at an early age.

It is proposed that further researcher specifically directed at cultural practices and AIDS using a longer sample and covering a wider area be undertaken.

CHAPTER SIX

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am a fourth year student at the University of Zambia (UNZA) carrying out a research on Women's Rituals.

I would be most grateful if you could cooperate by answering the questionnaire.

Please note that the information you give will be treated with CONFIDENTIALITY.

Thanking you in anticipation.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please fill in the blanks or tick the correct answer wherever APPROPRIATE.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Q1. Age of the respondent \_\_\_\_\_

Q2. What tribe are you?

1. Nyanja
2. Lozi
3. Luvale
4. Tonga
5. Bemba
6. Kaonde
7. Lunda
8. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. Age of mother \_\_\_\_\_

Q4. Marital Status of mother

1. Married
2. Single
3. Divorced/Separated
5. Widowed

4. Level of Education of mother

1. Tertiary
2. Secondary School
3. Primary School
4. No Education at all

5. Occupation of mother \_\_\_\_\_

6. Where do you live?

1. High density area (e.g. Kalingalinga, Kanyama, etc)
2. Medium density area (e.g. Helen Kaunda, Chelston, etc)
3. Low density area (e.g. Kalundu, Ibex Hill, etc)

7. Where do your parents live?

1. Rural
2. Urban

8. Do you live with

1. Both parents
2. Father only
3. Mother only
4. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q10. Which church does your mother belong to?

1. Catholic
2. Protestant
3. S.D.A.
4. Jehovah's Witness
5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q11. How do you consider your mother as regards religion?

1. Devoted
2. Liberal

Q12. Which church do you belong to?

1. Catholic
2. Protestant
3. S.D.A.
4. Jehovah's Witness
5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q13. How do you consider yourself as regards religion?

1. Devoted
2. Liberal

Q14. Type of school attended

1. All girls (government)
2. All girls (mission)
3. Co-education (boys & girls)

**PART TWO**

Q15. Do you have any idea as to what is taught during initiation ceremonies?

1. Yes
2. No

Q16. If answer to question 13 is Yes, what sort of teachings are given?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Q17. Do you know if there are any teachings about the opposite sex?

1. Yes
2. No

Q18. If answer to question 15 is Yes, what sort of teachings are given as regards the opposite sex?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Q19. Would you follow the above teachings?

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Q20. What, in your view, are your mother's/guardian's feelings about Initiation rituals?

1. Strongly supportive
2. Supportive

Q24. Would you, as a mother, give teachings/instructions concerning sex practice and behaviour to your children?

1. Yes
2. No

Q25. If answer to question 22 is Yes, list the teachings/instructions you give them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### PART THREE

Q26. Have you ever heard of HIV/AIDS?

1. Yes
2. No

Q27. What are the most common ways of transmitting HIV/AIDS?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



28. Do you think it is easy for one to get HIV/AIDS?

1. Yes

2. No

29. If answer to Q26 is yes, specify

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you think women are likely to get HIV/AIDS than men?

1. Yes

2. No

31. If answer to Q28 is yes, specify

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

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