

**An Ethical Perspective on the  
Implementation of the “UNESCO  
International Guidelines on Sexuality  
Education” in Zambian Secondary Schools**

**By**

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia  
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**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA LUSAKA**



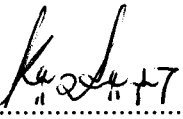
# DECLARATION

I, **Bwalya Rachael**, do hereby declare that this dissertation:

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# APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Bwalya Rachael** has been approved as fulfilling the partial requirements for the award of **Master of Arts in Applied Ethics** by the University of Zambia.

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## ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate from an ethical perspective how the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” can be implemented in Zambian secondary schools. The objectives of the study were to: i) explain the debate for and against school-based sexuality education, ii) assess the current curriculum on sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools, iii) find out views from key informants concerning the implementation of school-based sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools, iv) give an ethical evaluation of how the UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education should be implemented in Zambian secondary schools.

The data was collected through documentary research and also by conducting interviews with some key informants from the Ministry of Education, religious groups, Forum for African Women Educationists Zambia (FAWEZA) and parents. Different interview schedules were used to collect data from these different groups. The methodology employed was empirical research combined with an ethical analysis that applied the ethical theory of Utilitarianism and Rights Theory.

The study shows that the Ministry of Education in Zambia does not have a serious policy with regard to sexuality education in schools. Although there is a statement made in the Education Policy Document *Educating Our Future* concerning the teaching of sexuality education, very little has been done to enforce it. Analysis of the secondary school curriculum revealed that young people learn about their sexuality in Environmental Science, Biology, Civic Education and Religious Education. Nonetheless, these subjects do not cover most of the essential information and skills that young people need. Besides, these subjects are optional except environmental science which is compulsory at grades 8 and 9. This makes young people potentially vulnerable to risky sexual behaviour which in turn affects their health and their education process. Further, very few parents discuss issues of sexuality with their children due to certain social norms or because they are too busy to do so.

The views of those opposed to school-based sexuality education are that school programmes talk about sexual issues in a crude way. For instance, young people are taught to use contraceptives and condoms. This encourages them to indulge in premarital sex. Nevertheless, considering the overall results of the findings and based on human rights and utilitarianism, it is concluded that implementing the UNESCO International Guidelines is preferable because it promotes the well-being of young people better than home-based sexuality education and what is in the current curriculum for secondary schools.

Based on these findings, the study made some recommendations. The prominent ones are that the Ministry of Education should reinforce a policy on the teaching of sexuality education in schools and teacher training colleges to equip teachers with the information and skills that they would later teach to the pupils. It is also recommended that the UNESCO International Guidelines be adopted with some adjustments to suit the needs of the Zambian society. Also, consultations with various stakeholders should be made when formulating the syllabus to decide the topics to be included at different age levels.

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents: Mrs. Martha Yombwe and my late Dad Mr. Frederick Yombwe. May your soul rest in eternal peace, dad.

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# **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAMFED:	Campaign for Female Education
CDC:	Curriculum Development Centre
DEBS:	District Education Board Secretary
FAWEZA:	Forum for African Women Educationist in Zambia
HIV:	Human Immune Virus
IPPFs:	International Planned Parenthood Federations
LRF:	Legal Resource Foundation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoE:	Ministry of Health
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NPPHCN:	National Progressive Primary Health Care Network
SBCs:	School-Based Clinics
SE:	Sexuality Education
SIECUS:	Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
STDs:	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STIs:	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UDHR:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO:	World Health Organization

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

This chapter introduces the investigations into an ethical perspective on the implementation of the UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education in Zambian secondary schools. The presentation begins with an overview of the topic under investigation from a broad perspective and narrows it down to the Zambian context. It presents the debate for and against school-based sexuality education from different perspectives such as Christianity, Islam and non religious groups. It also explains what the UNESCO International Guidelines are with regard to school-based sexuality education. Thereafter, the chapter presents the problem under investigation, the objectives and the research questions through which the objectives are addressed. The chapter also provides the significance of the study and the research methods employed. Furthermore, it defines the scope of the study, outlining some of the limitations and lastly, it presents the organisational structure of the entire dissertation.

### 1.0 Background

#### 1.1 Sexuality Education: An overview

Sexuality Education is a sensitive topic that has been controversially debated worldwide. Different cultures have different views and perceptions about school-based sexuality education. The debates are usually on who should teach it, what should be taught and the age at which it should be taught. Those who oppose school-based sexuality education also question its benefit to society. This is because the purpose of any form of education is to enhance the well-being and quality of life for the entire society (Ministry of Education, 1996). The heated debates sometimes are a result of misunderstandings of what sexuality education involves. By definition, the term 'sexuality' refers to the way we see ourselves as men and women. It includes our bodies, feelings, beliefs and values, the way we behave and respond, the way we dress, the way we make decisions and our relationships with others (Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, 1994). Sexuality is a broader notion than sex which normally refers to the state of being male or female

and the act of intercourse. UNESCO (2009) states that sexuality is a fundamental aspect of human life which comprises the physical, psychological, spiritual, social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. It also cannot be understood without reference to gender. It is from this background that some scholars contend that sexuality education is necessary for young people as it will bring about a society where young people have the knowledge and skills in all dimensions of human life.

## **1.2 Definition of Sexuality Education**

Different scholars have defined sexuality education in different ways. Vergnani and Frank (1998: 4-5) assert that sexuality education helps young people to develop a positive view of their own sexuality and sexual relationships. It should provide them with the necessary information, clarify and teach values and skills necessary to make wise informed decisions about all matters relating to their sexuality. Avert (2009) defines sexuality education as the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. It is also about developing young people's skills so that they make informed choices about their behaviour and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices. Sexuality education encompasses education about all aspects of sexuality, including information about family planning, reproduction, and information about all aspects of one's sexual pleasure, values, decision-making, communication, dating, relationships, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and how to avoid them.

## **1.3 The Aim of Sexuality Education**

According to Avert (2009), sexuality education seeks both to reduce the risks of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviours, like unwanted or unplanned pregnancies, getting infected with STDs and also to enhance the quality of relationships. It is also about developing young people's ability to make decisions over their lifetime. UNESCO (2009: 2-3) states that sexuality education aims at equipping young people with knowledge, skills and values to make responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships in a world affected by HIV and AIDS. Effective sexuality education programmes are aimed to:

- increase knowledge and understanding
- explain and clarify feelings, values and attitudes
- develop or strengthen skills

- promote and sustain risk-reducing behaviour.

Vergnani and Frank (1998: 5) state that sexuality education in the senior phase should aim to:

- enable young people to learn to enhance their self-esteem and self-awareness,
- help learners to acknowledge and enjoy their own sexuality,
- provide accurate information,
- teach the skills necessary to make informed and responsible decisions, including decisions regarding sexual relationships,
- start to explore different values and attitudes in order to help each learner develop his/her own moral framework,
- help learners to act in accordance with their values,
- teach understanding, tolerance and respect for different sexual needs, orientations and values,
- teach learners to behave responsibly and in a caring way within all relationships,
- teach learners how to protect themselves from exploitation and learn not to exploit others,
- teach learners how to use health services and how to find the information they need and
- teach learners how to communicate and express their needs and feelings.

#### **1.4 Need for School-Based Sexuality Education**

School-based sexuality education is crucial for young people in the world today because of the confusing information they get from the media as well as from friends. This leaves them vulnerable to risky sexual behaviour. When young people reach adolescent stage, they begin to experience strong sexual feelings which if not well handled can lead them to indulge in risky sexual relationships. Young girls, for instance, may become pregnant and abandon school at a very tender age. They may also contract STDs, HIV and AIDS. This is often due to peer pressure and lack of proper information on sexuality and reproductive health. UNESCO (2009: 2) states that “few young people receive adequate preparation for their sexual lives. This leaves them potentially vulnerable to coercion, abuse and exploitation, unintended



pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.’’ Most of these young people reach adulthood faced with conflicting and confusing messages about their sexuality and gender. This situation is made worse by adults including parents, who feel embarrassed to discuss sexual matters with young people at the very time when they most need such information. The UNESCO International Guidelines show that school settings provide an important opportunity to reach large numbers of young people with sexuality education before they become sexually active.

As already pointed out, most adolescents already know something about sex and sexuality from what they see and hear from adults, their peers and from the media. Vergnani and Frank (1998: 6) say that depending on where they received their information, adolescents may have contradictory views on sexuality. They may be misinformed about factual issues concerning sex and sexuality. They may have misleading and inaccurate information such as the idea that having sex at an early age makes someone look attractive. Some may want to experiment due to peer pressure and this can have very negative consequences, for example, high rates in teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortions, AIDS and other STDs.

Many countries all over the world have realised how crucial school-based sexuality education is in curbing risky sexual behaviour among adolescents. UNESCO (2009: 63) states that “in 2008, the International Planned Parenthood Federations (IPPFs) made a declaration that governments should provide sexuality education in schools because it is an integral component of human rights.” The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2001) asserted that all states should ensure that comprehensive education on sexuality and reproductive health is included in all secondary school curricula. Furthermore, WHO (2004) argued that sexuality education is critical at an early age, especially in third world countries where girls in the first classes of secondary school face the greatest risk of the consequences of sexual activity. Beginning it early in primary school will also cater for those who have no chance to proceed to secondary school.

School-based sexuality education can enable young people to deal with peer pressure and avoid risky sexual behaviour. Young people generally are pressurized into doing what they do not want. This is due to lack of skills on self-assertiveness. For boys, sexual intercourse is mistaken for manliness. An adolescent boy who does not have sexual intercourse with girls is often teased and mocked by others as being weak. Girls, on the other hand, wrongly believe that sexual intercourse is a proof of

true love. This leaves them vulnerable to sexual coercion and abuse by older men. When they become adults, some of them do not have stable relationships with the members of the opposite sex. Their childhood sexual experiences leave very bad scars that are difficult to heal without proper psychological counselling. In line with the foregoing discussion, Arnaldo (2001: 5) says that “the visible and invisible scars of the past child abuse prevent many people from achieving their potential, thereby draining our global society of much good, while fermenting a spirit of mistrust, anger and hatred which impacts each of our lives.”

School-based sexuality education is a necessity especially because most parents are not free to discuss sexual matters with their children. A South African research conducted in rural Transkei revealed that school adolescents were having sexual relationships at increasingly young ages, often from as young as 12 years. The study showed that 64 percent of the 13-year old girls and 76 percent of boys of the same age were already sexually experienced (Buga et al, 1996). In relation to peer pressure among boys, the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network (NPPHCN) in South Africa writes:

The culture created by this pressure can be dangerous because it gives boys a sense that sex equals manliness. This allows young men to take the view that a woman’s refusal to have sex with them is an affront to their masculinity and that they have a right to demand sex at any time. It is an exhibition of their power and position in society and is foundation for a society in which rape will continue to be prevalent (1996: 40).

From the above discussion, it is clear that most boys, not only in South Africa but in other parts of the world also, abuse their gender roles by thinking that they have a right to demand sex from girls. They reduce girls to mere sexual objects that could be used whenever they please. Most of them grow up with this notion which later impacts negatively on their sexual relationships. Some of them end up being rapists and others become sexual defilers.

### **1.5 Overview of the International Guidelines on Sexuality Education**

To encourage sexuality education in schools, UNESCO produced in June 2009 a draft document called the *UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education: An Evidence Informed Approach to Effective Sex, Relationships and HIV/STIs*. This document was intended to help governments and their curriculum developers on how to implement school-based sexuality education. These

guidelines are based on intensive research which was conducted in different countries worldwide. The document has tackled various important and sensitive issues that arise from school-based sexuality education. It tried to answer the following questions:

### **1.5.1 Why Sexuality Education is important**

Sexuality education intends to teach young people about the fundamental aspects of human life. These include the physical, psychological, spiritual, social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. It also includes gender, diversity in sexual characteristics, as well as the rules that govern sexual behaviour amongst different cultures.

Sexuality education is important because the many young people do not have accurate information on sexuality. This makes them vulnerable to risky sexual behaviour which in the long run affects their performance at school. And in line with human rights, it is essential to recognise the need and entitlement of all young people to sexuality education. It is believed that effective sexuality education is critical for HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. Furthermore, UNESCO (2009: 5) states that “sexual and ill-health are among the most important contributors to the burden of disease among young people. Ensuring the sexual and reproductive health of young people makes social and economic sense.” It is the dream of every nation to have healthy citizens who will contribute greatly to the growth of its economy. Each nation strives to provide the needed services which include education on health issues to enable its citizens realize good health. How this education is provided varies from society to society. Schools have proved to be the most effective medium for disseminating information to a large number of young people from different social backgrounds. Besides, some parents and guardians are not comfortable with talking about sexual matters with their children due to cultural norms and ignorance. The provision of sexuality education will help nations to lessen the expenditure on medication for its citizens who are likely to avoid risky sexual behaviour. The money could be channelled to other developmental programmes rather than spending most of it on medication for sexual related illnesses which otherwise could be avoided. Studies have shown that effective programmes on sexuality education can achieve the following:

- reduce misinformation

- increase knowledge
- clarify and solidify positive values and attitudes
- increase life skills
- improve perceptions about peer group norms
- increase communication with parents or other trusted adults.

In addition, studies conducted revealed that effective programmes on sexuality education can help to:

- delay the debut of sexual intercourse
- reduce the frequency of unprotected sexual activity
- reduce the number of sexual partners.

### **1.5.2. Purpose and intended audience of the International Guideline**

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist education, health and other relevant authorities in the development and implementation of school-based sexuality education programmes and materials. It does this by recommending a set of age-specific standard learning objectives for sexuality education. The guidelines are formulated in such a way that they are relevant to education ministers and their professional staff, including curriculum developers, school principals and teachers. The document raises issues that focus on the ‘*why*’ and ‘*what*’ issues that require attention in order to strengthen sexuality education. The guidelines are rights-based, culturally sensitive, and considerate of sexual and gender diversity, comprehensive, scientifically accurate, age-appropriate and evidence-based.

### **1.5.3 How the topics and objectives were formulated**

Researchers examined curricula from twelve countries in order to identify common topics and related objectives. A non-governmental organization called Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) was also consulted on the topics and objectives on sexuality education that were used in India, Jamaica, Nigeria and the USA. Others were developed through key informant interviews with recognised experts and through a global technical consultation meeting held in February 2009 with experts from thirteen different countries (UNESCO, 2009). Prior to this, in 2008, UNESCO commissioned a review on the impact of sexuality education on the sexual behaviour of young people. This was going to be a back-up for the formulation of these International Guidelines. The

review considered 87 studies from around the world which comprised 29 from developing nations, 47 from the United States and 11 from European countries. The programmes did not intend to address the varied needs of young people or their right to information about many topics, but they were designed to reduce unintended pregnancy or STDs, including HIV. Seventy percent of these programmes were implemented in schools while 30 percent were implemented in communities or clinic settings. The review examined the impact of these programmes on those sexual behaviours that directly affect pregnancy and sexual transmission of HIV and other STDs. It did not review the impact on other behaviours such as health-seeking behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence and unsafe abortions. The results from the review provided by UNESCO (2009: 16) can be summarized as follows:

- Curriculum-based programmes implemented in schools or communities should be viewed as an important component that can often help, though it does not necessarily always reduce, risky sexual behaviour.
- There is strong evidence that the programmes instituted did not have negative effects. In particular, they neither hastened nor increased sexual behaviour. It is also possible that the same programmes can help to delay sexual intercourse on the one hand, and to increase the use of condoms and other forms of contraception on the other hand for those who are already sexually active. There is need for dual emphasis on abstinence together with use of protection.
- Nearly all studies of sexuality education programmes demonstrate increased knowledge and about two-thirds of them demonstrate positive results on behaviour among either the entire sample or an important sub-sample.
- Comparative analysis of effective and ineffective programmes provides strong evidence that programmes that incorporate key recommendations can be effective at changing the behaviours that put young people at high risk of getting infected with STDs and becoming pregnant.
- Even if sexuality education programmes improve knowledge, skills and intentions to avoid sexual risk or to use clinic services, reducing their risk may be challenging to young people if social norms do not support risk reduction or clinic services are not available.

- The sexuality education programmes studied had one common gap in that none of these studies focussed on the behaviours that cause most HIV infections among adolescents in large parts of the world (i.e., Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia). Those behaviours include, for example, unsterilized injections used to inject drugs, unsafe sexual activity in the context of sex work, and unprotected anal sexual intercourse between men.

#### 1.5.4 Goals of topics and learning objectives suggested by UNESCO

According to the International Guidelines, the goals of the topics and learning objectives are to:

- provide accurate information about topics that children and young people are curious about and on which they have a right to know
- provide children and young people with opportunities to explore values, attitudes and norms concerning sexual and social relationships
- promote the acquisition of skills
- encourage children and young people to assume responsibility for their own behaviour and to respect the rights of others.

The topics and learning objectives vary according to age groups and corresponding levels. This is done to ensure that each age group learns only those issues on sexuality which are appropriate to their cognitive abilities. The suggested ages and their corresponding levels are: level 1 (5-8 years), level 2 (9-12 years), level 3 (12-15 years) and level 4 (15-18 years and above).

As already alluded to, the topics and learning objectives for each level above have been formulated in such a way that they address issues that are within the level of the learners intellectual capacity. However, the present study focuses on the last two as it is dealing with sexuality education for adolescents in secondary schools. These levels have been picked because in Zambia the age range for secondary school pupils is between 12 to 18 years and above. In what follows, I present the suggested components of the learning process covered by the topics and learning objectives.

- a. **Information:** sexuality education provides accurate information about human sexuality, including growth and development, sexual anatomy and physiology, reproduction, contraception, pregnancy and childbirth, HIV and AIDS, STDs, family life and interpersonal relationships, culture and sexuality, gender rights, empowerment, equality and gender roles, sexual

behaviour, sexual diversity, sexual pleasure, sexual abuse, gender-based violence, and harmful traditional practices.

- b. Values, attitudes and social norms:** sexuality education offers students opportunities to explore values, attitudes and norms (personal, family, peer and community) in relation to sexual behaviour, health, risk-taking and decision-making and in consideration of the principles of tolerance, respect, gender rights and equality.
- c. Interpersonal and relationship skills:** sexuality education promotes the acquisition of skills in relation to decision-making, assertiveness, communication, negotiation and refusal. Such skills can contribute to better and more productive relationships with family members, peers, friends and romantic or sexual partners.
- d. Responsibility:** sexuality education encourages young people to assume responsibility for their own behaviour as well as their behaviour towards other people through the strategies of respect, acceptance, tolerance and empathy for all people regardless of their health status or sexual orientation, insisting on gender equality, resisting early, unwanted or coerced sex, and practicing safer sex, including the correct and consistent use of condoms and contraceptives (UNESCO, 2009: 27).

The components outlined above are all necessary in the provision of sexuality education to young people. Some of the key concepts arising from these components on which topics and subsequently learning objectives are formulated include relationships, values, attitudes and skills, culture, society and law, human development, sexual behaviour and sexual and reproductive health. Each topic is linked to specific learning objectives, and they are grouped according to the four age levels. Some of the topics and learning objectives drawn from each of the above concepts for levels 3 and 4 are illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Some key concepts, topics and learning objectives for age groups between 12-18 years and above

Key concept	Topic	Learning objective	Level
<b>Relationships</b>	Friendship, Love and Relationships.	Differentiate between different kinds of relationships.	3 (12-15 years)
<b>Relationships</b>	Friendship, Love and Relationships.	Identify relevant laws concerning abusive relationships.	4 (15-18 years and above)
<b>Values, Attitudes and Skills</b>	Norms and Peer Influence on Sexual Behaviour.	Explain how peer and social norms influence sexual decisions and behaviour.	3 (12-15 years)
<b>Values, Attitudes and Skills</b>	Norms and Peer Influence on Sexual Behaviour.	Demonstrate skills in resisting peer pressure.	4 (15-18 years and above)

(Source: UNESCO 2009).

The table above shows some learning objectives drawn from the suggested key concepts and topics that young people learn in sexuality education in countries where it has been implemented. It shows only a few topics and learning objectives from the many that are presented in the International Guidelines. It illustrates that one key concept can have the same topic but different learning objectives for different age groups or levels. For example, the topic on “Friendship, Love and Relationships” has different learning objectives for the two levels. At level 3, young people are expected to distinguish between kinds of relationships that exist between people. They are expected to understand and to show the differences between love, friendship, infatuation and sexual attraction. They are supposed to be aware that friends can influence one another positively and negatively. They are supposed to know characteristics and qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Level 4 builds on the key ideas presented at level 3 but at a higher cognitive level. At this level, young people are expected to understand that they have a right to take legal sanctions against abuse of friendship. They are expected to recognise and report all cases of sexual abuse to relevant authorities despite being blackmailed or intimidated by the offenders. This level progression in terms of learning objectives is important so that as pupils progress from one level to the next they do not have to



learn the same things, but will have to build on what they already know at a higher level. In addition, it prevents work from being monotonous but rather makes it exciting.

### **1.5.5 Points of entry**

Different countries have different policies with regard to the teaching of sexuality education. According to the UNESCO International Guidelines, the implementation of sexuality education depends on the available resources (including the availability of supportive school administration, trained teachers and materials), competing priorities in the school curriculum, the needs of learners, community support for sexuality education programmes and timetabling issues. Some countries such as Malawi and Jamaica have opted to implement it as a stand-alone subject while Mexico, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania have integrated it within various parts of the curriculum such as biology and civic education. Kenya delivers it under guidance and counselling.

However, some countries are still sceptical about the inclusion of sexuality education in their school curricula. This is due to cultural beliefs, prejudice, misconceptions or even religious reasons. UNESCO (2009) points out that despite the clear and pressing need for effective school-based sexuality education in most countries throughout the world, it is still not available. There are numerous reasons which include perceived or anticipated resistance resulting from misunderstandings about the nature, purpose and effects of sexuality education. Some evidence has shown that many people, including education ministry staff, school principals and teachers, may not be convinced of the need to provide sexuality education and so they are reluctant to provide it due to lack of confidence and skills to do so. Sometimes, the teachers' personal or professional values are in conflict with the issues they are being asked to address. Moreover, there is no clear guidance about what to teach and how to teach it.

In the article "Why are we failing our young people?" Kapatamoyo (2009) reporting for *Times of Zambia* states that, there is a general false impression that teaching young people about sex will encourage them to start having sex at a younger age. This negative misconception continues despite concrete evidence that sexuality education does not increase sexual experimentation and that in fact good quality comprehensive programmes can help reduce teen pregnancies and sexually

transmitted diseases including HIV. In fact, governments need to show strong leadership in supporting the introduction of sex, relationships and HIV education and overcoming community resistance where it exists.

In line with the above, a review of programmes around the world by the World Health Organization (WHO) found that sexuality education does not lead to earlier or increased sexual activity, contrary to what many adults think. In fact the review showed that good sexuality education programmes, which emphasise learning life skills, personalizing risk and giving young people options, can help them to delay first intercourse and protect those who are already sexually active from pregnancy, HIV infection and other STDs (Grunsett, 1997).

### **1.6 Sexuality Education in Zambia**

In Zambia sexuality education is part of the integrated life skills education that children receive at primary school. Life skills education includes topics on self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness, interpersonal relationships, decision making and problem solving (Ministry of Education, 2003a). Sexuality education in Zambia, therefore, is not a stand-alone subject as it is in Malawi and some other countries. This has made it difficult for all Zambian pupils to receive it. Besides, life skills education is taught only at primary school in grade five. The course has not been extended to secondary school. At the moment, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) has not produced any materials on sexuality education for secondary schools. This means that the vulnerable group of adolescents does not receive adequate information on sexuality and reproductive health. Most parents also shun such topics as they consider it unethical to discuss sexual issues with their children. As a result, young people learn about this through the media on television, internet and magazines. In Zambia, young girls are often abused by male adults (*sugar daddies*), who take advantage of their innocence and shower them with gifts in exchange for sex. Since the girls are not experienced enough to negotiate for safer sex or even to report to relevant authorities, they are sexually abused and often end up contracting STDs, tuberculosis (TB) and HIV. This disturbs their education and negatively affects their future.

Kapatamoyo (2009) reports in the *Times of Zambia* that while Zambia and the rest of the African continent battle with the HIV and AIDS epidemic, teenagers are becoming sexually active and promiscuous long before the age of societal consent.

Apart from sexual abstinence which very few young people adhere to, currently only condoms provide significant protection against HIV and other STDs, including unwanted pregnancies. It is necessary that good sexuality education programmes should be introduced in all schools and in all homes. He further said that there was need for parents and teachers to discuss openly the issue of sex and to teach young people their values and stress the importance those values played in their lives. He appealed to headmasters to intensify sexuality education in schools as more talk was centred on HIV and AIDS than on actual sexuality education. He said that talking about prevention of HIV and AIDS is not enough, there is need to talk about sex, and also guidance on how to deal with peer pressure. He advised parents to actively support comprehensive sexuality education in schools and make it a priority.

In addition, some stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health (MoH) and some NGOs like *Kwatu* produce various materials on sexuality and reproductive health education, which they distribute in schools. These materials are sometimes rejected by school administrators and parents who say that the content conflicts with Zambian cultural values which are supposed to be preserved. The problem is that if parents, guardians and other adults are not free to talk about sexual issues with young people, they will end up with incorrect information. Young people are consistently being exposed to pornographic films and magazines that encourage them to engage in pre-marital sex, but if they have comprehensive education on sexuality and reproductive health, they will be able to make wiser decisions.

### **1.7 Statement of the problem**

Studies carried out have revealed that while some people have argued that school-based sexuality education encourages young people to become sexually active at younger ages, more researches have shown that comprehensive sexuality and HIV and AIDS education programmes do not increase sexual activities. Many young people do not receive accurate information on sex and sexuality which makes them vulnerable to sexual risky behaviours and in the long run affects their performance at school (UNESCO, 2009). Like in many other countries, young people in Zambia today do not receive accurate information regarding their sexuality. Besides, no research has been done in Zambia to ascertain how the UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education could be implemented in Zambian secondary schools, hence the research.

### **1.8 Objectives of the Study**

The study was carried out to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To explain the debate for and against school-based sexuality education.
- (ii) To critically assess the current curricula on sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools.
- (iii) To find out views from key informants concerning the implementation of school-based sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools.
- (iv) To give an ethical evaluation of how the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” should be implemented in Zambian secondary schools.

### **1.9 Research Questions**

The study attempted to answer the following questions in relation to the objectives outlined above:

- (i) What are the reasons for and against school-based sexuality education?
- (ii) What is the current situation of sexuality education with regard to Zambian secondary school curricula?
- (iii) What are the main views of various stakeholders concerning the implementation of school-based sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools?
- (iv) From an ethical point of view, how should the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education?” be implemented in Zambian secondary schools?

### **1.10 Significance of the Study**

The study is intended to provide valuable data on how the UNESCO International Guidelines can help policy makers to revise the secondary school curriculum in order to improve the current sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. It is also expected to remove the misconceptions and prejudices about school-based sexuality education which people have. This is important especially for religious faiths such as Christianity, Islam and Zambian traditional beliefs that may have negative perceptions towards school-based sexuality education. The study is expected to add to the body of knowledge on Public Health Ethics as it will provide valuable data on the debate for and against sexuality education in Zambian schools.

### **1.11 Research Methodology**

This study combines empirical and philosophical research. In the empirical part, data was collected through documentary research by using secondary sources which included the internet, books and magazines. Primary data was collected by conducting interviews with key informants from the Curriculum Development Centre and from the Ministry of Education Headquarters in Lusaka as well as at provincial and district offices in Kasama. Others interviewed were head teachers in selected government, private and faith-based schools as well as some religious leaders from Christian and Islam in Kasama and Lusaka, respectively. The views of parents were also important in this research. Hence focus group interviews were conducted with women from Kapoka and Ngulula villages in Kasama district. It was also important to get views from the NGOs that support the education system in Zambia. Thus, one key informant from Forum for African Women Educationists Zambia (FAWEZA) was interviewed. This organisation contributes to the education system in Zambia by lobbying for girls friendly school policies and assisting vulnerable children in paying school fees. Purposive sampling was used to select the informants for this research. The justification for using this type of sampling was to target reliable informants who would not refuse to give information on this sensitive topic. This was important as it enabled the researcher to get more broad based information. Separate interview schedules were used for informal interviews with Ministry of education officials, religious leaders, and an official from FAWEZA. Another interview schedule was used to administer focus group interviews with parents from Kapoka and Ngulula villages (see Appendices).

The philosophical part of this study consists of an ethical analysis using utilitarianism and Rights theory. Utilitarianism asserts that we should choose that available action that result in the best overall consequences (Lafollette, 1997: 8). Utilitarianism has been used to argue that the implementation of the UNESCO International Guidelines on sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools can bring about the best overall consequences for young people and the nation as a whole. Rights theory, on the other hand, has been used to argue in favour of the right to school-based sexuality education for secondary school pupils in Zambia.

### **1.12 Scope and delimitations of the Study**

This study does not attempt to deal with sexuality education at home and it is not a medical research that intends to find out the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among young people in Zambian secondary schools who have not received any sexuality education at all. It is rather an ethical perspective on the implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” in Zambian secondary schools. The research does not intend to collect data from the pupils on their views on school-based sexuality education. It only involves key informants who were purposively selected to express their views on the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. Another important point which needs to be made clear is that, since the present research is an ethical analysis of sexuality education, many issues that will be relevant to the social scientists or educationists are not relevant to this study and have therefore not been researched.

### **1.13 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study included finances, the time factor, and the fact that some respondents did not cooperate fully in providing the needed information. This derailed the process of collecting desired primary data. It was also not easy to get information from the intended officials at the Ministry of Education Headquarters as well as at the Curriculum Development Centre. It was also difficult to get views from another NGO called Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) that supports the education of vulnerable children in Zambia as the key informants were constantly reported to be out of office. The same is true with regard to the traditional leaders whose views could have been significant for this study. There is also scanty literature on sexuality education in Zambia because this research seems to be the first of its kind about Zambian secondary schools.

### **1.14 Organizational Structure**

The study is composed of six chapters. The first chapter discusses the background of the study, starting from a broad view and narrowing it to the Zambian context. It is followed by the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance, the methods employed and limitations of the study. The second chapter presents the literature by reviewing similar studies conducted by other researchers. It also addresses the first objective concerning the debate for and against school-

based sexuality education at global level. Chapter three presents the theoretical framework by discussing the theories that are relevant to the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study by analysing the Zambian secondary school curriculum specifically looking at four subjects where issues of sexuality are taught. It also discusses the results of the findings from interviews held with key informants. Chapter five presents an ethical evaluation of the findings using Utilitarianism and Rights theory and chapter six gives a summary of the entire document with a conclusion and recommendations.

# CHAPTER 2

## Literature Review

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the literature that has relevance to the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. The chapter begins with the documentary research using different writings with a focus on school-based sexuality education from a worldview perspective. The discussion centres on debate for and against sexuality education in schools. The chapter further shows some studies that have been conducted in Zambia in connection with the need for school-based sexuality education among young people.

### **2.1 Debate for and against School-Based Sexuality Education**

There have been heated discussions among people of different cultures, beliefs and traditions concerning school-based sexuality education. According to various writings, people have divergent views concerning school-based sexuality education. Those in support have strongly argued that in this era of HIV and AIDS, it is vital for school-going children to have necessary information concerning their sexuality. With such information, they are more likely to make informed decisions and also to know how to cope with peer pressure and to reduce the risk of getting infected with HIV. It also enables young girls to avoid unintended pregnancies and other risky sexual behaviour that may see them dropping out of school at a tender age.

Those who oppose school-based sexuality education, stress that giving such information to young people perpetrates bad behaviour and encourages them to indulge in premarital sex. They argue that sexuality education taught in schools is not taken seriously by teens who view it as being for fun. They believe that the issues involved would be treated more seriously if they were taught by parents and guardians at home or religious leaders who focus on building good morals and not just on fear of becoming pregnant or getting infected with HIV.



### **2.1.1 Arguments for School-Based Sexuality Education**

Studies have shown that school-based sexuality education is necessary for a variety of reasons. A debate entitled, *Should teens have sex education in schools?* revealed that out of 149 articles posted on the internet, 143 were in favour of sexuality education in schools while only 6 were against it. One of these articles by Scarlett (2010) showed that in recent years in Canada, the rates of teen pregnancies and contraction of STD's have dropped due to school-based sexuality education. However, teen pregnancy is still a problem in Canada and many other countries, but it is not as bad as it used to be before the introduction of sexuality education. Scarlett indicated that if young people cannot receive accurate information, they will rely on rumours. As a result, they will end up with situations where girls believe that they cannot get pregnant the first time they have unprotected sexual intercourse. Other girls end up becoming pregnant because their religions are against birth control. Others feel less guilt to commit the sin of having sexual intercourse outside marriage, which is fornication, than to commit the double sin of fornication and using birth control measures. Scarlett further stated that good sexuality education programmes will teach teenagers to cope with hormones and abstain from sex as a personal choice, whether due to religion or for other reasons. Good sexuality education programmes can teach them that whether to have sex or not is a choice that deserves much thought and deliberation. With all these confusing thoughts and feelings surrounding sex and adolescent hormones, teenagers need a secure outlet to explore these thoughts and feelings without being judged. They need a classroom set-up where they can freely ask questions and receive adequate answers. Unfortunately, many parents are not prepared to provide that atmosphere due to their own prejudices about sex. If teenagers cannot get answers in a classroom setting, they will go in the field to find out for themselves.

Marilyn Morris, a victim of an early pregnancy, told Sound Vision (2010) about the possible dangers of non-involvement of parents, schools and the church in teaching sexuality education to teenagers. She explained that most teenagers find themselves in situations where no one talks to them about the subject of sex. Most parents do not feel comfortable to talk to their teenage children about sex and most churches also do not have such programmes, resulting in young people getting wrong information from friends. Morris told Sound Vision that when she was growing up as a teenager in the 1960s she never received any sex education either at home, at

school or at church. This partly led to her pregnancy at the age of 17. She explained that she was a good girl from a good Christian home and she attended church every Sunday. Nevertheless, she became pregnant. She and her husband believe that if someone had talked to them about sex either at home, at school or at church, they could have listened. Unfortunately, the only place where it was talked about was amongst the kids. The only message she heard back then was that sex was no big deal, that everyone was doing it and that nobody got hurt. She recounted that she learned the hard way that sex was a big deal and that there was a huge price to pay.

Beausang and Fowler (1998) have also argued that pupils need to learn about sexuality because it is part of social, personal and health education. It provides them with structured opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships as children and adults. In answering why sexuality education is necessary in schools, they explain that the general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual including the aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure. Relationships and sexuality education are clearly a part of this general aim.

The advocates of sexuality education state further that good sexuality education includes topics such as development of self-esteem, growing and changing, new life, feelings and emotions, keeping safe and making decisions. Self-esteem is very important and children with high self-esteem are more likely to develop caring relationships and less likely to be vulnerable to exploitation by others. The children with low self-esteem on the other hand, make unrealistically high demands on themselves and may be unable to evaluate themselves accurately. These characteristics increase the chances of failure. As a result, young people develop a sense of worthlessness which reinforces poor opinion of themselves. Furthermore, good sexuality education teaches young people how to use their senses (ibid.). For instance, it emphasizes the sense of touch. Young people are made aware that certain parts of the body are more sensitive than others. They need to recognise the fact that when these parts of the body are touched or caressed, it may lead to sexual arousal which may result in having sex. This information can help them to realise when someone is about to abuse them. Moreover, it can give them the courage to refrain from such touches or even to report to elders when they are abused.

### **2.1.1.1 Young People's Rights to School-Based Sexuality Education**

It is widely accepted that young people have a right to sexuality education. With such information they are able to protect themselves against abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and AIDS. It is further argued that the provision of sexuality education helps to meet young peoples' rights to information about matters that affect them, their right to have their needs met and to help them enjoy their sexuality and the relationships that they form (Avert, 2009). Young people are exposed to various sources of information on sex and sexuality, some of which is accurate while another is inaccurate. This creates misconceptions and, if not explained properly, it leads to disastrous consequences. Talking about misconceptions, Scarlet (2010) states that young people may have heard that a girl cannot get pregnant or contract STDs the first time she has sex, when she is on top, or as long as she rinses with cola immediately after unprotected sex. Information through the provision of sexuality education is necessary as it will correct the misconceptions that young people have.

The development of well informed attitudes and views about sex and sexuality is very important to the lives of young people, especially during the adolescent stage. This is a crucial period in the lives of young people as they experience many changes physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. If they are not informed properly they may end up developing wrong attitudes and beliefs concerning their sexuality. Young people see, read and hear contradictory statements about sex and sexuality, which is confusing. For instance, some health messages emphasize the risks and dangers associated with sexual activities, while some media coverage promotes the idea that being sexually active makes a person more attractive and mature. This is confusing because young people do not know which view to take. However, people providing sexuality education to young people should not take a narrow moralistic view about sex and sexuality. Avert (2009) states that providers of sexuality education need to provide effective information that includes work on right attitudes and beliefs, coupled with skills development that enable young people to choose whether or not to have a sexual relationship, taking into account the potential risks of any sexual activity.

Research has shown that sexuality education in a home set-up usually takes a narrow moralistic view where parents want their children to follow everything without question. This restricts them to a narrow view making them incapable to

make informed decisions. It is for this reason, therefore, that the advocates for school-based sexuality education feel it necessary to have sexuality education in schools to talk about those issues that are not addressed in homes. Besides, a classroom set-up enables young people to talk and ask questions freely as they interact amongst themselves. This kind of interaction benefits also those who are naturally shy as they listen to other pupils and the responses given by their teachers. This kind of interaction is lacking in many homes.

Further, literature has revealed that in sub-Saharan countries, where poverty is high, sexuality education for adolescents in schools is very important. Some parents force their children into commercial prostitution so that they can make money for food. Others do not find time to sit with their children and discuss matters concerning their sexuality because they are always out looking for ways and means to meet the needs of their families. This leaves young people with no one to talk to when they are faced with problems concerning their sexuality. School-based sexuality education, therefore, cannot be over-emphasized as it provides needed information that enables young people to develop necessary skills to avoid coercion and being sexually abused by rich male adults, also called 'sugar daddies'. These male adults usually take advantage of poverty stricken young girls who are vulnerable and cannot defend themselves from abuse. In relation to sexual abuse by sugar daddies, M'kandawire (1997) states that the 'sugar daddy menace' is also to blame for the high rate of pregnancies amongst school-going girls. Rich men make capital out of the financial constraints of girls from poor family backgrounds to engage them in sexual activities. These sexual relationships become a means of securing money or consumer items which the family cannot provide due to limited finances. The results are often unwanted pregnancies, STDs including AIDS, failure in examinations and finally, dropping out of school.

In addition, Fuglestad and Luwaya (2008), in their study entitled, *Sex, Poverty and a Second Chance*, explain that poverty coupled with lack of information on sex and sexuality contributes greatly to unwanted babies and dropping out of school. Besides, most young girls fail to report sexual abuse caused by a family member because they fear to cause trouble or rejection from other family members. This is so because in most homes there is no platform for discussing sexual issues. Most parents regard it as a taboo to discuss such issues with their children. In one of the interviews conducted by Fuglestad and Luwaya (2008), the girl explained that when

she reported that she was sexually abused by her brother in-law, her aunt beat her up as a punishment and cautioned her never to do it again. This instilled psychological and emotional trauma in the young girl who needed help and security from an adult member of the family. Unfortunately the person she ran to for comfort turned out to be another abuser. In the end the girl became confused because she did not know whether the beating was to warn her from indulging in sexual activities or to stop her from telling other people that she was sexually abused by a family member. This made the girl to become promiscuous and she began to sleep with different men so that in the end she became pregnant and did not know who was responsible. She sadly explained, “Now I have a child who is fatherless and I’m not able to support or feed the baby accordingly due to the fact that in the entire family no one is working” (ibid.:3).

Fuglestad and Luwaya (2008) present a similar story about another girl who became pregnant at the age of 14. She was forced into having sex so that she could make a bit of money for her school needs because her mother could not provide all the necessary needs for her family. Due to lack of information on safer sex, she became pregnant and the man refused the responsibility and ran away. The girl went through torture and developed hatred for men. She said, “I do not trust men. When I told my boyfriend that I was pregnant, he ran away and I have not seen him since. Any man may run away and leave me alone with the responsibility for the children. I might be infected with HIV and AIDS or may become pregnant. I will not marry another man. I would refuse marriage because it is not a solution to problems” (ibid.:18).

### **2.1.2 Arguments against School-Based Sexuality Education**

Those opposed to school-based sexuality education strongly argue that the kind of information given to young people sexuality education does not teach them good morals. It rather encourages promiscuity. Anderson (2010) states that those who hold that school-based sexuality education lower teenage pregnancy overlook other worse consequences that arise from sexuality education programmes. For instance, lessons on the use of contraceptives corrupt their morals. He claims that a country like Sweden, where sexuality education in public schools was introduced as far back as the 1950s has paid a heavy price. While it is true that the rate of teenage pregnancy has been low, nevertheless, despite recording lower rates in teenage pregnancy, the

percentages of venereal disease, illegitimate births, teenage disillusionment and suicide went up. The rates of STDs increased by 75 percent between 1959 and 1964, the number of divorce cases increased between 1963 and 1974, while those bothering to get married dropped to 66 percent. Moreover, a country like Japan, which has a conservative morality, was excluded from the studies that were assessing school-based sexuality education and its impact on teenage pregnancy. Japan has very low rates of teenage pregnancy not because of sex education in schools, but because of its conservative norms against early marriages and premarital sex as a best measure to fertility control.

In addition, Anderson (2010) compares school-based sexuality education to school-based health clinics (SBCs). He states that many people believe that the latter are an effective means of reducing teenage pregnancies. He argues that those who carried out this research, as for instance, Dr. Zabin at the John Hopkins University, had a small sample size. Besides, there was no mention of abortion cases in the report, leaving people to speculate that only live births were considered. He further said that these programmes were not an effective answer to problems faced by teenagers and their sexuality. He said, "They treat symptoms rather than problems by focusing on pregnancy rather than promiscuity. And even if we ignore the morality of handing out contraceptives to adolescents, we are left with a claim that cannot be substantiated" (ibid.:5).

### **2.1.3 Some Christian Views on Sexuality Education**

Christians have divergent views concerning school-based sexuality education. Some are in support of it being offered in schools while others believe it is the responsibility of parents to teach their children at home. Some conservative Christians argue that school-based sexuality education ignores the reality of human sinfulness. It does not include the teaching of moral principles, which are very important in the lives of young people. Similarly, Anderson (2010) argues that the problem why young people today indulge in sexual activities is not due to a lack of education, but to a lack of instructions on morality. They may have the intellectual education, but if they are not taught morals, they will still indulge in risky sexual behaviour. In his view, young people should be taught to refrain from premarital sex because it is immoral. They should know that chastity is the most effective means of preventing pregnancy and a multitude of sexual diseases. In addition, he believes that

there is need for Christians to understand the basic assumptions behind having sexuality education in public schools. He claims that those who advocate for it make naturalistic assumptions about human sexuality. They regard young people as though they were animals on heat that could not adhere to the teachings given to them at home, church or even at school concerning sex and sexuality. The bible shows that human beings were created in the image of God. Hence they have the capacity to exercise self-control. He indicated that the advocates of sexuality education are not realistic in their arguments when they view young people like animals that cannot exercise self-control.

According to Anderson (*ibid.*), most sexuality education programmes present data in a value neutral way. But in trying to be morally neutral, these programmes encourage immorality. It is true that young people need information on sex and sexuality, but it should be presented in a moral context. Christian parents should therefore, exercise authority and instruct their children about God's view of sex. The teaching should be based on abstinence, to flee fornication just like Joseph did in the Old Testament (Genesis). It is wrong to make provisions for the flesh like the use of contraceptive measures that the advocates for sexuality education suggest. Instead young people should be taught to exercise self-control and also be concerned about the dangers of premarital sex. This could only be achieved by providing them with biblical principles and moral leadership in the area of sexuality.

### **2.1.3.1 Sexuality Education in Catholic Schools**

The Catholic Church has supported prudent sexuality education taught to young people. Again, however, there are divergent views on the issue of school-based sexuality education. Some liberal members are in favour of it being taught in schools as long as it focuses on important issues that will enable young people to avoid risky sexual behaviour. Conservatives, on the other hand, prefer it being taught in Christian homes rather than in schools. Dolan (2010), one of the conservative Catholic theologians, discusses the history of the Catholic Church and the meetings that were held concerning the kind of sexuality education that was supposed to be offered to young people. He claims that the general view from the outcomes of those meetings was that parents were the right people to give sexuality education to their children. This was with a view of teaching them good morals and also to avoid all occasions of sin. His opinion together with other conservatives is that parents are in a

better position to give the right information to their children as compared to what they would learn from schools. Dolan's sentiments are similar to those of Trujillo and Sgreccia (1995) who reported that the Church has always affirmed that parents have the duty and the right to be the first and the principal educators of their children. These remarks were made during the "Pontifical Council for the Family" held on 8<sup>th</sup> Dec.1995 in the Vatican City.

Dolan states that the Catholic Church condemns immodest sexuality education. He encourages families to fight against all forms of literature that are capable of corrupting Christian morals. He says that despite this stance taken by the Catholic Church, some Catholic schools in different parts of the world have followed the example of public schools to introduce sexuality education programmes in their curriculum. Some bishops have been pressured to allow Catholic schools offer sexuality education in the schools that they preside over. Dolan says that some of these bishops have no idea what kind of content is taught to pupils. They probably think that it has to do with moral instructions pertaining to their sexuality. But that is not the case because they are not actually meant to teach morals as the bishops seem to think. He strongly argues that much of the materials used in teaching young people in schools are explicit and sensual, and that in some cases they border on pornography. For example, intimate parts of the body and their sexual functions are described in detail. These are prone to vulgarity and infringe on students' privacy. These bishops argue that if the instructions were given under the Catholic auspices, they would be given in the right way.

In addition, Dolan explains that the model of sexuality education that the conservative Catholic bishops advocate for is supposed to be based on morality, and aiming at forming virtues of modest and chastity. Young people need to learn that they should refrain from premarital sex, fornication, adultery or other acts of impurity such as lustful desires and indecent entertainment. This should be taught in every Catholic school because they are powerful tools that could enable Christian youths to stand out even in the midst of a sex-saturated society. To achieve this, parents are urged to see to it that the programmes that are designed to teach sexuality education in schools are closely supervised so that they teach the right things that are in harmony with the Christian values. It is the right and duty of parents to protest against school authorities once they discover that their children are being taught things that are contrary to their Christian values.



With regard to the kind of information which young people should receive at various age levels, Trujillo and Sgreccia (1995) state that parents should provide information on issues of sexuality with great sensitivity, but clearly and at appropriate times. They said that parents are well aware that their children should be treated in a personalized way, according to the personal conditions of their physiological and psychological development, and taking into due consideration the cultural environment of life and the adolescent's daily experience. In order to evaluate properly what they should say to each child, it is very important that parents first of all seek light from the Lord in prayer and that they discuss this together so that their words will be neither too explicit nor too vague. Giving too many details to children is counterproductive. But delaying the first information for too long is irresponsible, because every human person has natural inquisitiveness in this regard and, sooner or later, everyone begins to ask themselves questions, especially in cultures where too much can be seen, even in public.

#### **2.1.3.2 Sexuality Education in the Philippines**

There have been serious debates over school-based sexuality education in the Philippines, a country with a high birth-rate and high poverty levels. These two problems have been attributed to lack of information about family planning measures. The advocates of sexuality education believe that offering sexuality education to pupils in schools would curb population problems. The Philippine government and the United Nations (UN) backed a piloted programme in primary and high schools, which aimed to promote safer sex, limit the speed of HIV and AIDS and prevent unwanted pregnancies (Gutierrez, 2010). This was to be done through the introduction of school-based sexuality education as a way of disseminating information to the teenagers in schools. However, the Catholic Church and some powerful conservative crusaders against sexuality education campaigned strongly to shut the project down, saying it was going to break the nation's religious-based moral code. They argued that sexuality education in schools was not the answer to curb high population problems and poverty levels. Instead it would promote promiscuity among children and would not promote the proper values that they wanted their children to receive in schools. They viewed sexuality education as a family affair whose responsibility lay with the parents and not with the school. Its introduction in schools meant impinging on parents constitutional rights to educate

their children based on their religious beliefs. According to Gutierrez (ibid), parents have rights to decide the type of education for their children. Introducing sexuality education in schools without the consent of parents meant doing so against their wishes.

In addition, some Catholic bishops added that issues that were not meant for young people should not be taught in schools. These remarks were made due to the fact that the UN programme intended to teach young people on methods of family planning to reduce the problem of overpopulation. However, the advocates of sexuality education attributed the above arguments to prejudices and preconceived ideas that their opponents held. They defended sexuality education by emphasizing that the topics included in the curriculum were prepared by professionals who made sure that the content would be educational. Gutierrez (ibid.) reports that the topics were not designed to excite prurient interests by encouraging young people to engage in sexual relationships. Instead they were designed to help them handle their sexuality as part of the process of growing up.

#### **2.1.4 Sexuality Education from an Islamic Point of View**

Islam has no rigid regulations governing the teaching of sexuality education in schools. However, it is worth mentioning that just like Christianity, this religion has divergent views on the subject of school-based sexuality education. Most Muslim parents who send their children to public schools have the full knowledge of what is taught in those schools, including sexuality education. Ilyasu Ibn Muhammad (2010) in “Weekly Trust” reports that sexuality education in Islam is taught theoretically and not practically. There is nothing wrong with a teacher explaining in detail various aspects of human sexuality to a class. In fact, there are various writings in Islam that are used to explain issues relating to sex. Some books, for instance, explain sensitive aspects of sexuality such as how the sperm and semen are emitted. Nevertheless, it is considered wrong for a teacher to demonstrate to pupils the sensitive aspects of sexuality which are deemed to have the capacity of corrupting their morals. For example, some public schools have manikins which are used to demonstrate to the class on how to wear a condom for prevention of STDs and unwanted pregnancy. This is deemed wrong because Muslims believe that it corrupts young peoples’ morals, leading to destruction of the Islamic moral fibre. The general view of some Islamic scholars concerning school-based sexuality education seems to

be that there is nothing wrong in children learning about their sexuality. On the contrary, it is important because when they mature, they will know what to do in the light of difficult circumstances and situations that may arise in relation to sexual intercourse. Such situations could involve peer pressure, coercion by elderly people or even rape.

Shahid Athar (2010) another Muslim scholar said that Muslim parents should not shun topics that teach their children on sexuality. They need to correct misinformation which their children receive at school. In his discussion concerning school-based sexuality education, he begins with a quotation from “What kids need to know” by Dr. Sol Gordon and others which states, “Most opposition to sexuality education is based on the assumption that knowledge is harmful. But research in this area reveals that ignorance and unresolved curiosity, not knowledge, are harmful. Failure to tell children what they want and need to know is one reason for the highest rates of out-of-wedlock teen’s pregnancy and abortions” (ibid.:1). Some Muslim parents believe that the word ‘sex’ is dirty. They do not feel comfortable to discuss sexuality with their children, but they do not sexuality education being taught at their children’s school by secular or non-Muslim teachers, their peers and the media. Athar explains that Muslim parents should know that sex is not always dirty. It is an aspect of life that was even discussed in the Quran by Prophet Muhammad with his companions. He attributes the behaviour of some Muslim parents to their cultural upbringing and not their religious training. Athar said, “These parents are brought up in a state of ignorance with regard to sex issues. As a result, they may not be comfortable with their own sexuality or its expressions. They leave Islamic education to Islamic Sunday schools and sex education to American public schools and the media” (ibid.:1). Based on the foregoing arguments, Athar believes that it is necessary for young people to receive instructions on sexuality education, but the information should be censored by parents so that young people would not be misled.

Another Islamic scholar further, expresses concern over the age at which young people begin to receive instructions in sexuality education. According to Ilyasu Ibn Muhammad (2010), it is necessary that these instructions begin at an early age, say the age of seven, before the child becomes fully mature. If possible, children should start receiving instructions on sexuality education right from primary through to secondary school as against opponents who stress that sexuality issues are not children affairs but are meant for adults. In Islam, what matters is the presentation of

information on sexuality and the person presenting it to young people. It is deemed right for mothers to teach their daughters and fathers their sons on issues of sexuality.

The content of sexuality education has been another issue which has attracted controversial debate among different scholars. Within Islam, some scholars have argued that there is no harm in discussing topics on sexual intercourse, homosexuality and even masturbation with young people. Nevertheless, it is important to teach them about their harmful effects so that when they grow up and mature they would be able to deal with these issues without problems. Some scholars within Islam have argued that sexuality education offered in public schools is incomplete because it does not cover issues on morality associated with sex and the institution of marriage. It is considered immoral to teach young people about the use of contraceptives. They strongly condemn teaching materials that include the use of condoms and other contraceptive measures as a means to curb teenage pregnancy and STDs. It is believed that such topics encourage promiscuity among teenagers who are falsely assured of not becoming pregnant when they use them. In situations where they might have been taught about condoms and other contraceptives, Islam emphasizes the need to let teenagers know about the negative effects of using such things, and supplement this with an ethical dimension by teaching them that condoms and contraceptives could only be used when people are lawfully married.

### **2.1.5 Islam and the West on Sexuality Education**

Some Muslim scholars claim that sexuality education has been practiced by the religion since its inception fourteen hundred years ago, unlike in the West which realised the importance of sexuality education only after emerging from the darkness of the middle ages. Bayat (2010) claims that Islamic sexuality education is poles apart from the Western concept of sexuality education which he terms as “sex corruption”. He describes the Western approach to this topic as being crude compared to the Islamic approach which he believes is more refined. His argument is based on the assumption that the approach taken by Western culture to teach sexuality education to young people is wrong. Instead of benefitting its learners and guiding them correctly, it creates more complications and corrupts their values. Bayat further holds that the liberal attitude of the West towards sexual indulgence is responsible for the untold human suffering and misery which has resulted in high incidences of HIV and AIDS infections. In this argument, Islam is concerned with

the liberal approach taken by the West when teaching sexuality education. For example, the idea of giving instructions on sexuality to both boys and girls in the same class is strongly condemned. Islam also condemns the idea of giving freedom to young people to mingle with members of the opposite sex with the intent of knowing each other and sharing ideas. According to Islam, boys and girls are not supposed to date. They are discouraged from doing this as it is believed that it encourages immorality. Bayat stresses that if this kind of attitude by the West continues unchecked, it would destroy the morality of Islamic society because some Muslim youths attend these public schools and have non-Muslim friends whose morals are corrupt.

## **2.2 Studies on the Teaching of Sexuality Education in Zambian Schools**

The education policy in Zambia supports the teaching of sexuality education to young people in schools. However, the policy is not very strong on this matter. There is only a statement in the Educational Policy Document without further explanations on how to teach the subject. As a result, it has not been easy to implement its teaching in schools. There has not been any study conducted to ascertain the reasons why sexuality education is not taught as a subject at secondary school level in Zambia. As a result of this, there is no literature connected specifically to the current study. Nonetheless, some of the studies conducted on the teaching of sexuality education in Zambia include the study by Pillai and Yates (1992) entitled, *Teenage Sexual activities in Zambia: The Need for a Sex Education Policy*. The study revealed that teenage sexual activities among secondary school girls demonstrate the need for a sex education policy as an initial stage in controlling teenage fertility in Zambia. The study showed that a large percentage of teenage females enter into close relationships with males at young ages and a high proportion of them engage in sexual intercourse compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, it revealed that most of these sexually active females do not use family planning methods even if most of them have heard about modern methods. Pillai and Yates attributed this to lack of sex education from parents and suggested that there is need to provide a modern institutional sex education programme. In this study, attention was paid to family planning methods among secondary school girls in controlling teenage fertility. Little attention was paid to studies with regard to how both sexes could

protect themselves from risky sexual behaviour that could in turn affect their academic performance.

Another study which is similar to the present study is by Rasing (2003) entitled, *HIV and AIDS and Sex Education among the Youth in Zambia: Towards Behavioural Change*. In this study, Rasing compared sex education in the past which was taught during initiation ceremonies with sex education taught by teachers in schools, with particular attention to pupils in primary schools. The study revealed that traditionally, sex education for boys and girls was given by grandparents to their grandchildren, which means that grandmothers taught their granddaughters and sometimes their grandsons, while grandfathers taught their grandsons. The information given was usually not straight-forward but indirect in the form of stories (*inshimi*) and examples. Nevertheless, at present all parents consider this primarily a task for teachers, and to a slightly lesser extent the task of parents and other adults. Rasing indicated that teachers are at a certain distance as compared to parents, and therefore they are considered the right persons to teach young people about sex. Young people also seem to be more comfortable when teachers talk about sex and HIV and AIDS than their parents. In addition, teachers are considered more knowledgeable than parents, and might therefore be considered to be in a better position to talk about sex and AIDS. Moreover, the study showed that from grade six onwards, the lessons about sex education and HIV and AIDS include more details, while in most of the lower classes children are informed about it at their level of understanding. The latter is done by the anti-AIDS-clubs (Local initiatives on HIV and AIDS information). In almost all schools a special teacher has been appointed to inform young people about HIV and AIDS. This teacher teaches one class weekly for one hour about HIV and AIDS. Abstinence and the use of condoms are emphasized.

The present study departs from that of Pillai and Yates (1992) as well as that of Rasing (2003) in the sense that the earlier focused on family planning methods to control fertility among secondary school girls. Similarly, the latter focussed on how HIV and AIDS have altered the teaching of sex education to young people by comparing the past and the present. However, the present study aims at analysing the current curriculum for Zambian secondary schools to ascertain the extent to which young people are taught about issues relating to their sexuality. It also aims at presenting the views of various stakeholders on the implementation of sexuality education in secondary schools. And finally, it presents an ethical analysis on how

best sexuality education could be taught to young people in schools using the UNESCO International Guidelines.

### **2.3 Summary**

This chapter has reviewed the studies that are relevant to the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian schools beginning with documentary review on debate for and against school-based sexuality education. The chapter also reviews studies done in Zambia by Pillai and Yates (1992), and Rasing (2003). Documentary review concerning the debate on school-based sexuality education reveals that most arguments are centred on the content and its approach in teaching. Some conservative Christians and Muslims who oppose school-based sexuality education have argued that good sexuality education should be offered only at home by parents. Their emphasis is on building good character by teaching young people good morals such as abstinence from sex and to avoid boy-girl relationships that could corrupt their morals. They strongly condemn the content of school-based sexuality education programmes by saying that they lack important aspects, such as how young people should develop sound morals and values. Instead they promote immorality which results in moral decadence amongst young people.

However, the advocates of school-based sexuality education have strongly defended the content by stating that all the materials have been prepared by professionals to cater for the appropriate ages of children. According to UNESCO the approaches to school-based sexuality education were made in such a way that “they are right-based, culturally sensitive, and respectful of sexual and gender diversity, comprehensive, scientifically accurate, age appropriate and evidence-based. They were intended to address the diverse realities and needs of young people’s lives across a wide range of settings” (2009: 4). It is also argued that sexuality education in schools could be a comprehensive response to curb HIV and AIDS among young people.

Furthermore, the programmes on school-based sexuality education are not intended to teach young people bad morals as the opponents fear. Instead, comprehensive programmes on school-based sexuality education help to reinforce the teachings of parents at home and to fill the gaps that could not have been attended to by parents. There could be certain information which parents would not be comfortable to discuss with their children, probably due to cultural and religious

beliefs. It would be imperative for schools to take up the challenge to disseminate such information to young people.



# CHAPTER 3

## Theoretical Framework

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study consisting of Rights theory and Utilitarianism. The two ethical theories are later applied in chapter five to analyse the findings of the study from an ethical point of view.

### 3.1 Brief overview of Rights Theory

To begin with, it is important to distinguish between ‘rights’ and ‘human rights’. According to Velasquez et al. (2010s), many moral controversies today are centred on the language of rights. Whenever people are giving justifications regarding certain actions, they tend to say that they have rights to this and that, for example, a right to own property, a right to life and a right to education. However, there is no straightforward definition of what rights are. In the strictest sense rights are justifiable claims on others. For instance, when young people in Zambia claim to have a right to education, they have a valid claim against the state. The state has an obligation or duty to provide the necessary education to them.

Rights can also be understood in terms of liberties or freedoms. These rights are somehow weaker than claims. For example, if person A has a right to choose a career in life, person B has an obligation not to interfere with the freedom of person A in choosing a career. It is also important to understand that claims of rights are not always absolute, they can be *prima facie*. This simply means that rights can be overridden by other rights. An absolute right is distinguished from a *prima facie* right in the sense that an absolute right is more important than the *prima facie*. However, most writers in ethics agree that a right can only become absolute if it has an overriding status (Beauchamp, 1982:188). There are also instances when two or more rights can come into significant conflict. It may be difficult to decide which right takes precedence over others. In such instances, morality demands that we judge them not because the law says so, but because they are good in themselves.

There is also a distinction between legal rights and moral rights. Legal rights exist in virtue of given laws. For example, in Zambia each individual has a right to

education (Ministry of Education, 1996). Although this right is not enshrined in the Zambian constitution, the Zambian government, through the Ministry of Education, recognizes it as a human right and strives to make sure that young people are provided with the necessary education to enable them realize their full potential.

Human rights on the other hand, do not belong to the category of legal rights. These rights exist prior to legal rights. Human rights are moral rights possessed by all human beings simply because they are human beings (Donnelly, 2003). Moral rights could be used to evaluate legal rights and rules as being just or unjust. Human rights as moral rights have also come to attain a legal or semi-legal status, since they are now embodied in a number of international declarations, conventions and covenants. Even if the idea of human rights remains basically a non-legal one, they are rights which humans are said to possess whether or not they are recognized in positive codes of law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the dignity of all human beings regardless of sex, race, religion and age. The Declaration is based on the 'intrinsic dignity' of all persons and affirms the equal rights of all men and women, in addition to their autonomy. The Declaration gives human rights primacy over the power of the state. Although states are allowed to regulate rights, they are forbidden from violating them. Article 11 of the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child states that "state parties to the present charter shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realization of this right" (Sacco, 1990).

### **3.2 A brief overview of utilitarianism**

According to Bramsted and Melituish (1978: 13), the term 'utilitarianism' was originally coined to describe the school of thought formed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). It was loosely used to describe those in the history of ethics whose criterion for moral judgement was based on maximizing the good. It is also worth mentioning that all utilitarians share the conviction that all human actions are to be morally assessed in terms of their production of maximal value (Beauchamp, 1982: 80). However, there is a question on how to determine which things are valuable. However, utilitarianism is not a single ethical theory. It belongs to a broad group of ethical theories called 'Consequentialist theories'. These theories hold that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends solely on its consequences. The utility principle also states that an act is morally right if there is no other possible act that

has overall seen better consequences (Beauchamp, 1982; Raphael, 1981). The implication of this is that when deciding whether an action is right or wrong, it is always necessary to go beyond the action to the consequences. If the consequences of an action are better than the consequences of its alternatives, then this action is worth pursuing.

Another point worth noting here is the distinction between *hedonistic* utilitarians and *pluralistic* utilitarians. Bentham and Mill belonged to hedonistic utilitarians who conceived utility in terms of happiness or pleasure. They argued that the good is equivalent to happiness or pleasure and that all other things are valuable only as means to the production of pleasure or avoidance of pain (ibid.: 81). Pluralistic utilitarians on the other hand, do not measure intrinsic value in terms of pleasure or happiness. Moore, a pluralist utilitarian, argued that “even certain states of consciousness involving intellectual activity and aesthetic appreciation possess intrinsic value apart from their pleasantness” (ibid.: 83). Another third approach apart from hedonistic and pluralistic utilitarianism is based on individual *preferences*. The proponents of this approach analyze utility in terms of an individual’s actual preferences not as intrinsically valuable experiences. The explanations put forward are that to maximize an individual’s utility is to maximize what he/she has chosen or would choose from the available alternatives. To maximize the utility of all persons affected by an action or policy is to maximize the utility of the aggregate group (ibid.: 84). This approach to value based on preferences is favoured by many and is seen as superior to the other two.

To explain further what utilitarianism is, let us consider some of its main components.

**a) Welfarism:** This component of utilitarianism states that the value of the consequences depends on the welfare or well-being found in the consequences as opposed to other goods. The philosophical notion of well-being encompasses both the positive and the negative aspects. The positive aspect means how well a person’s life is going for that person, that is, what is good for that person. It could also mean what is in the interest of a person. Another term that is used in this context is ‘flourishing.’ A flourishing life refers to a life that is going well. The negative aspect of well-being refers to a situation where someone is living in agony. Other terms which are used to describe this negative situation include ‘ill-being,’ ‘ill-faring’ or ‘unhappiness.’

**b) Universal Consequentialism:** This component states that the goodness of morality depends on the consequences of all people as opposed to only the individual agent, present people or any other limited group. In other words, consequentialism is not restricted to a particular group of people or individuals but it takes into consideration everyone who will be affected by the consequences of an action. As a universalistic theory, it tries to promote the well-being of all affected. That is to say, it seeks to promote a flourishing life not only for individuals but for particular everyone who is directly and indirectly affected.

**c) Maximizing the Good:** Utilitarianism holds that moral goodness depends only on those consequences that are the best as opposed to those that are satisfactory or are an improvement on the status quo. For example, if there are only two options available, one should choose that option that will result in more well-being than the other. In this sense, maximization entails that we do not choose an alternative that is worse than another that can be chosen.

**d) Impartiality:** This component holds that in determining moral goodness, benefits to one person matter just as much as similar benefits to any other person. In other words, utilitarianism requires impartiality. In the words of Bentham: ‘everyone to count for one, nobody for more than one.’ In this case utilitarianism discourages bias either towards oneself or towards another person. This idea can be further clarified by comparing it with two biased views, i.e., ‘Ethical Egoism’ and ‘Ethical Altruism’. Ethical egoism is extremely biased in favour of the agent. Others only count insofar as they influence his/her good. Ethical altruism on the other hand, refers to the idea that one must favour the welfare of others more than his/her own. However, utilitarianism is neither egoistic nor altruistic, it is impartial.

### 3.3 Summary

This chapter has discussed the ethical theories which are Rights theory and Utilitarianism that will be applied in chapter five to evaluate the findings of the study. Under rights theory, a distinction was made between rights and human rights. Rights have been explained in terms of claims and liberties. It has also been noted that not all claim rights are absolute, they can be *prima facie* in which case one claim right can be overridden by another. Human rights, however, have been explained as moral rights possessed by all human beings by virtue of being humans. The United

Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter have been cited as two bodies that support human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the dignity of all human beings regardless of sex, race, religion and age.

Utilitarianism belongs to consequentialist theories which hold that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends solely on its consequences. The utility principle also states that an act is morally right if there is no other possible act that has overall seen better consequences. In addition, the principle of utility has been discussed according to three approaches which are hedonistic utilitarian, pluralistic utilitarian and preference utility. Hedonistic utilitarian judges utility value in terms of happiness and pleasure. Pluralistic utilitarian as argued by Moore holds that even certain states of consciousness involving intellectual activity and aesthetic appreciation possess intrinsic value apart from their pleasantness. Preference utility measures value in terms of individual's preferences, and these are seen to satisfy the needs and desires of individuals who choose them.

# CHAPTER 4

## Research Findings, Discussion and Analysis

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study on school-based sexuality education from different perspectives. The main purpose of the presentation is to provide answers to the second and third research questions posed in Chapter One. The second question sought to assess the current curriculum on sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. The third sought to find out the views of various stakeholders concerning the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. The second research question was tackled by discussing the extent to which sexuality education is offered in the current Zambian secondary school curriculum. This was done by analysing four subjects namely; Environmental Science, Human Biology, Civic Education and Religious Education (both syllabus 2044 and 2046). These subjects were selected because they have components that deal with issues on sexuality. The third research question was addressed by getting the views from key informants on the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools.

### 4.1 The Current State of Sexuality Education in the Zambian Secondary School Curriculum

Sexuality education in Zambian schools forms what could be termed as the *hidden curriculum*. This means that the subject does not stand on its own like other subjects. There is no policy on paper to teach sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. Nevertheless, sexuality education is partially integrated in other subjects as this chapter shows. The four subjects where issues of sex and sexuality are taught include Environmental Science, Biology, Civic Education and Religious Education both syllabuses 2044 and 2046. The first subject is offered at junior secondary or upper basic school level, while the other three are offered at senior secondary or high school level. Environmental Science is a compulsory subject which is taken by every pupil at junior secondary level. But the topic that touches on sex and sexuality is not

detailed, leaving young people with little information. On the other hand, Biology, Civic Education and Religious Education are optional subjects in some schools, meaning that not all pupils learn about sex and sexuality. In what follows, each of the four subjects has been analysed to see the extent to which issues of sex and sexuality are discussed or covered.

#### **4.1.1 Environmental Science**

As mentioned above, sexuality education does not exist as a detailed component like other topics. It is discussed briefly, just as a cross-cutting issue within other topics. Even then it does not bear the name “sexuality education”. Issues of sex and sexuality are briefly discussed under Human Reproduction. It is in lessons under this topic that adolescents learn about their physical body make-up and how to deal with their sexual feelings in a more responsible manner. Young people learn about the physical changes that come along with puberty in both sexes. They learn about the different parts of their reproductive organs and their functions. They are also taught about the consequences of engaging in casual sex, which include unwanted pregnancy and acquiring STDs including HIV and AIDS which could see them dropping out of school. However, this is not enough as it does not cover all the necessary information that young people require to know. For instance, the skills they need to deal with peer pressure and self assertiveness to avoid being coerced into sexual activities.

#### **4.1.2 Human Biology**

This is an optional subject which pupils take at senior secondary level. The subject has very little content on issues of sex and sexuality which are covered under human reproduction. The content is similar to what is covered in Environmental Science, concentrating more on the physical body make-up and the process of procreation. Adolescents learn also about issues of safer sex to avoid getting pregnant and contracting STDs. There is a component on HIV and AIDS explaining how the virus is acquired and how it affects the immune system. Pupils are also taught that there is no cure yet for AIDS and that only antiretroviral drugs which help to boost the immune system exist. The component also deals with issues of stigma and discrimination as evils that should be done away with and it sensitizes young people to the fact that some children are born with the virus and hence, need support and care. Just like environmental science, human biology does not cover all the necessary

issues that young people need to know in order to deal with problems concerning their sexuality. This is because sexuality education does not only deal with the physical health of the human body but also with the social and spiritual welfare of pupils.

#### **4.1.3 Civic Education**

This is a recent subject which was introduced at senior secondary or high school level as an extension of Civics which is offered at junior secondary or upper basic school level. However, Civic Education is broader than Civics and it has important themes such as Health Education (HIV and AIDS), Self-esteem, Self-development, Life Skills, Relationships and Sexuality, among others. In grade eleven, young people learn about the causes of HIV and AIDS, its impact on individuals and the nation as a whole, and what they ought to do to avoid contracting the virus. Young people are also taught about defilement cases and the steps to take if such cases happen either to them or to their friends. In a grade 11 Civic Education text book (Ministry of Education, 2003b: 125) *defilement* is defined as the act of having unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of 16 years. It includes:

- i) touching the private parts of a child,
- ii) making a child touch or play with sexual organs of an older person,
- iii) showing children pictures of naked men and women with intentions of exciting them and thereafter abusing them.

Pupils are taught that defilement is an offence contrary to section 138(1) of the penal code, which states that any adult person who unlawfully and carnally “knows” any girl less than 16 years is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment. It is hoped that with this information, young people will have the courage to report perpetrators of such evil acts. In addition, issues of sexual assault, rape and sexual harassment are discussed. Pupils learn how to protect themselves against sexual assault and ways of resisting rape. In situations where rape has occurred, pupils are taught to do the following: report to the police, get a medical report from the nearest health centre, visit a counsellor and seek legal advice from recognised institutions such as Legal Resource Foundation (LRF) or Legal Aid Clinic for Women. It is necessary that adolescents are given this kind of information at school because some parents do not avail such information to their children. In other cases girls are even blamed for having been raped, especially if the rapist is a close relative. They are told to keep



quiet and never mention it to anyone. Furthermore, pupils also learn the right procedures to take against sexual harassment. This is very important because young people may not realise that they have been sexually harassed. Similarly, young people hold wrong conceptions about their sexuality with regard to male supremacy. The topic on *Gender equity and equality* states that there is male monopoly of control over female reproduction. There is a misconception that a husband has a right to control the sexual relationship in a home. He controls the use of condoms in a way making it difficult for a woman to protect herself from pregnancy, HIV, AIDS and other STDs (ibid.: 93). Unfortunately, this important information does not reach every pupil who is in secondary school because the subject is not compulsory for all pupils at senior secondary or high school level, leaving more adolescents vulnerable to sexual harassment.

Teenage pregnancy is another ethical problem that is discussed in Civic Education. Adolescents learn about the factors that contribute to this problem which include:

- i) Peer Pressure: Some boys and girls engage in sexual activities because they want to be like others. This often results in teenage pregnancies.
- ii) Personal development: As children grow, they develop sexual feelings and emotions, which they do not understand. As a result, they want to fulfil these urges.
- iii) Lack of sex education: Parents should discuss sexual issues with their children.
- iv) Influence from society and the media: Young people get wrong information from people they socialise with, from other cultures, from modern songs, television and radio programmes.
- iv) Economic issues: Due to high poverty levels some girls tend to engage in sexual activities for monetary gains (Ministry of Education, 2003b: 131-132).

#### **4.1.4 Religious Education**

The Zambian high school curriculum has two syllabi for religious education. There is syllabus 2044 which is a Catholic-oriented and 2046, a Protestant-oriented syllabus. The first one is widely offered in Catholic schools. It is also offered side by side with 2046 in most government and private schools. However, both syllabi deal with issues of sex and sexuality from different perspectives which include the present day

situation, African tradition (in the past), Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. From these various perspectives, adolescents are taught about the purpose of sex and sexuality. They are taught how to maintain good morals by not indulging in premarital sex because sex is meant for married people.

#### **4.1.4.1 Religious Education (syllabus 2044)**

This syllabus has topics on sexuality from grade 11 to grade 12. There are three sub-themes under the major theme, “Man and Woman”. These include: family life, sex difference and the person, and courtship and marriage. Although pupils are supposed to learn all the three themes, teachers often teach and help pupils to specialize in only one or two for examination purposes.

##### **a) Family Life**

Under this sub-theme, (Ministry of Education, 1986a) sex and sexuality are discussed from the Hindu and Christian points of view. Hindus teach that boys and girls who intend to marry are not allowed to mix, go on dates or mingle before marriage. Virginitly is held in high esteem and a boy cannot marry a girl who has had sexual experience. According to Hinduism, sex is meant for married couples and marriage is considered a sacred wedlock that should last a life time. Divorce is not allowed except in cases of insanity. Faithfulness is encouraged and lustful looks are discouraged as this leads to promiscuity.

Similarly, according to this syllabus, Christians teach that sex can only be expressed fully in a marriage relationship. It becomes a sin when it is done before and outside marriage. Adolescents are also taught that sexuality is not merely biological, but must be an integral part of love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another till death. This calls for respect of the other person’s body not to be used as a sexual object. Additionally, polygamy, divorce, adultery, fornication, masturbation and homosexuality are forbidden by Christians because they do not fulfil God’s plan of marriage and family life.

##### **b) Sex Differences and the Person**

This sub-theme begins with teenage growth. Pupils learn about awakening of sex interests and male and female sexual responses. They learn that a man’s instinctive reaction to female attraction is predominantly physical, whereas a woman’s natural response to male attraction is predominantly psychological (ibid.: 107). The topic

explains that the biological make-up of males is different from those of females. They are aroused faster, even by the mere dressing of women. Therefore, girls should dress properly to avoid unnecessary sexual stimulation of men. For Muslims, the dressing of a woman is very important to avoid committing sin. Women in Islam are associated with an old tradition known as the *veil*. Every Muslim woman should beautify herself with the veil of honour, dignity, chastity, purity and integrity. She has to refrain from all deeds and gestures that might stir the passions of people other than her legitimate husband (ibid.: 115). This teaching is followed strictly by Muslim women, and mothers guide their daughters in obeying it. From the foregoing teachings, young people learn about proper dressing and self-respect. This could help both males and females to avoid coerced sexual activities.

Another component on boy-girl relationships teaches them on the differences between love and infatuation. They learn how to differentiate the two concepts once they happen to be in boy-girl relationships. They are also taught to develop good morals by abstaining from sex till marriage and to have self respect. From the African tradition point of view, pupils learn that issues of sex and sexuality were taught to young people during initiation ceremonies. Whenever young people reached puberty, rituals were performed and this marked the entrance into adulthood. Both sexes were taught to refrain from sex and to be polite and obedient to elders.

### **c) Courtship and Marriage**

This sub-theme explores a good number of issues concerning sexuality. It looks at the question of marriage and the prior steps that lead to the possibility of a successful marriage. The topic opens up with boy-girl relationship discussed as follows:

- i) Adolescence: As young people struggle for identity, they resent directions from elders and want to make their own decisions. Any defect in their bodies or lack of nice clothes becomes a source of worry. When they are appreciated by a member of the opposite sex, it becomes a gift.
- ii) Adolescence: At this stage, the growth of sexual responsibility develops. Young people develop interest in the opposite sex and to be popular becomes an overriding concern. New sexual feelings arise that one has never felt before and they drive them towards relationships with members of the opposite sex.

- iii) Adolescence: As young people learn to mature and care, they long to be in the company of the opposite sex. They long to talk and share together and enjoy the fascination of learning to understand each other's world and so enlarge their own.
- iv) Adolescence: From falling in love to a decision to care. They are taught that infatuation is the first step on the way to learning to love. They also learn that real love demands knowledge of the other person, a reflective decision on their compatibility and a decision never to selfishly exploit the loved one, but to care and help the loved one reach full human and spiritual development.
- v) Adolescence: Dating towards selective companionship, they learn that this is healthy if the boy and girl are mature enough to control their sexual desires. They learn to know and understand each other better before they commit themselves to a relationship in marriage. However, for those who have not matured enough to integrate their sexuality in a responsible way, it can become a deceptive seeking after sexual pleasure.
- vi) Adolescence: Keeping the desire for sexual intercourse in perspective, they learn that sexual intercourse is only one way of showing love in a marriage relationship. It can be an expression of love or an empty imitation of one of love's most profound acts. At its best it can be a special message for the uniquely important person one is married to; at its worst, it is an act of violence, attacking the very dignity and worth of another person. Only in marriage can sexual intercourse achieve its fullest potential for building and expressing love (Ministry of Education, 1986b: 5-6).

Pupils are also taught about the Hindus' perception of courtship and marriage. They learn that a Hindu girl is very careful about keeping herself chaste and pure as otherwise she would be considered an outcast in society and would not get good marriage alliance. Equally, a boy who has a reputation of fooling around with girls would find it difficult to get a descent wife. This is why courtship and marriage in Hindu society is rare, and most marriages are arranged by parents.

The sub-theme ends with the Christian perception using scriptures from the Bible. Selected scriptures talk about the purpose of sex, fidelity in marriage, no fornication and adultery, no divorce, genuine love, mutual respect, understanding and self giving between partners in marriage. To cite a few, in Genesis 2:18-25, young people learn about God's purpose of creating a woman. The interpretation given is

that a woman was created to take away the loneliness of man and their lives can only find full meaning in a marriage relationship. For instance, the last two verses state: “that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one. The man and woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.” The book of Hosea, on the other hand, is used to teach on fidelity in marriage. Hosea chapters 1 and 2 explain that unfaithfulness in marriage can ruin a marriage relationship. Once a couple decides to marry, they are supposed to be faithful to each other. Young people also learn that in Christianity cohabiting is morally wrong according to this syllabus. For example, in John 4:16-19, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman to refrain from such relationships, and in John 8:1-11, young people learn that fornication and adultery are not acceptable as well.

#### **4.1.4.2 Religious Education (Syllabus 2046)**

The pupils who take this syllabus learn about sex and sexuality from different perspectives. For instance, in Islam, the teaching on sex outside marriage is very much emphasized so that those who are caught breaking this law receive severe punishment. Islam teaches that “the correct relationship between man and woman is marriage. Free sex-licence and immoral behaviour are not allowed as they are considered to be sinful. Adultery is punishable under the criminal law of Islam (sharia law), which involves severe beating or death by stoning so that such unsocial behaviour does not become common” (Ministry of Education, 1984: 200). In fact, many Muslim marriages cannot take place unless the woman’s virginity is proved.

In Part 2, on “Christian Attitudes to Sex and Marriage”, pupils learn that it is God’s plan that sexual relationships belong to married couples only. To use sex outside marriage and to use it selfishly for one’s desires is to sin against one’s body. Christians are called upon to refrain from sexual immorality but to use their bodies for God’s glory (1 Corinthians 6). Another scripture passage with similar teachings is 1 Thessalonians 4: 3-7. It talks about the life that pleases God. According to this syllabus, pupils are taught that God wants Christians to be free from sexual immorality, cautioning men to avoid lustful desires. Instead they should live in holiness. These teachings are summarized under “Christian Standards for Sexual Behaviour” as follows:

- i) The first important point is no sex before marriage. Purity of life is commanded.

- ii) There must be no unfaithfulness after marriage. Faithfulness is commanded.
- iii) Self-control is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Christians must control their bodies according to God's will and not by human desires.
- iv) Immorality is sin. Many people excuse it as human nature, but it is not true. A deceitful heart harbours evil ideas which make a person to do immoral things.
- v) Christians should not even talk about sexual evils and moral indecency, except to counsel people about them, and even then they should not be discussed unnecessarily.
- vi) Modern standards of sexual behaviour contrast sharply with Christian standards, because there is so much freedom in present day sexual activities. There is excessive liberty of action, abuse of freedom and disregard of morals. Life without control leads into sin and lawlessness. Young people follow the desires of their bodies and not the Christian standards (Ministry of Education, 1984: 149).

In a nutshell, the above section has presented four subjects in the Zambian secondary school curriculum which have relevant topics on sex and sexuality. It has revealed that there is little sexuality education offered to young people in secondary schools. This is due to the fact that the subjects where sexuality issues are taught do not have comprehensive topics. Hence, sexuality education is not extensively covered. From the sciences young people learn about their body make-up and understand the physical and emotional changes that they develop as adolescents. They also learn about health issues and how to avoid getting STDs. In Civic Education, they are taught about their rights. For instance, they are sensitized on legal actions to take against sexual abusers. Lastly, in Religious Education, adolescents learn about sex and sexuality from moral and spiritual points of view. In the two syllabi of Religious Education pupils learn that most teachings regarding sex and sexuality are similar in various religious traditions. There is great emphasis on abstinence from sex for unmarried people and faithfulness for those in marriage. However, it is unfortunate that very few pupils receive this important information due to the fact that the subjects are optional, except for Environmental Science. Besides, the components are not detailed enough to cover the necessary skills needed by young people to protect themselves from sexual misconduct.

## **4.2 Views of Key Informants on the Implementation of Sexuality Education in Zambian Secondary Schools**

This section presents the findings of the research from primary data collection which involved interviewing various stakeholders concerning their views on school-based sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. The findings are presented in the following order: policy makers and implementers from the Ministry of Education, head teachers in schools, religious leaders from Christianity and Islam, parents and from a non-governmental organization (see appendices).

### **4.2.1 Views of Policy Makers and Implementers**

Interviews held with policy makers and implementers revealed that sexuality education is already there in schools. However, it is discussed as one of the cross cutting issues within other subjects, just as with HIV and AIDS education. For example, Environmental Science and Biology have a topic on human reproduction in which pupils both at upper basic and high school levels learn about the physical and health issues of sexuality. Another subject is Civic Education where pupils are taught about their rights regarding sex and sexuality. They learn that there are human rights that can protect them from being sexually abused or coerced into having sex with anyone without their consent. No one should force them into early marriages, be it parents or other relatives. From the health point of view, they are also taught about the negative implications of indulging in sex at a tender age such as getting infected with STDs, becoming pregnant and eventually dropping out of school. In Religious Education, both syllabi 2044 and 2046 have components on sex and sexuality in relation to moral values. Young people are taught about the meaning and purpose of sex from various religious beliefs and traditions. The emphasis in all these religious traditions is on abstinence. Young people are taught that they are supposed to remain pure until marriage because sex is meant for married couples. However, it was admitted that not all pupils receive this important information because these subjects are optional in some schools, except Environmental Science at junior secondary school.

Officials at the Ministry of Education headquarters and Curriculum Development Centre in Lusaka expressed ignorance about the draft document, “International Guidelines on Sexuality Education”, from UNESCO. They said that they were not aware of such a document so they could not make comments on it. But

some officials said that if the document was prepared by professional researchers who, after gathering information from countries worldwide discovered that the programme was working well, it would be good for Zambia to implement it as well. However, they were quick to suggest that other stakeholders like religious groups, traditional leaders, politicians and NGOs should be consulted for their inputs so as to come up would a policy that would be acceptable to everyone.

The importance of implementing sexuality education in secondary schools cannot be overemphasized, especially that adolescents are excited about their sexual feelings. The views of officials from the Ministry of Education were that young people need information and skills on matters of their sexuality. They believed such information and skills would enable them to make responsible decisions on whether to indulge in sexual activities or not. Mrs. Tuchili from CDC expressed concern over the lack of accurate information on sex and health education among adolescents in this era of HIV and AIDS. She mentioned that the life skills that young people learn in grade five can be extended to higher grades up to secondary school level. She pointed out that improvements can be made to the content so that it is more elaborate compared to what is taught at grade five level.

The views of Mr. Simuntala an official from the Ministry of Education at district offices in Kasama were that the introduction of sexuality education in schools and higher learning institutions was long overdue. It should have been introduced earlier because young people were in desperate need of this kind of education. He held that if it were implemented fully, there would probably be no need for the re-entry policy for girls who wish to go back to school after getting pregnant and giving birth. Mr. Simuntala further said that introducing the re-entry policy in schools was like treating symptoms instead of addressing the root-cause of the problems. According to him, sexuality education would help teenage girls to avoid psychological traumas, self stigma and poor academic performance that teenage mothers experienced.

Mrs. Mulenga, another official from the Ministry of Education provincial offices in Kasama, expressed concern over the abortion cases that were happening in girls' boarding schools, and attributed this to lack of sexuality education among teenage girls. She said that despite the introduction of the re-entry policy for teenage mothers in schools, some girls were still practicing abortion because they feared to disappoint their parents who trusted them so much. Others were aborting because



they could not face the shame of being banned from participating in religious activities at their various religious denominations. They would rather terminate their pregnancies than to live with the shame of raising illegitimate children. Such abortions were usually performed by non-medical professionals or even by the girls themselves by drinking poisonous concoctions which sometimes led to death or damage their maternal health. Similar sentiments were also expressed by head teachers from government, private and faith-based schools in Kasama district of the Northern Province as presented below.

#### **4.2.2 Views of Head teachers from Government, Faith-based and Private Schools**

Interviews were held with head teachers of the following schools: Kasama Girls boarding, Kasama Boys day, Ituna Boys and Girls day, Mungwi Technical boarding for boys and Mbala Boys and Girls boarding schools. Faith-based schools included Laura Girls in Kasama, St. Theresa Girls (Chilubula) and St. Francis Boys (Malole). Private Schools included Chiti and Letabo, both in Kasama. During the interviews with the head teachers of these schools it was revealed that sexuality education has been ongoing on in all the schools though it did not bear the name 'sexuality education'. It was part of the localised curriculum which schools devise to help them deal with those issues that are not within the broad curriculum from the Curriculum Development Centre. Each school identifies certain issues that they may consider worth looking at and they come up with a programme which could be included within extra curricula activities. Those activities include clubs such as religious clubs, academic clubs, sports clubs, life skills clubs and the reproductive health clubs. Apart from what is taught in these clubs, the schools have the Guidance and Counselling sections which also look at issues of sex and sexuality, among other issues. Nonetheless, not all issues concerning the problems of young peoples' sexuality are dealt with in extra curricula activities. Besides, these activities are not compulsory for all pupils. On the main curriculum, issues of sexuality are taught in subjects like Environmental Science, Human Biology, Civic Education and Christian Religious Education. However, this is not enough considering the complexity of the problems that adolescents encounter during this period of their growing up. In addition, these subjects are optional, apart from Environmental Science which is compulsory at upper basic school level.

The general view from head teachers in the above schools was that the implementation of sexuality education in their schools would be welcome because it had been discovered that pupils had wrong information about sex and sexuality. They usually indulged in risky sexual behaviour because they were not well informed on issues of sexuality. They lacked information and skills on how to protect themselves from sexual coercions. The head teacher from Ituna high school stated that the girls were the most vulnerable to sexual coercion. He further stated that when some girls became pregnant, that marked the end of their education. Others would go back to school after delivery, but they had to face stigma and discrimination from their colleagues.

Mr. Bambala, the head teacher of Mbala high school said that despite having the Guidance and Counselling sections in schools to mentor pupils in various aspects which include sexual issues, there were still problems faced by the school authorities as well as the pupils themselves pertaining to issues of sexuality. He cited the problem of homosexuality among teenagers in single sex boarding schools. He explained that the time he was at a girls' boarding school, there were cases of lesbianism which would at times result in fights amongst girls. In such relationships, girls became emotionally attached and developed jealousy which in turn negatively affected their concentration on academic work. In boys' boarding schools on the other hand, cases of homosexuality were not as common as those found in girls' boarding schools. He attributed these practices to lack of sexuality education both at home and school. He further explained that in most Zambian ethnic cultures, parents were not free to discuss issues of homosexuality with their children as it was considered a taboo. However, since they would want their children to refrain from such activities, schools can be used to educate them on the negative effects of indulging in such sexual activities. He pointed out that such sexual practices usually had very bad effects on the lives of young people even after they had left school. Some women failed to keep stable relationships with members of the opposite sex, while some men became molesters of young boys.

The opinion of the school manager at Chiti Private School on school-based sexuality education was that the Ministry of Education should quickly revisit and reinforce the statement in the education policy concerning the teaching of sexuality education in schools. The policy should not only be implemented in government schools but also in private schools and should be monitored closely. He said that



most of the expulsion cases at his school involved pupils who were found with pornographic materials, alcohol and drug abuse. He explained that when these pupils were sent home some parents took offence instead of disciplining their children. They blamed the school administrators and said that they would take their children to better schools. Unfortunately, for fear of losing customers at the expense of maintaining discipline and building good morals in school, such pupils were often retained. He added that from such experiences, it was clear that there was little sexuality education being done in homes by parents. He wished government could come up with a strong policy that would bind all schools to offer sexuality education as a compulsory, examinable subject.

The view of all head teachers on who should teach sexuality education in schools was that it was every teacher's responsibility. It was therefore, important for teachers to uphold the highest standard of morality so that even as they talk about issues of sex to pupils, they would be taken seriously. They added that there was no need to let female teachers teach the girls and male teachers teach the boys as what mattered were the skills, the knowledge and interest in the delivery of information just like in the other subjects. Similar remarks were made by officials at the Ministry of Education headquarters in Lusaka, who said that the subject could be taught by every teacher regardless of the sex of the class one was handling. Gender was not supposed to be a barrier in teaching young people on issues of sexuality. The head teacher of Ituna high school said that it had been observed that during lessons on human reproduction in Biology and Environmental Science, girls asked a lot of questions when they were taught by male teachers as compared to when they were taught by female teachers. But boys had no problems. They tended to be more open with both male and female teachers.

When asked what age was appropriate to learn about sex and sexuality, the head teachers indicated that it would be better to begin as early as ten years old, probably from grade five. The reasons given to justify this age were that young people were at risk of being sexually abused or defiled by elders who in many instances include close relatives. In addition, some HIV positive adults held wrong beliefs about the *virgin myth*. This is a misconception that when a person living with HIV has sex with a minor who is a virgin, that person is cured of the infection. Young people needed to start knowing about all these issues from a tender age in order to protect themselves and report such evil acts. The head teachers stated that in

grade eight, pupils were old enough to understand these issues and that before they developed wrong attitudes towards sex and sexuality there was need to guide them.

Mr. Chanda, the deputy head at Laura Girls, stated that there were variations in age amongst pupils at secondary schools. Some were younger than others but it was important to consider the fact that whether they were young or old, they were vulnerable to sexual coercion and abuse. He further said that at Laura Girls, they used to have more pregnant cases at upper basic school level as compared to high school level. This prompted them to subject the pupils to the same information that is offered by female teachers and *bana fimbusa* (tutors). These were women from various walks of life who taught young people morals and values. This programme was part of the localized curriculum which the school had come up with to sensitize the girls on issues affecting their sexuality. It was called “challenge week-end” and it was done on selected week-ends when each class went to receive instructions.

The head teacher of Kasama Boys’ school also said that due to lack of sexuality education from a tender age, young people developed wrong perceptions about males and females on matters of sex. Boys, for instance, perceived girls as sexual objects and girls wrongly believed that to prove their love for men they had to sleep with them. These misconceptions which were developed at a tender age put men in a superior position and women in an inferior position with regard to their sexuality. The head teacher added that most of the rape cases that occurred among young people, including some adults, were due to lack of respect for the other partner, the wrong views about men’s sexual supremacy over women and lack of negotiating skills, which they never learned.

In response to the question whether sexuality education should be taught as a stand-alone subject or whether it should be imbedded in other subjects, the head teachers said that it would be better if it were to be taught as a stand-alone subject because then it would cover a wider range of issues compared to when it is integrated in other subjects. They further added that sexuality education should be made compulsory in order to cater for a large number of pupils in schools. Similar views also came from Mr. Lubinda at Ministry of Education in Lusaka. He said that it would be better if sexuality education were to be taught as a stand-alone subject so that it could have an impact on young people. On the other hand, the head teachers from St. Francis and St. Theresa said that sexuality education probably could be

taught under Science or Religious Education so that even those parents who were cynical about it would accept it.

The issue of content attracted various views. The head teachers said that the content should be made in such a way that it covers a wide range of sexuality issues so that when young people are taught they do not remain with unanswered questions. Among the topics that they suggested were life skills education, health education, early pregnancy and abortions, peer pressure, stigma and discrimination against teen mothers, sexual abuse and harassment, and more importantly, abstinence from premarital sex. They further said that emphasis should be placed on building good behaviour by avoiding risky sexual activities such as watching pornographic movies, drinking alcohol and drug abuse as well as improper dressing. Mr. Lubinda from the Ministry of Education headquarters in Lusaka made similar remarks in an interview where he said that sexuality education should focus on behavioural change. Young people should be taught to avoid risky sexual behaviour in order to avoid contracting STDs and getting pregnant.

Mr. Simuntala, another official at the Ministry of Education district offices in Kasama, also said that there were certain things that parents failed to discuss with their children. For instance, issues of oral sex and masturbation should be included in the syllabus under sexuality education so that pupils would know how to avoid them. In addition, Mr. Chanda, the deputy head at Laura Girls, said that it would also be wise to consult parents on the topics that they would love their children to learn in schools because they had a right to choose what should be taught to their children.

#### **4.2.3 Views of Some Christian Religious Leaders**

The opinion of Fr. Musonda, a Catholic priest in Kasama, on school-based sexuality education was that its introduction would be a good idea. But it should be monitored closely to ensure that young people were taught the right content that should enable them to develop good morals. Being the Education Secretary for Kasama Archdiocese, he explained that the morals of most pupils in Catholic schools had gone down, probably due to what they were exposed to in the media. He explained that it was unfortunate that very few young people received correct information on sexuality and life skills in their small Christian groupings. In fact, some of those groupings did not have such programmes. Moreover, some parents did not allow their teenage children to attend these Christian groupings because they thought that

they would indulge in bad behaviour. This was a further reason why schools needed to introduce sexuality education because they could reach large numbers of young people.

Another religious leader from the United Church of Zambia, who declined to be named, said that sexuality education in secondary schools could be welcome because morals among young people had gone down due to new things brought in by technology. He mentioned that in the past young people would listen and take advice from elders seriously, but today they claim that advice from elders which included issues of sexuality was boring. Young people felt that their parents were backward in terms of knowledge on sexuality. For this reason, it is important that schools reinforced what parents had been doing. He further said that parents were too busy for their children as they were always out working and when they appeared at home, they were like strangers to their own children. Similar sentiments were echoed by women who were interviewed from Kapoka and Ngulula villages in Kasama district. The women said that it was difficult for them to sit down and discuss issues of sexuality with their teenage children because they were always busy selling to earn a bit of money for food at home. They said that in the past, fathers were providers of all necessities at home while mothers had the responsibility of teaching children the norms of society. Unfortunately, today fathers went to drink leaving all the responsibilities to mothers.

Another interesting response came from a pastor from Bread of Life Church in Kasama who said that the introduction of sexuality education in secondary schools should not be debatable because whether it was taught or not, young people were bound to discover on their own what we might have considered a taboo to talk about. He said that parents could not claim to be in a better position to discuss all matters of sexuality with their children since there was always a limit to what they discussed with their children. He said that since young people spent more of their time at school, than at home, schools could take up the role of parents and teach young people on matters concerning their sexuality. He further stated that in his church there were programmes for the youths where they discussed topics on sex and sexuality but there was need for some reinforcement even from schools.

Elder Daka and elder Mulenga from the Jehovah's Witness in Kasama were somehow sceptical about the implementation of sexuality education in secondary schools. They said that schools had in a way contributed to moral decay among

young people. Elder Daka said that before children were sent to secondary boarding schools their behaviour was usually good, but afterwards they changed into bad children. He pointed out that sexuality education could only make sense if the emphasis was to be placed on developing good morals. Elder Mulenga said that young people should be taught to refrain from premarital sex. Both elders said that their opinion on this matter was that it was the responsibility of parents and guardians to teach young people about their sexuality. During Bible study, various topics were discussed at length, which included sexuality. In this way young people were guided properly. The two expressed concern over new technology which enabled young people to discover things on their own. They cited examples of young people watching erotic movies from television and listening to bad songs which eventually corrupted their morals. They further mentioned that sometimes young people became spoiled not because they were from bad homes but due to peer pressure which they failed to resist. They said schools could devise programmes that could teach them how to resist peer pressure and be able to make personal sound decisions without being coerced.

#### **4.2.4 Views of Some Muslim Religious Leaders**

During the focus group discussion held with five Muslim leaders at the Lusaka Muslim Society, it was found that some Muslims were against school-based sexuality education if it was offered in non-Islamic schools. They said that the type of sexuality education offered in non-Islamic schools lacked morals because it taught young people to use protective measures such as condoms and other contraceptives in the name of protecting themselves from unintended pregnancy and STDs. They said in doing so sexuality education encouraged immorality because somehow it indirectly taught young people that there was nothing wrong with engaging in premarital sex. Hamid Abdul, the head teacher for Lusaka Muslim Society, said that if sexuality education were to be offered in Zambian public schools, Muslim parents would be encouraged to withdraw their children from such lessons. He commented that those lessons would not be up to something good but would just destroy young people and the entire nation in terms of morality. Another respondent, Shahid Umar, said that there was nothing wrong with offering sexuality education to young people if it was done in an Islamic way by teaching them Islamic values. He explained that in Islamic schools, sexuality education focused on building good morals amongst

young people by teaching them to refrain from sex because it was meant for married people only. Besides, sex outside marriage was a punishable sin that deserved death by stoning. This is what was taught to young people and due to this teaching they feared to indulge in sexual activities.

In response to the question about the gender of the teacher to teach sexuality education, they responded that the parents were the best teachers. Abdul said according to their religious teachings, Muslim parents were called upon to raise their children in a way that pleased Allah. He added that parents were encouraged to befriend their children so that they were free to share everything with them, including the problems they faced concerning their sexuality. Another leader, Salim Hamia, added that in Islam mothers were responsible for the education of their daughters while fathers were responsible for their sons. He said mothers could not talk to their sons about wet dreams just like fathers could not talk to their daughters about menstruation as this would be embarrassing. Even in Islamic schools, female teachers were responsible for the girls' sexuality education and male teachers for the boys'.

The opinion of these Muslim leaders on the question of age was not different from that of some Christian leaders who said that it would be better to start teaching young people sexuality education from a tender age, say twelve years. They said that at this age they were leaving childhood and some of them may have attained puberty. Hence with new hormones developing in them, they needed sexuality education. However, Abdul said that sexuality education should not be offered at primary school, but at secondary school and at higher levels like colleges and universities. In addition to Abdul's response, Ali Salaam commented that if sexuality education was to be offered to children in primary schools it would not have an impact on them because they were too young for this kind of information. Children would not take it seriously because they may not have started experiencing strong sexual feelings yet. It would be better to give such education to adolescents who were at the right age.

In response to the question on content, Mohammed Ibrahim said that the lessons should be centred on morality and proper behaviour. He explained that this should be expressed in the way they dressed and in the manner they presented themselves before other people. He said Muslim youths should be told that they were different from non-Muslims. Thus, they needed to dress properly, use non-vulgar language, and behave well because this was what differentiated them from non-



Muslim youths. On the dress code, their view was that Muslim girls were not supposed to reveal any part of their bodies in order not to tempt men. Similar views on women dress code among Muslims were also found in a book entitled, *Gender and Relationships*. The book stated that women should wear clothes that cover them from head to foot to ensure that innocent men do not get unnecessarily excited by women's bodies (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001). Ibrahim, one of the respondents, further said that the veil which some conservative Muslim women wear was being historical. He said that it was part of Islamic religious teaching as stated in the Quran 24:31: "Faithful women should lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not to display their beauty except what is apparent of it, and to extend their scarf to cover their bosom." On the other hand, men are expected to dress modestly as well by covering the area from the navel to the knees. Apart from dressing, Abdul said that Muslim youths should be cautioned about what they read, watched and heard on sexuality from outside their religious teachings. They should refrain from such information because it may corrupt their morals leading to backsliding from their Islamic faith.

The opinions of these Muslim leaders on whether sexuality education for pupils was necessary in this era of HIV and AIDS was that young people should be told that AIDS is real and the only way to avoid getting it was to refrain from premarital sex. They should not be taught about the use of contraceptives as it would encourage them to indulge in sexual activities. They should also be told to avoid being in private places with members of the opposite sex. They said that all these teachings should be given to young people at home by their parents, or if it is taught in schools, it should be taught with Islamic values.

#### **4.2.5 Views of Some NGO Leaders**

Informal interviews were conducted with George Chileka, the Information Officer at Forum for African Women Educationists of Zambia (FAWEZA), in Lusaka. He expressed concern over the lack of a serious policy by the Ministry of Education to have Sexuality Education in Zambian schools. He mentioned that FAWEZA being an organisation that worked with the education system in Zambia would equally support such a policy if it were to be introduced. His arguments were that according to the National Policy document on Education (Ministry of Education, 1996), the Zambian government recognised the right to equitable and quality education at all

levels as a means to enhance knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Based on this principle, young people should be given the education that would enhance their well-being and that of the entire society. Chileka said that young people needed Sexuality Education not just for the sake of having information but for survival's sake. He explained that FAWENZA received a lot of cases concerning abuse of children which included sexual harassment, rape, defilements and forced marriages. He said that if young people were to be enlightened on issues concerning their sexuality, they would be in a better position to deal with problems of sexual abuse.

To elaborate further on sexual harassment, he cited from the study which was carried out by Sophie Kasonde Ngáandu and others (2004) entitled, *The Extent of Safety and Abuse of Girls in Schools with Weekly Boarding Facilities in Zambia*. In this study it was discovered that girls were sexually harassed by male teachers and other boys. Whenever girls refused the advances from male teachers they would be told by teachers that they would make them fail their final examinations. Meanwhile the boys also harassed girls by making degrading remarks, especially on their menstruation, touching their breasts and their buttocks. Chileka said that this affected the academic performance of girls who begin to view themselves as second-class citizens. He said they began to hate their biological make-up and in due course lost self-esteem. For these reasons he felt that sexuality education for young people in schools was necessary as it would teach them to appreciate the sex roles of both males and females. Besides, it would enable girls to know their rights and the actions to take when they were sexually harassed. Boys would equally learn that sexual harassment was a serious offence that led to a jail sentence.

Responding to the question on whether sexuality education encouraged promiscuity among young people, Chileka said that could not be true. He said that there would be more merits than demerits in offering sexuality education to young people. Some of the merits he mentioned were that it would broaden young people's knowledge on sex and sexuality and reduce risky sexual behaviour to avoid teen pregnancies and STDs. It would also contribute to fewer abortion cases among girls and higher chances of them completing school successfully. In addition, like Simuntala from the Ministry of Education at Kasama district offices who commented on re-entry policy for teen mothers, Chileka also said that the number of teen mothers who go back to school after giving birth would reduce if sexuality education were to be offered in secondary schools.

Chileka's response to the question of content to be included in the syllabus on sexuality education was not different from most of the respondents. He said that young people should be taught about physical, emotional and social changes that *they experienced as they grew up from childhood to adulthood. They should be taught how to handle these changes so that they were not caught up in a web of confusion as they made decisions relating to their sexuality.* He said that young people should be told to avoid risky sexual behaviour that may lead to unintended pregnancy and contraction of STDs. They should also be taught about their sex and gender differences so that they learn to appreciate their biological make-up. This would help them to avoid stigma and to build up high self-esteem, especially girls who were the most vulnerable to sexual harassment.

However, Chileka's opinion on the age of pupils who should be taught sexuality education was somehow different from most respondents in this research. His suggestion was that it would be better to introduce sexuality education from primary school, probably at the age of seven years. The reason for this was that young people were being exposed to sexual materials and information at a very tender age. As such reason, there was need to give them correct information to avoid developing misconceptions about their sexuality. Furthermore, Chileka said that it would be better to begin offering sexuality education to children before they start having sex. When they were properly informed at a younger age, they were likely to avoid risky sexual behaviour when they reached adolescent stage. He said that it would be difficult for most of them to change their sexual behaviour patterns after they started having sex.

In response to the question on the gender of the teacher to teach sexuality education, Chileka said that the gender of the teacher did not matter. He cited the example of teachers of Biology who handled both girls and boys when teaching human reproduction. He said that it was important to give young people the correct information and skills to equip them for making good decisions concerning their sexual life. He further stated that the best way to offer sexuality education to young people was to separate the content according to the age and grade progression. Topics that were more sensitive should only be taught to young people at senior secondary level, starting from grade ten to grade twelve. For instance, topics like dating, love and infatuation and use of contraceptives should only be included in the syllabus at senior secondary or high school level.

#### **4.2.6 Views of Some Parents**

In the two separate focus group interviews with parents from Kapoka and Ngulula, they expressed desire that schools implement sexuality education. The women from Kapoka village said that they would support the idea of implementing sexuality education in secondary schools if it were to teach young people good morals. They explained good morals as refraining from sexual activities, keeping hygiene and dressing in a decent manner for girls to avoid being raped by men. One old woman from Kapoka village said that even during the colonial era, sexuality education was being taught to young people who attended the white man's school. She explained that this was done as part of the Christian instructions which taught them to keep away from premarital sex and for the girls to maintain hygiene when they became of age.

The views of women from Ngulula village were not different from those from Kapoka village. They said that in the past young people were instructed on sexual matters through initiation ceremonies. Unfortunately, these initiation ceremonies were no longer practised. Similar views were also expressed by Rasing (2003) who said that sex education in Zambia had somewhat changed in the last few decades, due to urbanization which had led to the old system of sexual teaching by elderly women significantly disappearing. These elderly women were not always in the close neighbourhood of their grandchildren. This had made it difficult for young people to access the needed information concerning their sexuality. The informants from Ngulula village also confessed that they did not sensitize their children on the dangers of indulging in sexual relationships before something bad happened. They said that they only talked about it when, for instance, some of the girls in the neighbourhood got pregnant or aborted their pregnancies. The parents said that this was not helpful because harm would have already been caused. They said that they would support sexuality education in secondary schools as long as they would be consulted on the issues they would want their children to learn about.

#### **4.2.7 Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings and discussions of the study into an ethical perspective on the implementation of the UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education in Zambian secondary schools. The findings revealed that young people in secondary schools did not receive adequate and accurate information

regarding their sexuality both at school and at home. This left them potentially vulnerable to risky sexual behaviour. The findings indicated that schools did not have comprehensive programmes on sexuality education. The subjects where sexuality issues were taught showed that the contents were too explicit. As a result, very little was covered. As for home-based sexuality education, very few parents talked to their children about matters of sex. The reasons were that most parents were too busy with work or other activities to find time to discuss these issues with their children. Other parents found it inappropriate to discuss sexuality issues with their children due to cultural beliefs and customs. Religious groups also do not have comprehensive programmes on sexuality education, hence the lack of accurate information and skills on sexuality among Zambian adolescents. The next chapter presents an ethical evaluation on the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools.

# CHAPTER 5

## **Ethical Evaluation of Findings on Sexuality Education**

### **5.0 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the findings and discussions concerning the extent to which the current curriculum covers sexuality education in secondary schools. It also presented the views of various stakeholders on the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. The findings revealed that officials at the Curriculum Development Centre and the Ministry of Education were not aware of the UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education. It was also discovered that most of the key informants welcomed the idea of implementing sexuality education in secondary schools. However, having no awareness of the UNESCO International Guidelines, they suggested ways on how best sexuality education could be implemented in Zambian secondary schools. The present chapter gives an ethical evaluation on the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools by applying rights theory and utilitarianism.

### **5.1 Implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” from an Ethical Point of View**

#### **5.1.1 Human Rights-Based Arguments for Sexuality Education**

Since Zambia is a signatory to the United Nations conventions and the African Charter on human rights, it has an obligation to ensure that its citizens are recipient of these important human rights. Based on this recognition, the Zambian government, through the Ministry of Education, has included in its educational policy document, *Educating our Future*, the aim which sought to promote the full and well-rounded development of the physical, intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of all pupils so that each could develop into a complete person for his or her own personal accomplishment and the good of society (Ministry of Education, 1996). The educational policy document supports the rights of young

people to have sexuality education as a way of helping them to deal with problems arising from this sexuality development. The document stated that many young people who attended school had not been given the help they needed in this area. The school had an obligation to compensate for losses they could have experienced elsewhere by helping young people to form an enlightened view on sexuality. This is very important today in view of the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. Because of this, schools in their localized curricula had been urged to include an education programme in the areas of sexuality and interpersonal relationships suitable to the age and development of its pupils (ibid.: 51). It was very unfortunate that young people in most secondary schools did not receive this important education despite the fact that it was part of the education policy. The reason for this was that there was no reinforcement from the education standards or inspectorate who was supposed to ensure that education policies were implemented in schools.

The right to sexuality education could not be a legal right like constitutional rights in Zambia, but from the moral point of view, it was disgraceful to deny young people this important right. It was wrong to live on the assumption that parents were the best providers of sexuality education, as some people claimed. The findings revealed that sexuality education did not take place in many homes, and where it did, very little was discussed. In line with this, Trujillo and Sgreccia (1995) stated that parents found themselves unprepared to provide adequate answers on matters of sexuality. The other obscurity about home-based sexuality education was that parents had different perspectives concerning issues of sexuality. Consequently, as young people mingled from various homes, they too would have divergent views depending on what they could have been taught by their parents. This usually created confusion amongst young people. In this sense, there was need to provide comprehensive programmes on sexuality education in schools where all these diverse views could be clarified.

It is also true to state that parents have a prior right to choose the type of education that should be given to their children (United Nations, 1948). But morally speaking it would be wrong for them to withdraw their children from institutions that were ready to offer this vital education which they themselves were not ready to offer. Denying young people the right to sexuality education would be an infringement on their right to education and subsequently a lack of respect for their human dignity. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

“Everyone has the right to education... Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (ibid.: 6). In addition, Article 17 of the African Charter also states that “every individual shall have the right to education” (Sacco, 1990). Young people had the right to sexuality education just as they had a right to other forms of education that contributed to their personal development. Providing them with good sexuality education would enable them to be well informed and to develop skills that could help them in dealing with problems pertaining to their sexuality.

Furthermore, it was also imperative to mention that not all young people had parents and guardians to give them information on sexuality. Some homes in Zambia were headed by children themselves. These orphans had no one to turn to for guidance on issues concerning their sexuality. The family ties were not as strong as they used to be years back. The HIV and AIDS pandemic had weakened family ties such that when parents died, children were left to fend for themselves in all areas of their lives. With this unfortunate scenario, it was crucial that young people were provided with this important information which they desperately needed in order to avoid risky sexual behaviour. The right to sexuality education is a moral right which was not only supposed to be provided by biological parents or other close relatives. It was a moral duty of every responsible adult to ensure that young people accessed this vital education.

### **5.1.2 Sexuality Education from a Utilitarian Point of View**

In this section, I am going to argue that the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” promote the well-being of all the affected parties better than other forms of sexuality education. First of all, every human being desires to have a good life. A good life in this sense means a life that is free from illnesses, free from social problems and a life that enables individuals to achieve self-actualization and happiness.

Utilitarianism states that whenever we are presented with options to choose from, we should choose an option that has the best overall consequences as compared to others that can be chosen. Let us consider the following four realistic options about sexuality education:

Option 1: No sexuality education for young people at all.



Option 2: Sexuality education offered to young people by parents at home.

Option 3: Sexuality education in the current Zambian secondary schools curriculum.

Option 4: Implementation of the UNESCO Guidelines on Sexuality Education.

Using the above realistic options, I will argue that implementation of the UNESCO International Guidelines promotes the well-being of all affected parties (all Zambians) better than the other three options. I will show that from a utilitarian point of view, the UNESCO International Guidelines are preferable to the other options. Let us now turn to each of the above options.

According to maximizing the good, option 1 would be the worst alternative. The possible consequences could be that young people would have wrong information about their sexuality, they would make wrong decisions concerning sexual relationships, they would lack skills to avoid risky sexual behaviour and they would be ignorant about institutions where they could turn to for help in case they were sexually abused. Above all, they would become sick and possibly drop out of school and would eventually become a burden to their families and the nation.

Options 2 and 3 are better than option 1. The consequences of option 2 are that parents would be likely to provide some accurate information to their children that would enable them to develop good morals and avoid risky sexual behaviour. However, this option has shortcomings also, one of which is that some parents did not find time to discuss matters of sexuality with their children as echoed by most of the key informants during the interviews. Some of those were the women from Ngulula and Kapoka villages who said that they did not find time to sit and discuss issues that affected the sexuality of their children because they were always busy working and selling at the markets. The women from Ngulula said that the only time they discussed these issues seriously was when, for instance, some of the girls in the neighbourhood got pregnant or aborted their pregnancies.

Another shortcoming of option 2 is that of cultural limitations with regard to issues of sex and sexuality. In certain Zambian cultures, parents were not comfortable to talk about all issues of sexuality with their children. Traditionally, it was unthinkable to discuss sexual matters with one's own child as for instance, issues of oral sex, masturbation, anal sex as well as homosexuality. Mr. Simuntala, one of the key informants, suggested that these issues could be included in the syllabus because most parents were not free to talk about them with their children. The other

problem with this option is that since sexuality education did not take place in every home, there were few chances of many young people accessing accurate information.

Option 3 has weaknesses as well. Firstly, the contents of sexuality education covered in the subjects discussed in the previous chapter are not detailed. In addition, Human biology, Civic education and Religious education which are offered at senior secondary or high school level are optional subjects, making it impossible for all young people to receive this necessary knowledge. There is also no serious policy from the Ministry of Education to teach this important subject except for a statement which was made in the education policy document *Educating our Future*. Even this however, lacked reinforcement from the policy makers and the inspectorate who are supposed to develop comprehensive programmes on sexuality education to be implemented in schools.

Option 4 promotes the well-being of young people and others affected by sexuality education better than the other options. This is because, apart from receiving accurate information about their sexuality, young people were also likely to be taught even those issues that their parents found embarrassing to talk about which were also missing in the current curriculum. There is also a possibility that this option would contain up-to-date information and skills that young people need to avoid risky sexual behaviour compared to limited information found in the current Zambian secondary school curriculum and what some parents might have. If sexuality education was to be made compulsory, it would also cater for a larger number of young people than home-based sexuality education and the current one in the curriculum where very few pupils in secondary schools had access. Young people were also likely to take it more seriously than when it was being offered by parents whom they consider boring, as stated in the previous chapter by a religious leader from the United Church of Zambia. This is also in line with Rasing's (2003) findings about traditional sexuality education offered by Zambian parents as she stated that young people found these lessons insufficient because they were taught in a traditional way and in indirect terms. They wished to have a direct way of being taught, a more western way, similar to the lessons taught at schools, and to have more explanations and certainty on certain aspects. They needed to have clear information and more explanations. This is equally lacking in the current curriculum because it does not explore all the necessary information and skills that young people needed to make informed decisions on their sexuality.

In addition, the number of girls who go back to school after child delivery would probably go down as stated by Mr. Simuntala and Mr. Chileka in the previous chapter. Further, advantages of option 4 are that young girls would not become mothers at a tender age and the chances of completing secondary school successfully would also be higher. Parents would also not have the burden to start supporting unexpected grand children in addition to their teenage children. The nation would also have a more sustainable population, not too high for the available resources, and this would somehow contribute to poverty reduction.

Utilitarianism tells us to do the best we can with utter impartiality. Using four realistic options on sexuality education, I have tried to show that the best of the four options stated above is option 4. It would not be right to let young people discover things on their own without being guided as the case may be with option 1. The danger with this is that they would end up with wrong information that would not only be disastrous to themselves but also to the whole nation. It would also be wrong to give too little information to young people as this would leave them with unanswered questions as is the case with options 2 and 3. With this little information and skills, young people would still be at risk because they might not know how to handle certain problems they face concerning their sexuality. But if they were taught effectively, as the UNESCO International Guidelines suggest, they would use those skills and knowledge to avoid risky sexual behaviour. The implementation of the UNESCO International Guidelines would ensure that as a good number of young people are well equipped with information and skills concerning their sexuality, they would also lead healthy lives. And in turn, the government would probably spend less money on medication for sexual related diseases, but would channel some of it to other developmental programmes. In short, utilitarianism would prefer option 4 as the right action to take because it promotes the well-being of young people and of all Zambians better than its alternatives.

However, considering the results of the findings and the model suggested by the UNESCO International Guidelines, some adjustments could be made on the content to suit the needs of the Zambian society. For example, most of the key informants suggested that emphasis should be placed on developing good morals where young people could be taught about modest dressing, avoiding risky behaviour such as drinking alcohol and drug abuse, avoiding watching pornographic movies and abstaining from sexual intercourse. These issues have not been included in the

model. Furthermore, in addressing issues of human rights, it is important to seek consent from parents on the content to be offered to pupils. Curriculum developers should work in collaboration with many stakeholders who include parents in coming up with a comprehensive curriculum for sexuality education. This is important because parents have the right to choose what their children should learn in schools. Besides, it would help to avoid conflicts with school administrators where the programmes were being implemented.

## **5.2 Summary**

In summary of this ethical evaluation, it can be said that the best thing that the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders could do is to support the implementation of the UNESCO International Guidelines on sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools. This is because there would be more advantages than using home-based sexuality education and continuing with the sexuality education in the current curriculum for secondary schools. According to utilitarianism and rights theory, it is morally wrong and a violation of human rights to deny young people access to information and skills that would bring about their well-being and also the well-being of the entire nation.

# CHAPTER 6

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the investigation into an ethical perspective on the implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” in Zambian secondary schools. This was achieved by conducting interviews with selected key informants from various stakeholders as well as by analysing the Zambian secondary school curricula. The chapter begins with a summary of the problems that adolescents face with regard to their sexuality. It proceeds with an overview of the UNESCO International Guidelines on sexuality education and the debate for and against sexuality education. Then it summarizes the ethical evaluation and finally, makes some recommendations.

### 6.1 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, two major types of problems emerged that young people face concerning their sexuality. The first is lack of accurate information on sex and sexuality. The second is lack of proper skills in dealing with those problems they face regarding their sexuality. I will briefly summarize these two types of problems in turn. Lack of accurate information brings about mistaken beliefs and ideas concerning young people’s sexuality and this leads them to indulge in risky sexual behaviour. As already pointed out in Chapter 2, some may wrongly believe that a girl cannot become pregnant the first time she has unprotected sex or when she is on top during sexual intercourse. In addition, some young people get wrong information from the media, magazines and also from peers whose influence they fail to resist. As a result, they end up doing wrong things just to please their friends. Besides, most parents do not discuss sexual matters with their children because they are either busy with other activities or rather find it culturally inappropriate to do so. This leaves young people potentially vulnerable to sexual problems and consequently to ill-health which in turn affects their education process.

When young people lack accurate information they may also have no proper skills in dealing with the problems of sexuality that they face. For example, peer

pressure is one big problem faced by young people in the area of sexuality. Some are coerced into abuse of drugs and alcohol which incapacitates their thinking and in due course they end up having unprotected sexual intercourse. Some girls do not have the courage to refuse sexual advances from boys and especially from “sugar daddies” who capitalize on their innocence, knowing that even if they abuse them sexually, the girls will not take serious action against them. When some girls become pregnant, they still have to face the challenge of stigma and discrimination from their peers and also fear to disappoint their parents. As a result, they resort to unsafe abortions. Some boys, on the other hand, do not know how to deal with the sexual hormones that become active with puberty and the adolescent stage. Because of this, they end up engaging in homosexuality or, worse still, rape or defile young girls. These and many other problems discussed in this study have negative consequences on the education and lives of young people.

Considering the multitude of problems with regard to young people’s sexuality, UNESCO developed International Guidelines on Sexuality Education. The guidelines have highlighted the aim and goals of sexuality education, how they were formed and how they can help nations to offer school-based sexuality education. They have tried to clarify some concerns raised by those who oppose school-based sexuality education by providing some evidence from countries where the programmes have been implemented. In addition, they have provided a model on how the programmes can be offered in schools considering the content to be taught at different age groups. The content suggested can be adjusted according to different cultures to suit the needs of young people and those of the entire society.

The other important aspect discussed in this dissertation is the debate for and against school-based sexuality education. Some of the concerns that came out from those who oppose school-based sexuality education were that it may encourage young people to indulge in pre-marital sex before it is socially acceptable. Others argued that school-based sexuality education did not teach young people morals. This was on the assumption that when young people are taught about contraceptives or safer sex methods they usually engaged in promiscuity. Furthermore, some were concerned about the age, saying that certain issues on sexuality that were taught in schools should not be discussed with children because they were meant for adults. This group of people prefer sexuality education that is offered in homes by parents who they believed taught young people good morals beside other sexual issues.

However, the advocates of school-based sexuality education have argued that school settings are the best places where young people could resolve their unanswered questions and misconceptions concerning the issues of sex and sexuality. The findings revealed that some parents do not find time to discuss sexual matters with their children, and others are not comfortable with this topic. This leaves young people with the option of finding information from various sources like the internet, magazines and television because they are curious. Some of these sources do not give accurate information resulting in young people acquiring wrong information. Besides, UNESCO findings show that in the countries where school-based sexuality education has been implemented, there has been a positive change in sexual lifestyle among young people. For instance, it has enabled young people to delay their sexual practice because they are aware of the dangers involved in having sex at an early age. There is also a reduction in teen pregnancies and STDs.

The findings suggest that the implementation of the UNESCO International Guidelines on sexuality education is a possible solution to the problems that young people face regarding their sexuality. It is on this basis that rights theory and utilitarianism have been used to support the implementation of sexuality education in Zambian secondary schools from an ethical point of view. According to utilitarianism, an action is morally right if it has the best overall consequences. In this regard, the UNESCO International Guidelines on sexuality education are seen to have the best overall consequences compared to sexuality education which is offered at home by parents and the one found in the current curriculum, both of which have many weaknesses as highlighted in the previous chapter. Human rights, on the other hand, support the right of young people to have comprehensive sexuality education which is offered in an environment free from various restrictions. It is morally right that young people are provided with a favourable environment where they can freely express themselves as they seek for information pertaining to their sexuality. This would also help them to develop skills that would enable them to deal with problems that they encounter in this area. According to utilitarianism and rights theory, young people in Zambia have a moral right to a good sexuality education because it will promote their well-being and that of the entire nation. In addition to this, the Zambian government and the ministry of education in particular have a moral duty to ensure that young people are given this important education. To deny them this noble right is seen to be an infringement on their human dignity.

## 6.2 Recommendations

In view of the results of the study and the conclusions drawn, I make the following recommendations:

- (i) There is need for the Ministry of Education to strengthen the statement made in the Education Policy Document, *Educating Our Future*, concerning the teaching of sexuality education to pupils in schools. This can be done by introducing it as a compulsory subject at secondary school and it should be examinable at both grade 9 and grade 12 levels.
- (ii) The subject should be extended to colleges of education and universities that train teachers so that student teachers are equipped with the necessary information and skills. This will help them to guide young people well in the formation of attitudes and skills towards their sexuality.
- (iii) There is need for the Ministry of Education to create the position of subject specialist in this area at the Curriculum Development Centre so that it is easier to implement and monitor the subject in schools.
- (iv) There is need for the Zambian communities to change their perception of sex and sexuality. This can be done by sensitizing them on the multitude of problems that young people face in the area of their sexuality and on the need for schools to teach young people those issues which parents find inappropriate to talk about with their children.
- (v) When formulating the syllabus, various stakeholders should be involved in coming up with the content to be taught to young people at various stages of their life and educational progression. The suggested topics by UNESCO can be adopted, but adjustments can be made to them so that they suit the needs of the Zambian culture.



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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND APPLIED ETHICS

#### An Ethical Perspective on the Implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” in Zambian Secondary Schools

#### Interview Schedule for the Ministry of Education Officials

#### Personal Details:

Name:.....

Sex:.....

Department:.....

Position held:.....

#### Questions:

1. Is there any policy in the Ministry of Education to offer sexuality education to all pupils in schools that follow the Zambian curriculum?
2. If yes, at what level of education is it offered?
3. In this era of HIV/AIDS, do you think sexuality education is necessary for pupils in secondary schools?
4. Should sexuality education be taught as a stand-alone subject or should it be integrated in other subjects?
5. What should be the right age for young people to receive sexuality education?
6. What content should be taught to pupils?
7. Should the gender of the teacher matter when teaching sexuality education?
8. How best should sexuality education be offered in schools?

Closing

Any other comments?

Thank the respondent.

# APPENDIX II

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND APPLIED ETHICS

### An Ethical Perspective on the Implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” in Zambian Secondary Schools

#### Interview Schedule for Head Teachers in Public, Private and Faith-based Schools

Name of School:.....

Name of Respondent:.....

#### Questions:

1. Does your school offer any form of sexuality education?
2. If yes, how is it done?
3. If no, why is it not offered?
4. In this era of HIV/AIDS, do you think sexuality education to pupils is necessary?
5. Are there any benefits of offering sexuality education to pupils in schools?
6. Who should teach sexuality education in schools?
7. What content should be taught to pupils in schools?
8. Should the content vary according to age and maturity of and maturity of pupils?
9. Does your school have materials on sexuality and public health education that could be of help to pupils?
10. Are these materials easily accessible?
11. How best do you think sexuality education should be offered to pupils?

Closing

Any further comments?

Thank the respondents.

# APPENDIX III

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND APPLIED ETHICS

### An Ethical Perspective on the Implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” in Zambian Secondary Schools

#### Interview Schedule for Religious Leaders

##### Personal Details

Name.....

Religious Organization.....

Position Held.....

##### Questions:

1. Does your religious faith allow sexuality education to pupils in schools?
2. According to your religious values, is it morally acceptable for pupils in schools to learn about sexuality education outside your religious institution?
3. In this era of HIV/AIDS, do you think sexuality education for pupils is necessary?
4. At what age should sexuality education be taught to young people in schools?
5. What content should be taught to teenagers?
6. Who should teach religious education to young people?
7. When teaching sexuality education, where should teachers place the emphasis?
8. How best should sexuality education be taught?

Closing

Any further comments?

Thank the respondents.

# **APPENDIX IV**

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND APPLIED ETHICS**

### **An Ethical Perspective on the Implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” in Zambian Secondary Schools**

#### **Focus Group Interview Schedule for Parents from Kapoka and Ngulula Villages**

1. Would you allow schools to offer sexuality education to your children in secondary schools?
2. If yes, why do you think this kind of education is necessary for your children?
3. If no, what could be the reasons why it should not be offered?
4. Do the young people get enough information on sexuality at home?
5. If yes, who gives them this information?
6. If no, how do they access this necessary information?
7. From the tradition Zambian culture, is it morally acceptable for parents to discuss issues of sex with children?
8. What issues on sex would you want your children to learn from schools?
9. At what age level should sexuality education be taught to young people?

Closing

Any further comments?

Thank the respondents.

# APPENDIX V

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND APPLIED ETHICS

### An Ethical Perspective on the Implementation of the “UNESCO International Guidelines on Sexuality Education” in Zambian Secondary Schools

#### Interview Schedule for NGO Leaders

Name of Respondent.....

Organization.....

Title/Designation.....

#### Questions:

1. Do you think sexuality education should be taught to teenagers in secondary schools?
2. If yes, what benefit will it bring on the recipient and the nation as a whole?
3. If no, what harm will it cause to the recipients and the nation?
4. If it were to be included in the Zambian secondary school curriculum, what moral values should be included as part of the content?
5. In this era of HIV and AIDS, should sexuality education be encouraged in Zambian secondary schools?
6. Do you think it would be better if female teachers were to handle girls and male teachers handle boys?
7. At what age should pupils start to learn sexuality education in secondary schools?
8. If sexuality education were to be implemented in Zambian secondary schools, how best could it be taught to pupils?

Closing

Any further comments?

Thank the respondent.