

**EXPLORATION OF *SIKENGE* INITIATION RITE IN THE
PROMOTION OF *LOZI* CULTURAL HERITAGE: A CASE OF
MONGU DISTRICT**

BY

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in
Religious Studies**

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DECLARATION

I, **Yvonne Mulako Mundia**, hereby declare that the work herein is my own, and that all the works of other persons used have duly been acknowledged, and that the work has not been presented to the University of Zambia before or indeed any other institution for similar purposes.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by **Yvonne Mulako Mundia** has been approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Religious Studies (MEd.RS) of the University of Zambia.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother, Namakau Katambo and her parents, Ndate Namakau Katambo and Ma-Inonge Wabei, without whom I would not have reached this far.

I also dedicate this piece of work to my husband, Muyangwa and our children Mukubesa, Mukatimui, Katambo and Wabei for their love and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the extent to which *Sikenge* Initiation Rite promotes *Lozi* cultural heritage in Mongu district. The study further sought to determine changes that have taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of *Sikenge* initiation rite. The objectives of the study were to: explore spiritual education that is provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district; assess social aspects of the *Sikenge* initiation rite; establish the extent to which moral education is being provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district and lastly to determine changes that have taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of *Sikenge* initiation rite.

This qualitative study employed a case study design because it described and analysed the culture and behaviour of the *Lozi* people from the point of view of the participants. It focused on the reasons and procedures for performing the rituals. The target population of the study comprised initiators, initiated girls and women. To arrive at the targeted sample, purposive sampling was used and snow-ball was employed to get to the intended respondents. In order to ensure reliability and validity of the findings the study triangulated the methods of data collection by using the semi-structured interviews that involved initiators and initiated girls, focus group discussions with initiated women and observations of the rite were done.

The study established that spiritual education provided in *Sikenge* was based on beliefs and values that the *Lozi* people have held for a long time now. Furthermore the study established that *Sikenge* as a socialising agent promoted respect for elders and authority through good conduct; good and stable marriages, solidarity in the community and provided entertainment to members of the community. It also established that the rite still encouraged the young girls who undergo it to adhere to good morals. Although the rite has been in existence from the time of our ancestors, it was established that several changes had taken place due to the advent of Christianity, Western education, urbanisation, modernity and economic factors. The study recommends that the participants should continue to modify the rite in order to incorporate issues that had surfaced as a result of the changes in the social and economic life of the *Lozi* people.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This Chapter gives a synopsis of the background to the exploration of the *Sikenge* initiation rites in the promotion of *Lozi* culture. The presentation starts with an overview of African traditional religion and narrows down to the *Sikenge* initiation rite. The Chapter, thereafter, presents the problem of the study, purpose of the study, the objectives of the study and the research questions through which the objectives are addressed. The significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study are provided. Lastly, the Chapter presents the theoretical framework and conceptual framework and the operational terms.

1.1 Background

In African tradition, religion was used as a vehicle of teaching moral and spiritual values. From earlier ages children learnt moral and other societal values by way of traditional religion and other socialisation paradigms (Kasongo, 2008). Among the many socialisation paradigms used to teach societal values were initiation rites (Snelson, 1974). Each ethnic group had its own initiation rite in which the young acquired important knowledge about their tribe (Magesa, 1998). For the *Lozi* people of Western province of Zambia, the initiation rite for girls who have reached puberty is known as *Sikenge* and this study is based on this initiation rite.

According to Mundumuko (1990: 18) *Sikenge* is a period of seclusion for *Lozi* girls during which a girl received instructions in all the things she had learnt previously from her family and is introduced to new facts relating to womanhood as a final preparation for her entry into adult life. Just like other initiation rites *Sikenge* has been in existence from the time of our ancestors and it is still practised to date (Mundumuko (1990). Both Mundumuko (1990) and Mushaukwa (2011) state that *Sikenge* has continued to be practiced because it is a means of preserving the cultural norms, values and beliefs of the *Lozi* people. In emphasising the importance of culture, the Human Rights Commission of Malawi (1998) states that culture is a very important element of any nation as it

determines, to a larger extent, the way people behave and go about their day to day lives. This is the more reason that Mushaukwa (2011) suggests that conserving culture is essential because it preserves the social identity of the kinship.

However, with the passing of time *Sikenge* is believed to have undergone several modifications due to social and economic changes that have occurred in Western Province (Mundumuko, 1990; and Mushaukwa, 2011). Christianity, Western education, urbanisation and modernity are the main factors that have affected the *Lozi* culture (Mundumuko, 1990). It is against this background that this study has been conducted to explore the extent to which *Sikenge* is still serving its purpose of preserving the cultural heritage of the *Lozi* people by teaching the moral and Spiritual values.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although studies have been carried out on the subject of *Sikenge* by Mundumuko (1990), Chama (2006) and Mushaukwa (2011) their areas of focus were to establish how the rite had changed from 1885 to 1975; how its teachings impacted on women; and how the rite had repositioned itself in the era of HIV and AIDS. None of these studies focused on how *Sikenge* promoted the culture of the *Lozi* people by revealing the religious aspects of the *Lozi* people, therefore it is not known to what extent the rite provides spiritual, social and moral education to its graduates in this era. This inadequate attention to the spiritual, social and moral aspect of the initiation rite seems to have created a knowledge gap which this study sought to fill. Furthermore, it is not clearly known what changes have taken place in the *Sikenge* initiation rite concerning its spiritual, social and moral aspects. If the above gaps are not filled, this may lead to loss of information on the cultural heritage of the *Lozi* people in relation to *Sikenge*.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which the *Sikenge* initiation rite promotes the cultural heritage of the *Lozi* people of Mongu district. The study also seeks to determine the changes that have taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of the *Sikenge* initiation rite.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- i. to explore the spiritual education that is taught in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district.
- ii. to assess the social values emphasised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite.
- iii. to establish the extent to which moral education is provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district.
- iv. to determine the changes that have taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of *Sikenge* initiation rite.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. what spiritual education is taught in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district?
- ii. what social values are emphasised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite?
- iii. what is the extent of the moral education provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district?
- iv. what changes have taken place over the years regarding the moral, social and spiritual aspects of the *Sikenge* initiation rite on the initiates?

1.6 Significance of the study

The importance of this study is that the findings would provide insight into and promote understanding of the *Lozi* culture with regards the subject of *Sikenge*. There is a lot of hidden information concerning the rituals that are performed in these initiation rites that most people, especially those who have not undergone initiations do not understand. It is hoped that this study has revealed that hidden knowledge to such people. The information that this study has revealed could also be relevant to some of the elderly women who

have taken up the responsibility of tutoring the girls and young women during initiations and at kitchen parties. The study further hopes to have added some knowledge to the subject of African Traditional Religion as it is still practised in Mongu district.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was restricted to the Western province of Zambia and Mongu district to be specific. Mongu district is the provincial headquarters of Western province which is formerly known as Barotseland. This district is situated 600 kilometres west of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. Mongu district is divided into two geographical features, the eastern part is a highland where the township has been established and the western part lies on the famous *Barotse* plains and hosts the *Litunga's* summer palace called *Lealui*. *Silozi* is the main language spoken in this district. The study was conducted in the township of Mongu district because the researcher had no financial resources that could enable her to go to places far from her area of residence. The other reason for choosing the township is that there were a lot of *Sikenge* ceremonies that were conducted around this area and the researcher was enthused to investigate how these rites were promoting the *Lozi* cultural heritage.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Since the study was carried out in Mongu district and in the township area, its findings cannot be generalised to the whole Zambia because the sample involved was too small to warrant such.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

Kombo and Tromp (2006: 56) define a theoretical framework as 'a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories'. They go further to state that, 'It is a reasoned set of prepositions which are derived and supported by data or evidence'. A theoretical framework is an important part of a study because it attempts to clarify why things are the way they are. This research was guided by the socialisation and moral development theory because *Sikenge*, just like all the puberty initiation rites, is an institution of learning that is aimed at socialising the adolescent girls into acceptable women of the

society. The moral development theory was also included in this framework because of the moral component that the study investigated.

Socialisation refers to the 'preparation of new comers to become members of an existing group and to think, feel and act in ways the group considers appropriate' (Persell, 1990: 98). It is the process whereby people learn to become competent members of a group. In the case of *Sikenge* initiation rite, the girls who have reached puberty are prepared to become women, they are taught the acceptable morals, norms, attitudes, beliefs, values, social roles and language of womanhood. Giddens (2006) sees socialisation as a continuous process, a life-long process that does not cease when a child becomes an adult. Socialisation as a continuous process continues to transmit culture from generation to generation and in this manner society maintains itself. The *Sikenge* rite as a socialising agent has continued to transmit the culture that was instituted by the ancestors from one generation to the next.

Socialisation takes two forms which are primary and secondary socialisation. Giddens, (2006) explains that Primary socialisation on one hand happens at infancy and childhood levels and it happens to be the most intense period of cultural learning because this is the time when children learn language and basic behavioural patterns that form the foundation for learning. In this kind of socialisation, the family and the caregivers are the main agents. Secondary socialisation on the other hand takes place later in childhood and into maturity. In this phase other agents of socialisation emerge and take over the responsibilities of the family (Oetting, 1999). Agents such as school, peer groups, the media and organisations and eventually the work place become the main socialising forces for the individual (Giddens, 2006). It is during this phase that the *Sikenge* rite comes into play. The individual at this stage learns new roles which were not emphasised in the first phase, she or he learns roles that bring change such as becoming a wife or husband.

The role of socialisation is to acquaint individuals with the norms of a social group or society (Giddens, 2006). In this case, *Sikenge* initiation rite has a socialising role of acquainting girls who have reached puberty with the norms of womanhood to which they

are about to become members. The girls are prepared by the elderly women to participate in the society as mature and acceptable women by teaching them the expectations held by other women in their society. Socialisation has three primary goals as stated below:

Firstly, it teaches impulse control and helps individuals to develop a conscience. This goal is accomplished naturally as people grow up within a particular society they pick up on the expectations of those around them and internalise these expectations to moderate their impulse and develop a conscience. Secondly, socialisation teaches individuals how to prepare for and perform certain social roles such as gender roles and the role of institutions like marriage and parenthood. Lastly, through socialisation people learn to identify what is important and valued within a particular culture (Persell, 1990: 98).

From the above, the theory of socialisation suits this study because *Sikenge* introduces the adolescent girls to womanhood by imparting them with the knowledge of value in their adult life.

While the process of socialisation is going on, the individuals learn the roles that are associated with their gender. This aspect of learning roles associated with one's gender through socialisation is known as gender socialisation (Giddens, 2006: 169). Gender according to Gagon and Parker (1995) as cited in Mushaukwa (2011: 17), 'refers to the social construction of roles, responsibilities and obligations associated with being a man or woman'. According to Chodorow's theory (1988) cited in Giddens (2006:172), 'learning to feel male or female derives from an infant's attachment to his or her parents from an early age'. This view is true to some extent because the parents are in most cases the immediate people that the infant spends the entire infancy life with. Parents tend to treat their babies differently depending on their gender. This is evident in the type of clothes and toys the parents provide, the way they address the infants hence influencing the way they grow.

Chodorow (1988) argues that girls remain closer to their mothers than boys and continue to imitate what they do (Giddens, 2006). The continued closeness between girls and their mothers makes them grow into adult women and develop a sense of self. The theory

further suggests that the absence of a close relation to another person could threaten the self esteem of some women (Giddens, 2006). Since women play a primary role in socialising their girl children, they continue to pass on these patterns from generation to generation. Most women define themselves in terms of personal relationships and judge their successes by referring to their ability to care for others. Probably this could be the reason why most societies have initiation rites for girls and not for boys so that they could strengthen their capabilities of caring for other family members.

The other theory that constitutes this framework is Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) was motivated to develop this theory because he was interested in how people learn to decide what is right and wrong. To understand this topic he developed theory in three levels: the pre-conventional; conventional and post-conventional. This study will focus on the conventional level which coincides with the adolescent stage and the puberty rites. Moral development is an important part of the socialisation process. The term refers to the way people learn what society considers to be "good" or "bad", which is important for a smooth functioning society (Kohlberg, 1981). Kohlberg (1981) further states that Moral development prevents people from acting on unchecked urges, instead considers what is right for society and good for others.

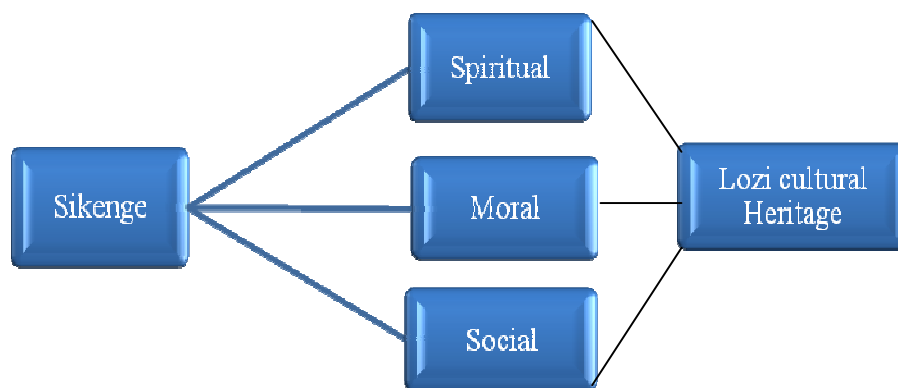
Among the other proponents of the theory of moral development is Gilligan Carol (1936-) who stated that girls understood morality from a care and responsibility perspective. She argues that girls consider people's reasons behind behaviour that seems morally wrong and adds that girls are socialised for a home environment where flexibility allowed for harmony in caretaking and nurturing (Gilligan, 1982).

1.10 Conceptual Framework

Chalmer (1982), states that a conceptual framework is important in research because it identifies the research variables and clarifies the relationships among the variables. It is also valuable in that it sets the platform for presentation of the research questions that drive the study. For this study, the conceptual framework guided the interpretation of the findings.

In this study of the *Sikenge* initiation rite, the spiritual, social and moral aspects were explored in order to establish the extent to which they promoted the *Lozi* cultural heritage to the current generation of women. Special attention was placed on the meaning and significance of the rituals and taboos that are conducted and emphasised in the rite in order to bring out the kind of spiritual, social and moral education that is imparted in the initiates. *Sikenge* is conceptualised as playing a significant role in promoting the *Lozi* cultural heritage by imparting spiritual, social and moral values in upcoming women as shown in figure1 below.

Figure 1



Summary of the Conceptual Framework

1.11 Structure of the Whole Dissertation

There are six chapters in this dissertation. Chapter One provides the general background of the study which begins by stating the Overview of the Chapter, Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Research Objectives and Questions. The chapter further provides the Significance of the Study, Delimitation of the Study and the Limitations of the Study. The last part of the Chapter gives the Theoretical framework, Conceptual Framework.

Chapter Two is the literature review on the *Lozi* Culture, *Sikenge* initiation rite and other initiation rites in Southern Africa and in Zambia. The last part of this Chapter presents some Comments on the Literature and the Summary.

Chapter Three presents the Methods that were employed in the collection and analysis of data. It also states the Research Design that was employed. The Chapter further provides information on the Study Population, Sample Size, Sampling Design, Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedure. The last part of the Chapter comprises the Reliability and Validity Issues, Data Analysis, Ethical Considerations and Summary of the Chapter.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. It constitutes the data collected through the interviews with the initiators and initiated girls, the focus group discussions with initiated women and the observations made by the researcher at the *Siyeke* and coming out ceremony.

Chapter Five discusses the findings presented in Chapter Four according to the themes derived from the objectives. It goes further to connect the literature and the theoretical framework.

Finally, Chapter Six concludes the results and provides recommendations to the study.

Having outlined the dissertation in Chapter One, I present the next Chapter which reviews the literature that guided the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The previous Chapter discussed the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions as well as significance of the study. The Chapter also discussed the delimitation of the study, limitations, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. It further provided the definition of operational terms and the outline of the structure of the whole dissertation. This chapter discusses selected information on the literature available on the culture of the *Lozi* people with the main focus placed on the spiritual or religious and social aspects which embrace the moral aspect. Literature on studies that have been conducted on girls' initiation ceremonies was reviewed in order to bring out the spiritual (religious), social and moral education content in initiation rites.

Literature review, according to Hart (2006), is a selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written to form a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed. Literature review provides the researcher with ideas on how to categorise his or her own data and ways in which to draw on the works of other researchers in order to support or refute one's own arguments and conclusion (Bell, 1999).

2.1 The *Lozi* Culture

Culture is a very wide topic to discuss and because of that, this study has only focused on the parts that are relevant to the topic at hand. According to Arowolo (2010) culture is about people's total way of life; the way people live, eat, worship, produce, create and recreate. It is the totality of a set of bequeathed ideas, belief systems, values and norms which constitute the common bases of generally agreed social actions. In line with the above definition of culture, this part of literature has briefly described the *Lozi* culture in relation to its social, moral and religious aspects. The social aspect discusses marriage

and customs which are upheld by the *Lozi* people while the religious aspect highlights the prominent beliefs and practices.

The *Lozi* people are found in Zambia's Western province (formerly *Bulozi* or Barotseland). They comprise various ethnic groups who have lived together under the *Luyi* kings long before the coming of Europeans. These different tribes have since married and intermingled considerably (Sumbwa, 2000). The term *Malози* refers to all the subjects of the *Lozi* Kingdom. However, the *Aluyi* claim themselves to be *Malози tota* meaning the proper or true *Lozi* by claiming common descent names from *Lozi* ancestors and from one of their ancestral villages on the *Bulozi* plain (Paul, 1996).

The *Lozi* society is highly stratified, with a monarch at the top and those of recent royal descent occupying high positions in society. The monarch or *Barotse* Royal Establishment (BRE) is known as *Mulonga*, and *Lozi* society tolerates little criticism even of an unpopular *Litunga*. Criticisms of a *Litunga* by a foreigner are treated as criticisms of the *Lozi* nation as a whole (Johnson, 2012).

The *Lozi* culture is strongly influenced by the flood cycle of the Zambezi river, with annual migrations taking place from the flood plain to higher ground at the start of the wet season. The most important of these festivals is the *Kuomboka*, in which the *Litunga* moves from *Lealui* in the flood plain to *Limulunga* on higher ground. The *Kuomboka* usually takes place between February and April (Johnson, 2012).

The village occupies a position of significance in the *Lozi* social structure. Due to the flooded plains, the *Lozi* people have to build villages on the mounds which to some extent stand above the flood water. The main occupation of the *Lozi* people was farming, hunting and trapping of birds and game in the plain. Their economic activities were centered on fishing and herding cattle (Gluckman, 1951).

The *Lozi* have no clans instead they have eight non-corporate name groups called *Mishiku* and a man can claim membership in all of them provided that he is a direct descendant in any line of a person who was a member. These *Mishiku* could be translated as descent names (Gluckman, 1951).

The *Lozi* society is polygamous and jealousy among co-wives for sexual and other favours is pronounced and accepted as normal but when it is too much there is fear that it may lead to sorcery. Previously girls were betrothed in childhood, and married after *Sikenge* but this is no longer the case (Jalla, 1969). Girls are left to choose their husbands. A marriage is considered legitimate by payment of a bride price which is mostly charged in form of cows. When an ostensible virgin marries, the husband pays more cows compared to a non-virgin. Jalla (1969) further elucidates that the man pays more cows because one of them is for the right of sexual intercourse and the other one is for the untouched fertility (Jalla, 1969). The marriage payment is believed to grant a man the right to exclude other men from his wife and the right to control her but it does not give him absolute right to the woman's children (Paul, 1996: 46).

In *Lozi* society, the husband and wife constitute an economic unit. Both the husband and wife contribute to the economy of the family. The husband is obliged to give his wife land for gardening, feed her from his own garden, provide her with meat and fish, a hut and clothing. The wife must work in her garden and do all the household duties (Jalla, 1969).

Lozi marriages were unstable because of the kinship system. However, women were held in great esteem, loved and spoke with authority. Although wives exercise important influence, they are liable to easy dismissal and as widows they have no rights in their dead husband's homes Gluckman (1951: 78). As in all African societies, marriage is a vital relationship for proper begetting of children. Gluckman (1951: 79) claims that *Lozis* marry for sexual satisfaction, to secure economic partners, to obtain children and not to find a companion. Although this statement might apply to some people, it is too generalised because it may not apply to others.

In this society the birth of a child is attended with little ceremony. A child is given a name of an ancestor or ancestress. Since the *Lozi* society is guided by an all kinship system, the children are born into a system of kinship relationships in which they have rights in a large number of villages and in which many of them will pass at different times of their life (Gluckman, 1951). Socialisation of the children involves teaching the

acceptable norms and values. Among the most emphasised ones are respect for the elderly, this entails no standing while talking to the elderly and speaking to the elderly whilst looking into their face or eyes is regarded to be disrespectful. Entering one's parents' sleeping room, passing in front of seated elders and jumping over the legs of seated elders are also prohibited. Clapping of hands when greeting elders or when being greeted is a sign of respect (Paul, 1996).

As girls grow, they have a sharp break at first menstruation and are secluded for two to three months, spending the day in a hideout in the bush in the charge of older women and returning to the village in the evening, Gluckman (1951: 84). According to Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979), the girl is taught endurance in life by subjecting her to very difficult tasks like lifting up a plate using her teeth. The difficult tasks undertaken symbolise that she will have to do difficult things in life. She is taught that she has to suffer during seclusion because she is going to get married and marriage is difficult. Therefore, she has to get used to suffering so that she does not give up on her marriage easily. At the end of the seclusion period, a ceremony is held that symbolises that she is now a woman ready for marriage.

Before the Christian missionaries arrived in Barotseland, the *Lozi* people were essentially monotheistic. God was known as *Nyambe* and was credited with creating the world and all the people in it (Johnson, 2012: 9). The *Lozi* believe in life after death. From their God *Nyambe*, the next on the ladder of beings are the Spirits of the dead kings and members of the royal families. When a ruler dies, his grave site becomes a village so that the people can take care of it. Elaborate rituals and offerings are conducted on the burial sites of former kings and chief princesses. The priests are the main celebrants in mediating between the people and the spirits of their former rulers (Jalla, 1969).

Another belief held by the *Lozi* is in ancestors. Unlike the bad spirits the ancestors are rarely referred to as the cause of happenings such as death or misfortunes but are believed to be the source of good luck. These ancestors may be in any line and of either sex and have no fixed homes. The dead relatives are buried in the cemeteries which serve as neighbourhoods or at the edge of the village, or in the gardens or bushes (Mupatu, 1959).

In the past the village headmen used to make important offerings to the God on behalf of the whole village. In September, at the beginning of the planting season he would ask God's blessings on all the villagers' seeds and implements and thank him for a good harvest in May. He would also make offering for luck in hunting and appeal for good rain. The *Lozi* do not take offerings to the graves of their ancestors (Jalla, 1969). Offerings of beer or meal or beast are made at one of the posts of the courtyard fence around the hut (*Lushoko*) by men or women, even by a wife with her husband to the ancestors (Mupatu, 1959). The *Lozi* also believe in good and bad spirits. The bad spirits are believed to be the cause of calamities and are exorcised by means of charms made from bones of men and beasts among other things (Holub, 1976: 302).

Another element that constitutes the world-view of the *Lozi* people is witchcraft. According to Paul (1996) witchcraft was introduced among the *Lozi* by *Mbunda* people. The most common motives for killing other people through witchcraft could be revenge, jealousy and cruelty. In order to detect witchcraft divination had to be conducted by diviners or traditional doctors. In some cases poison ordeals had to be used to detect the witches (Gluckman, 1951).

2.2 Studies on *Sikenge* Initiation Rite

The first study to be conducted on *Sikenge* rite was that of Sinvula Mundumuko which was done in 1990 on *The Decline and Change in the Milaka and Sikenge Institutions of the Lozi: 1886-1975*. The study is important to this study in the sense that it gives some symbolic meanings to some of the rituals conducted in *Sikenge*. The study was carried out in Mongu and Senanga districts of Western province of Zambia. This qualitative study had a sample of both men and women and it used the interview as the instrument for data collection. The study aimed at showing how the *Sikenge* had changed within the period that is stated above. It revealed that *Sikenge* had changed due to social activities that were taking place in *Bulozi* such as the introduction of Christian faith and Western education which has led to the abandonment of some of the taboos and other ritual practices that were not in line with the Christian faith. The study by Mundumuko is relevant because it highlights the changes that occurred in *Sikenge* forty years ago and

before while this current study has added onto the list of changes that have since occurred.

Mundumuko (1990) defines *Sikenge* as a period of seclusion for *Lozi* girls during which the girls receive instructions in all the things they learnt previously from their families and are introduced to womanhood as a final preparation for their entry into adult life. The period of seclusion in olden days lasted between six months and one year. This depended on how quick the initiates were able to demonstrate the skills that they were taught. However, the period of *Sikenge* has since been reduced to a month because of the introduction of Western schooling. Most parents today would want to seclude their daughters during the school holidays so that the initiation does not interfere with the school calendar.

According to Mundumuko (1990), *Sikenge* was closely connected to the religious, social and economic life of the *Lozi*. It was meant to celebrate the first menstrual flow of blood which was considered a sacred and miraculous divine event when the young girl received her gift of sexuality from her ancestors. This was a stage when the adolescent girl came close to the forebears to receive her gift of motherhood. Just like other tribes, the *Lozi* people believed that without being initiated, a girl would never bear children because she would have not been blessed by her ancestors. The attainment of puberty was regarded sacred and hence involved a lot of myths and religious rituals. The rituals were a very important part of the initiation because it was believed that if they were not conducted a misfortune would befall the *Mwalanjo*. The term *Mwalanjo* refers to a girl initiate in *Silosi*. The condition of the *Mwalanjo* was believed to be contagious and assumed to contaminate those who had not gone through the *Sikenge*. Thus her seclusion was not only to facilitate learning but to also reduce the risk of contamination to the *Lozi* society”, (Mundumuko, 1990: 18).

During the seclusion period most of the rituals were performed by a principal tutor known as *Ma-mwalanjo*. The *Ma-mwalanjo*'s qualifications were that she should be a woman who was a close relative to the *Mwalanjo*, of good conduct and should have a living first born child. It was believed that such a person was blessed with motherhood by

the ancestors and was expected to be a medium through which the *Mwalanjo* would receive her motherhood, (Mundumuko, 1990).

The study pointed out that just on the first day of seclusion the *Mwalanjo* was given a symbolic beating that signified elders' authority over her despite attaining puberty. On the second day of seclusion, a ritual called *Kulumisa* was performed by the *Ma-mwalanjo* on the *Mwalanjo*. In this ritual, the *Mwalanjo* was made to bite and spit a small lump of *nshima* to the east, north and then to the west from a broken potsherd. The woman officiating at the *Kulumisa* ceremony would then tap her on the chest and on the back with a broken potsherd whilst the *Mwalanjo* clapped her hands.

The spitting of food had a religious connotation related to giving food to the *Mwalanjo's* ancestors. Giving food to the ancestors was one of the ways of reminding the living dead that they were not forgotten and this was meant to solicit for their support and success of these functions. The *Kulumisa* ritual had a symbolic meaning in that it was the participants' belief that by using a heavy substance like a broken potsherd, the *Mwalanjo* would have a 'heavy heart' that would enable her to keep secrets in her journey through life. The *Kulumisa* ritual had three functions which are:

1. To express to the *Mwalanjo* the type of behaviour that was expected of her; 2. to provide the *Mwalanjo* with the medium through which she could get in touch with her ancestral spirits; and 3. to request the ancestral spirits for a successful completion of the *Sikenge* (Mundumuko1990: 20).

Instructions in sex education were highly emphasised in *Sikenge* just like in other initiations practiced elsewhere. The instructions are started by a ritual of opening the ears known as *Ku kwalula Mazebe* conducted on the third day of the initiation. However, the aspect of teaching young girls sex education during seclusion has been highly criticised by some quarters of society. They argue that sex education rather came too early in this process hence promoting immorality among the young graduates after the initiation ceremony. This has led to some people not to accept the practices of the *Sikenge*. However, Mundumuko (1990) claims that initiation rites emphasised a high level of discipline which included refraining from sex before marriage.

In conclusion of his study, Mundumuko (1990: 61) states that, the “*Sikenge* has continued to be practised because of the support it receives from the men folk. Men prefer to marry women who have undergone the *Sikenge*. A good wife is one who portrays the values stressed in the *Sikenge*.” The other reason for the continuity of *Sikenge* according to this study is that, elderly men and women continue to support it because they take it as a way of upholding morality among the *Lozi*. Morality is important in promoting harmony between children and parents and elders. *Sikenge* is one of the channels through which humble and obedient women who feared the authority of the elders are produced in the society. These women are expected to transmit such morals to their children. Mundumuko (1990) is of the opinion that the *Sikenge* is considered as a tradition without significance and argues that its future is bleak because of the changing social and economic positions of women. He feels the rite will fall into disuse in the next generation.

Mundumuko’s study was conducted twenty-five years ago and to date people still practice the *Sikenge* initiation rite. While Mundumuko’s study captured some religious information of the rite, his findings were solely depended on the information he was given by the respondents. Being a male he could have been denied some information since he did not confirm his findings by physically and practically observing the teaching sessions. Therefore it was not clear whether the rite still provided the same education values as it did twenty-five years ago or not and this is the gap that this study of exploration of the *Sikenge* initiation rite in promoting cultural heritage sought to fill.

In 2006, Grace Mikombe Chama also conducted a study on *The Impact of Sikenge Initiation Rite on Women in Western Province: A Case Study of Mongu District*. The study highlighted the effects of *Sikenge* on women’s behaviour. It revealed that *Sikenge* benefited women but affected them differently. According to Chama, *Sikenge* made women behave maturely, well disciplined and produced submissive wives. On the other hand, some women misapplied the knowledge they acquired during initiation by engaging into prostitution and destabilising other people’s marriages. She recommended that *Sikenge* should be practised but a few modifications needed to be made such as the inclusion of issues of HIV and AIDS, issues of home management and issues of how to

keep virginity until when one got married. Chama's (2006) study is different from this study in the sense that, her sample included uninitiated women and focused only on the effects of *Sikenge* on women. The sample of this study comprised only *Sikenge* graduates, it used observation as one of the methods of data collection and focused on the spiritual, social and moral aspects of the rite. Despite the noted differences in the two studies, Chama's study is still relevant because it points out the moral aspect of the initiation rite.

Another study of value to this study is that which was carried out by Mushaukwa Mubuka-Matale in 2011 entitled *The Practice of Sikenge in the Shadow of HIV and AIDS: A Case Study of Past and Present Practices of the Lozi Speaking People of Western Province in Zambia*. The study aimed at investigating whether *Sikenge* had re-invented itself in the shadow of HIV and AIDS. It showed that *Sikenge* had changed in order to accommodate the changed times. HIV and AIDS education is being incorporated in the teachings. This study revealed that people still practise *Sikenge* because traditionally it is believed that a woman cannot be complete without experiencing initiation. *Sikenge* is one way of imparting some of the skills that are of significance to a woman.

The other reason for the continued practice of initiation rites is that, initiations are a means of preserving the cultural norms, values and beliefs. Through preservation of culture, a social identity of the kinship is preserved too. Most people consider initiation rites as marks of social identity because those who have the same social identity tend to see issues from the same perspective as members of the same social group. Some people initiate their daughters because they believe that if a girl is not initiated, bad luck shall befall the family. This is called *Kutolela*.

Mushaukwa (2011) concluded that initiations rites imparted into girls the skills to help them earn a living by venturing into work as hired tutors. Nowadays people pay for the services of initiators and those who have the knowledge and skills required make a living out of it. Therefore if the girls that undergo initiation rites could master the knowledge and skills that are availed to them in these initiations rites, they could become professional traditional counsellors known as *Chilombola*, *Bana Chimbusa* or *Alangizi*.

However, other people do not accept the practices of *Sikenge* and therefore they do not initiate their daughters because it is against their Christian beliefs. They believe that *Sikenge* is a pagan and immoral practice while others fail to do it due to lack of financial resources to conduct the coming out ceremony because it is an expensive venture to undertake. For others, they feel initiation rites expose the young girls to adult material by teaching them how to handle a man in bed. Some parents are not comfortable with the content of the *Sikenge*. Despite this study providing the latest information on the developments that have occurred in the *Sikenge* initiation rite, it still did not address the religious aspect which this current study has explored.

2.3 Studies on Other Initiation Rites

The concept of rites of passage as a general theory of socialisation was first formally articulated by Arnold Van Gennep (1909) in his book, *Rites of Passage*, to denote rituals marking the transitional phase between childhood and full inclusion into a tribe or social group. He defined rites of passage as ‘rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age’. Rites of passage have three phases which are separation comprising the preliminary rites; transition which are executed during the transitional stage, they comprise the *Liminal* rites; and incorporation which are the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world of post *Liminal* rites.

During the separation stage initiates are physically removed from the mainstream society and sent to secluded places. This stage involves a metaphorical “death”, as the initiate is required to leave childhood behind by breaking with the previous practices and routine of childhood. It is a time of physical and psychological stress because the initiates do not know their status in the society. The initiates do not know the way of life of the community, they also do not understand the significance of the religious customs of the community and the future is not clear to them. Separation to the initiate signifies that without being initiated they cannot become acceptable members of the society and they are nothing in society. This stage is important in the sense that it enables an individual to cross the boundaries of life.

The second stage *Liminal* is a transition which is usually the longest and most important. During this phase, the initiate passes through a realm that has few or none of the attitudes of the past or coming state. The phase involves the creation of a tabula rasa, through the removal of previously taken for granted forms and limits. *Liminality* is usually symbolically likened to being in the womb, invisibility, sexless, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon. The initiate is expected to be passive and submissive, obeying the instructors and accepting punishment without complaining; silence is highly emphasised to the initiates because it is likened to an unborn baby who is speechless and it further symbolises wisdom. Submissiveness confirms the power and authority of older people especially the ones performing the ritual.

According to Gennep (1977) there are two characteristics that are essential to the rites in this stage and these are: the rites must follow a strictly prescribed sequence, where everybody knows what to do and how. Secondly, everything must be done under the authority of a master of ceremony or a specialised person. This stage implies an actual passing through the threshold that marks the boundary between the two phases. The initiate, at this stage, is expected to pass a test to prove she or he is ready for adulthood.

The last stage of the initiation is the incorporation involving the re-incorporation of the initiate into the society with a new identity as a 'new' being, 'an adult'. This stage involves a celebration of the 'new birth', of an adult and the welcoming of that being back into society. The stage symbolises the initiate's resurrection and the ancestors' approval the initiate. Therefore, the initiate is expected to behave according to the customary norms, values, traditions and ethical standards of the community.

Arnold Van Gennep's study is significant to this study because both studies contain three stages characterised by a lot of religious symbolism. While Van Gennep's study brings out the religious symbolism in initiation rites, his study is too general and this is where this study bridges the gap because it has dwelt on the *Sikenge* initiation rite which is specific to the *Lozi* people. Some of the things Van Gennep raised in 1909 may not be understood in that context nowadays.

The study conducted in 2006 by Rooyen, Potgieter and Mtezuka entitled '*Initiation School among the Southern Ndebele People of South Africa: Depreciating Tradition or Appreciating Treasure*', is also important to this study because the Ndebele and the *Lozi* initiation schools for girls have some similar aspects. According to Rooyen and his associates the aim of initiation schools is to produce an honest, respectful, skilled, cooperative, and individual who conforms to the social order of the day. Among the Ndebele, initiation is culturally viewed as the strength of the child's preparation for adult life and an indispensable part of his or her education.

Rooyen et al. (2006) claim that initiation schools prepare children socially making them ready for communal life. The social education provided is aimed at ensuring conformity, indoctrination and integration of the adolescent into tribal group values and societal behavioural norms. Initiation rites are therefore perceived as the most important channels through which culture is preserved and transferred. The social education provided in initiation rites prepare the initiate for citizenship in the tribe by enabling him or her to take social responsibilities and obligations.

According to this study, initiation should be continued because it teaches the child what the parents cannot, mainly because of the parents' languishing authority over the child. The lateral discipline that is exercised by the elders and the pressure that is exerted on the adolescent during initiation to obey and conform is another reason that has made these initiations to continue to be practiced up to date. Most parents want their children to undergo initiation because initiation schools strengthen their hands with the moral, ethical teachings and the inculcation of norms and values.

Whilst the study by Rooyen et al. (2006) is relevant to this study because it highlights the social and moral aspects of the Ndebele rites, it does not provide enough information on the religious aspect of the rite leaving a knowledge gap on the type of spiritual education that is provided by initiation rites.

The study carried out in Malawi by Munthali and Zulu in (2007) entitled "*The Timing and Role of Initiation Rites in Preparing Young People for Adolescence and Responsible Sexual Reproductive Behaviour*" is also relevant to this study because it shows that

initiation rites play the role of imparting knowledge on responsive sexual and reproductive behaviour in initiates. Responsive sexual and reproductive behaviour constitute part of the spiritual, social and moral education that this study attempted to address.

During the transition phase the initiates are taught the three key things which are: respect and obedience, hygienic practices and restraint from sex. Respect is a central theme in initiation rites. The initiates are taught never to be rude to their parents or elderly people, to kneel down when talked or to saw adults, never to enter their parents' bedroom. Hygiene practices mainly emphasise how to take care of the pieces of cloth used during menstruation and sexual intercourse while a girl was menstruating is prohibited. It is believed that if a man was in contact with menstrual blood during sexual intercourse, he would be afflicted with some sickness and possibly die if no proper medicine is used. Cooking food as well as adding of salt to food is forbidden during menstruation time as this can cause the people who may eat the food to fall sick. In this case menstruation is treated with great sensitivity and regarded negatively because it is believed to be dangerous to society, thus a menstruating woman is regarded unclean.

The study reveals that girls' initiation ceremonies emphasise avoiding indulgence into sexual activities as a way of preventing unwanted pregnancies, abstinence as a way of avoiding early pregnancies and contraction of sexually transmitted diseases which is not the case with boys' initiation rites. It also revealed that most young people attend initiation rites because it is an important part of their culture that marks a transition from childhood and have no choice but to do what their parents ask them to.

Munthali and Zulu (2007) revealed information relevant to this study, however, their study did not highlight the spiritual aspect of the initiation rite as this study has done.

Zambia just like other countries has several ethnic groupings that practice the puberty initiation rites for girls. The arrival of a girl's first menstruation is an important event in the African culture, Zambia inclusive. Several studies have been conducted in relation to initiation rites for girls and this study chose to review a few of them that seem to be significant to the Exploration of *Sikenge* initiation rite in promoting cultural heritage.

The first of these studies is the classic works of Audrey Richards (1956) entitled *Chisungu, A Girls' Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia*. The study was carried out between 1930 and 1931 in *Bemba Land*. Audrey was privileged to observe a *Chisungu* initiation rite. It is a detailed description, analysis and interpretation of the rite in relation to the cultural setting.

The relevance of Richards' (1956) study to this study is that, it formed the bedrock of the subsequent studies because it was based on ethnography. An ethnographic study is "one that contains the collection and analysis of descriptive socio-cultural data or the way of life from a single social group, society or some related society", Suryani (2008: 122). This research design which usually involves participant observation requires a minimum of one year to conduct which makes it very important and effective because it brings out detailed and valuable information. However, my study did not employ the typical ethnography but used a case study which is closer to what Richards had used.

According to Richards (1956), *Chisungu* is practised because it is a critical way of preparing a girl for marriage and to change her status from a girl to a woman. The initiators strongly believe that during the process of *Chisungu*, they are changing an alarming condition to a safe one, and securing the transition from a calm but unproductive girlhood to a potentially dangerous but fertile womanhood. The rite is meant to protect the girl from the dangers associated with the physical commencement of adolescence as well as ensuring that she is safe during marriage and child delivery.

According to Richards (1956) *Chisungu* teaches the socially acceptable attitudes of a wife and mother. The initiates are taught how to do their house chores differently. Besides consecrating the woman's duties in the sense of making them honourable, the rite is an event for public acceptance of the authorised marriage obligations. Richards further claims that *Chisungu* confers the right to bear a child because it is believed that before a girl is initiated it is a taboo for her to fall pregnant since by this time she is not yet blessed with fertility by her ancestors. The *Bemba* culture highly values fertility and care of children which are believed to come as blessings from the ancestors, chiefs and senior relatives, especially the father's sister.

Concerning moral teaching, the following morals were emphasised during the *Chisungu* rite as:

Social obligations of husband and wife; obligations to in-laws; domestic duties; agricultural duties; maternal duties; obligations between mother and daughter; sex and fertility and general ethical rules (Richards, 1956: 140).

From the above cited morals the social obligations of husband and wife tops the list, followed by sex and fertility. This justifies the point that *Chisungu* values marriage and child bearing and in order to accomplish these moral values, *Chisungu* expresses morality by stressing that a girl should submit to her husband who has a duty of providing for her. There is a general belief in the Bemba culture that in order to have a blessed life one needs to fulfil certain obligations like: conducting oneself in the manner that is pleasing to the ancestors; respecting senior members in the society such as chiefs, in-laws, senior women and elders in general and observing the sex, fire and blood taboos are believed to reduce high infant and maternal mortality.

Richards' study contains vital information relevant to this study, however, her study is different in that it describes *Chisungu* not *Sikenge* and it was conducted in a rural setting in *Bembaland* over eighty years ago while this study on *Sikenge* was carried out in an urban setting and in *Lozi* land. Since Richards' study was conducted over eighty years ago, it differs with this current study because of some social and economic changes that have taken place over the past years.

Mwewa Kapita a Catholic priest conducted a theological study in 1977 entitled *Traditional Zambian Eschatology and Ethics Confronting the Advent of Christianity* which is relevant to this study. In his study, Mwewa has explained the religious meanings attached to some of the teachings emphasised in initiation rites that are practised in Zambia. The study indicates that:

Nobility of procreation and motherhood; transmission of human life and devotion in nursing it; continuation of the family and the clan into the future through her

fertility and observance of tradition are some of the values that receive great emphasis in initiations (Mwewa, 1977: 140).

Furthermore, the initiate is “admonished to abhor harlotry as a danger to her own life, and that of the clan. It is disrespectful to her and to her parents,” (Mwewa, 1977: 142). It was regarded to be disrespectful to oneself and one’s parents for someone who was not initiated to indulge in sexual activities. It is for this reason that the girls were prohibited from indulging in sexual activities before marriage because if they did it would show through pregnancy.

Patience, endurance, self control and continence are some of the values that had to be carried on in the life of a woman. During initiation, virginity before marriage was highly stressed and appreciated, the girls were told to avoid being in the company of men. Strict observance of moral integrity and virginity began during this stage of life.

The difference between Mwewa’s study and this study on *Sikenge* is that his study is too general in the sense that it looked at initiation rites in Zambia while this study is specific to *Sikenge* for the *Lozis*. Secondly, his study did not highlight the changes that might have taken place in the initiation rites which this study did.

An anthropological study that was conducted by Thera Rasing (1995) which has been put in form of a book entitled *Passing on the Rite of Passage. Girls’ Initiation Rite in the Context of an Urban Roman Catholic Community of Zambian Copperbelt* is equally of great significance to this study. The study was conducted in Kitwe’s Luangwa Township and targeted the Catholic women groups. Its aim was to find out what rites of passage mean for urban women and how the women who participate in women’s church groups were involved in the rites of passage. It focussed on the relations established by marriage, the community and its continuity in space and across the generations.

In this study, Rasing (1995) points that initiation rites emphasise the power and authority of senior women and they teach the girls about their own power and self respect. Hygiene, respect for elders and self reliance are major values that are stressed to the girls. According to Rasing initiation are aimed at socialising the girls on their roles hence

fulfilling the social and moral aspects of traditional education. She further states that initiations are expressions of fundamental social values. They place emphasis on the relations established by marriage, the society and its continuity in space and across generation. The rituals that are conducted during initiation rites are believed to be a property of the ancestors who are the founders of all social life and must be passed on to the generations to come. She claims that initiation rites are a necessary part of humanity because they create solidarity among women; they form a community of women.

Rasing noticed that although initiations have existed from time immemorial they have undergone modifications. For instance there are changes in the manner in which initiations are conducted today. The girls are initiated some years after the onset of the menstruation which implies that the focus is no longer the biological changes but the social ones. The reasons for postponing according to Rasing are financial and she claims that the ritual's association with nature no longer exists. She argues that while the girls were initiated when they were still virgins this time it is not the case, they have knowledge about sexuality because they learn about it at school and it is well known that some of them have sexual relationships.

The other change observed in the study is that traditionally girls were only initiated in the cold and wet season but depending on the availability of finances they are likely to be initiated in the hot or dry season. It was believed to be a bad omen to have a ceremony during this time and that if a girl was initiated in the hot and dry season she would be troublesome, sick or will not have long life to see her to old age. Some of the beliefs were emphasised by elders to ensure that people adhered to the established pattern of conducting the rituals otherwise the explanations that were given do not make sense in this era.

Initiations are still relevant even in this era because they work to build up communities. Through initiations boundaries in the lives of individuals are made visible and by undergoing initiation a girl gets a right to pass the border between young or old, girl or woman, male or female, married or unmarried, power or no power which is socially constructed. These boundaries are important ways of maintaining social order, becoming good ancestors and keeping the ancestral law and therefore they must be kept, (Rasing,

1995). Indeed the boundaries must be kept because they are a vehicle through which tradition can be passed on to the younger generations to come.

In conclusion of this study Rasing (1995) states that, initiation is like baptism or confirmation in the Christian faith, if someone is not baptised she continues to be regarded as a sinner regardless of how often they attend church.

In 2001, Rasing published another book entitled *The Bush Burnt, the Stones Remain, Female Initiation Rite in Urban Zambia*. This book comprises all the earlier conducted studies. It focuses on the interpretations of the relevance of female initiation rites in an urban setting among today's modern Christian women. She points out that female initiation rites are linked to gender relations, changes in gender relations during the last few centuries and decades are examined on a socio-economic, religious and political level. Despite these changes, initiation rites remain of remarkable significance.

The significance of initiation rites lies in the fact that they express and confirm solidarity and unity among women. The norms and values concerning gender, production and reproduction, and cosmological ideas are passed on through initiation rites. Symbols and rituals add to the creation and maintenance of an inclusive cosmology, as well as to the preservation of a social system through being repeated, (Rasing, 2001).

According to Rasing (2001) Initiation is rite of transition that sets a basis for adult life by constructing a new identity for a woman. During initiation, the novice symbolically crosses the boundary from childhood to adulthood and constructs herself as a new person. Apart from symbolically transforming a girl into a woman, initiations provide maturing individuals with numerous social attributes that a woman is expected to have. These initiation rites, as earlier indicated, emphasise reproductive roles within marriage, domestic and agricultural duties, respect for elders and the initiate's future husband, sexuality and food taboos also form part of the agenda.

The rituals are aimed at creating and emphasising the social order and unity in a community. Rasing (2001) confirms that initiations are there to stress the value of inter-human relationships, required for procreation. The complementarities and

interdependence of men and women in production and reproduction is justified as well as the relationship with the ancestors.

The difference between Rasing's studies and this one is that Rasing focused on *Chisungu* a girls' initiation rite for the *Bemba* tribe on the Copperbelt province of Zambia and it targeted the women from the Roman Catholic lay groups as well as the priests and nuns. However, this study on *Sikenge* did not focus on a specific religious group and was conducted in a less developed area as compared to Luangwa township where Rasing's studies were conducted therefore the findings to these three studies could be different.

2.4 Own Comments on the Literature

Literature has so far shown that initiation rites emphasised a lot of norms and values that a married woman is expected to exhibit. Among the values that have been highly emphasised in the literature are respect for the elderly, husband, in-laws and authority. Hygiene and sex education are equally emphasised. The literature has also shown that these initiation rites have undergone modifications due to the introduction of Western education which came with Christianity and economic changes. What is lacking in most studies is the religious aspect of the initiation rite as well as salient studies on how the *Lozi* initiation rite for girls is promoting cultural heritage.

2.5 Summary

This Chapter has discussed the *Lozi* culture from its social and spiritual angle. It has also shown that there is a component of spiritual social and moral education that is provided in initiation rites and that initiations are channels through which the cultural heritage of a particular tribe is passed on to the young generation. However, the studies that have been conducted out on the subject of *Sikenge* have not concentrated on the spiritual education provided in the initiation rite. The studies have not gone into details to provide explanations for conducting the rituals during the initiation rites. This study has attempted to explain what the participants thought they were doing as they conducted the *Sikenge* initiation rite and why they were doing it.

The next Chapter discusses the methodology that was employed in gathering information and how the information has been analysed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The previous Chapter reviewed literature on the *Lozi* culture, *Sikenge* and initiation rites conducted in some parts of Africa and Zambia. This Chapter gives an account of the methods that have been used in this study. It describes the research design, population, sample size, sampling strategy, research instruments, data collection procedures, reliability and validity, data analysis and ethical issues.

3.1 Philosophical Orientation

The study employed a qualitative paradigm. A qualitative research is a form of research that involves description. Its aim is to describe and analyse culture and behaviour of people and their groups from the point of view of those being studied (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). According to Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013), this kind of research aims at gathering in-depth understanding of human behaviour and presides over such behaviour. The focus in this case is on the reasons for doing something and the procedure of doing it. It does not just concentrate on the site and time; that is the 'what', 'where' or 'when'. A qualitative research uses natural settings and not artificial ones like the laboratories and relies on research strategies that are flexible and interactive; these comprise of focus group discussions, questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. In this type of a study the feelings and insights of the subjects are very important.

Kahn and Best (2009) explain that a qualitative study leaves open the possibility to change, to ask questions, and to go in the direction that the observation may lead the experimenter. This kind of research is more open and responsive to its subjects. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a qualitative research allows the researcher to change the research instruments depending on the type of respondents one has and usually it involves small samples. Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013: 5) further explains that 'this kind of research is a non-numerical data collection or explanation based on the attributes of the graph or source of data.' "It is a study in which the description of observations is not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms" Khan and Best (2009: 163). However,

this is not to say that a qualitative study is completely free from statistical analysis, statistics could be used to group and code themes.

In philosophy, any information that is to qualify as knowledge should satisfy the epistemological and ontological considerations. According to Bryman (2008: 11) ‘an epistemological issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline.’ Of very much importance about this issue is the question of whether the social world must be studied according to the same principles, procedures and ethos as the natural world. There are two positions of thought under the epistemological consideration which are the positivism and the interpretivism. ‘The positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond’ (Bryman, 2008: 12). He further explains that interpretivism is an epistemological stance that advocates that the subject matter of the social world, the people and their institutions, is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences and therefore requires a different logic of research process which mirrors the distinctiveness of people against the natural order.

Ontological considerations deal with questions of the nature of social entities. The main point is to establish whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that possess a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2008). The first point is referred to as objectivism while the second one is taken to be constructionism. Objectivism is ‘an ontological position that asserts that phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors’ while constructivism is ‘an ontological position that asserts that phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. The above definitions have the following implications: the first one implies that the knower and knowledge itself exist independently and second one implies that the knower and knowledge itself are dependent of each other, knowledge is a product of the knower.

This study being a qualitative one employed the epistemological stance of interpretivism and the ontological stance of constructivism. This implies that the study supports the idea that knowledge is a result of the meanings attached to the phenomena under study and as

such the researcher and the subjects are fused into one entity. The findings of the study are therefore a literal creation of the processes of interaction between the researcher and the subjects (respondents) this is because interpretivism is of the view that the social world is a construction of the people in it (Krauss, 2005). People construct their own realities based on the values and beliefs resulting from concrete experience.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a plan or blue print of how one intends to conduct a research. However, Ghosh (1992: 207) argue that “a research design is not a highly specific plan to be followed without deviation, but rather a series of guide posts to keep one headed in the right direction.”

A research design deals with four main ideas which are the strategy, the conceptual framework, the sample of the study and the tools and the instruments to be used for collecting and analysis of empirical materials (Punch, 2009). In order to show the connection of the four main ideas above, this study has done a literature review of studies that are related to the spiritual, social and moral education offered in initiation rites; used snow ball sampling as a strategy for selecting participants for the study who were the initiated women in Mongu township and they were subjected to interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher also observed two sessions of the *Siyeke* where the initiate was tutored as well as the procedures for the coming out ceremony. During all these events the researcher paid particular attention to the spiritual, social and moral values, norms and beliefs and got the descriptions and meanings of the rituals that were conducted. A research design is therefore a necessary component of a research because it situates a researcher in the empirical world and connects the research questions to the data.

This study employed a case study design to collect, describe, analyse and interpret the data. A case study is an ethnographic research which is qualitative in nature and whose aim is to provide an in-depth description of a small number of less than fifty cases (Mouton, 2010). This kind of design requires the researcher to collect many forms of data either by voice or video recording, analysing documents such as diaries, letters or e-mail

and in so doing, the researcher needs ample time to come up with a detailed description of the case or event under exploration hence a small sample is recommended.

3.3 Population

Sidhu (2013: 253) defines population as ‘the aggregate or totality of objects or individuals regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study. It means all those people or documents proposed to be covered under the study.’ It refers to an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common that are of interest to the researcher, for example all initiated women who underwent *Sikenge* initiation rite constituted the population of this study.

3.4 Sample Size

According to Bless and Smith, (1995), sample is a subset of elements taken from a population which is considered to be a representative of the population. In other words a sample is the number of participants selected from the universe to form a desired sample. It is just a fraction of what should be studied. The sample for this study comprised of twenty five respondents who are categorised as follows: five initiated girls aged between sixteen and twenty years, ten initiated women aged twenty one years and above and ten initiators aged forty years and above.

3.5 Sampling Design

The process of coming up with the desired number of participants required to conduct a particular study is what is termed as sampling. Sidhu, (2013: 253) defines sampling as ‘a process of selecting a sample from the population.’ Sampling is an important process in conducting a research because researchers cannot collect data from all persons that have the suitable characteristics needed for a study. Gathering data on a sample is less time consuming as compared to the whole population because not everybody eligible for the study shall be subjected to questioning. It is also less costly to collect data from a sample in the sense that a large sample could be wide spread over a large geographical area and this can lead to high travel expenses and time consuming.

There are two types of sampling designs namely probability and non-probability designs. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the main feature of probability sampling designs is randomisation, or random selection of respondents, things and places. The aim of randomising is to give each unit of the population an equal chance of selection. This kind of sampling warrants the researcher to generalise to the greater extent and make inferences. Non-probability sampling, according to Bless and Achola (1988: 68), 'is one in which the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown, that is, it is not possible to determine the likelihood of the inclusion of all representative elements of the population into the sample.' Under this kind of sampling some elements of the population might not have a probability of being included in the sample for this reason it is not easy to determine the extent to which the sample represents the population hence making it difficult to warrant generalisations, (Bless and Achola, 1988). Non-probability samples are frequently used in social sciences. They have a pragmatic advantage in that they are less time consuming and less costly.

Since this study falls under social sciences and it is a qualitative one, it adopted one of the non-probability sampling designs which is purposive sampling. This method of sampling required the researcher to purposefully target people believed to be reliable for the study. For example, to study *Sikenge*, the researcher had to engage people who had undergone this initiation rite in order to get the appropriate answers to the research questions. In this case purposive sampling had the strength of selecting cases that provided rich information that was required for in-depth analysis related to the main issues being studied, (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), purposive sampling is divided in several categories. This study only used snow-ball sampling among the several types of sampling that fall under purposive sampling. Bryman (2001: 98) defines Snow-ball sampling as 'a form of convenient sampling where the researcher makes initial contacts with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and uses them to establish contacts with others.' In this case the researcher used a few initiators who were recommended to her to get to know the other initiators and the initiated girls.

3.6 Research Instruments

Research instruments refer to the tools or devices that the researcher uses in collecting the necessary data. The most commonly used method of gathering information is by directly asking respondents to express their views, thus making the following instruments to be the most commonly used; questionnaires, interview schedule, observation checklist and focus group discussion guide, (Bless and Achola, 1988). In some cases these instruments are referred to as schedules or guides. A schedule is a list of questions that assists in the collection of data or required information. Therefore the word 'guide' shall imply 'schedule'. Of the above listed instruments, this study used the interview guide (semi-structured), focus group discussion guide and observation guide.

3.6.1 Semi-structured Interview Guide

An interview is a two- way method which permits an exchange of ideas and information. It is a conversation carried out with the definite purpose of obtaining information through the spoken word, (Sidhu, 2013). It involves collecting of data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. Interviews require direct actual and physical proximity of the two or more persons involved.

This instrument aims at collecting information from a number of people and puts less emphasis on a standardised approach. It is a more flexible style that suits the personality and circumstances of the person being interviewed (Johnson, 1994). The semi-structured interviews are based on the use of an interview guide. An interview guide is a list of questions on topics that need to be covered by the interview. These interviews comprise of structured and open-ended questions that the interviewer asks as a way of leading the respondent towards giving the intended data that meets the objectives (Khan and Best, 2009).

For this study interviews were conducted in such a way that there was face to face and one-to-one encounter between the interviewer and the interviewees. This instrument was used to gather information from the initiators and the initiated girls.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide (FGD)

The focus group is a special type of group interview that focuses on a number of people at once (Bryman, 2008). A focus group discussion differs from a group interview in that

it depends on the interaction between the participants while the group interview emphasises the interaction between the researcher and the participants (Bryman, 2008). In order to enhance this relationship between the participants Kombo and Tromp (2006) suggest that this method of data collection should usually involve homogeneous members of the target population such as age or education level. A focus group discussion has an advantage of producing a lot of information quickly and is good for exploring the beliefs, ideas or opinions in the community and this is why this study used it. The focus group discussion brought out critical points that went unchallenged during the semi-structured interview. The focus group discussions were used to collect data from the initiated women who were divided into three groups which are; those who are above fifty years and reached tertiary education level, those who were above thirty years and had reached tertiary education level and those who have not reached the tertiary level but who have gone as far as junior secondary level.

3.6.3 Observation Guide

‘Observation means seeing things with a purpose. It involves collecting facts which are in the direct knowledge of the investigators. Observation is a process of acquiring knowledge through the use of sense organs’ (Bryman, 1984: 64). There are several forms of observation and this study will use the structured observation in which Kombo and Tromp (2006: 96) describe the position of the researcher as an onlooker. The structured observation focuses on a small number of specific behaviour patterns, where only the behaviour appearing on a pre-defined observation list is recorded.

This study used this instrument of data collection because it has some strength of bringing out information that would not be captured by the interview guide such as behaviour. The researcher observed the *Sikenge* initiation rite that is one session of the *Siyeke* (*Liminal* stage) and an integration session order to collect the information on the spiritual, social and moral aspects of the rite.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Punch, (2009) defines data collection as ‘a process of finding information on research, or a process of gathering information aimed at providing solutions to the research

questions'. In this study, the semi-structured interview was used to collect information from the initiators and the initiated girls as earlier stated. The interviews were conducted in the places, at the times and on dates of choice of the participants. During the interviews, the researcher recorded the responses from the participants by taking notes in a note book using a pen. A cell phone recorder was used to record some responses and this was done with the permission of the interviewee.

The focus group discussions were conducted among the initiated women. The discussions were carefully planned and designed in order to obtain information on the topics discussed. The researcher made appointments with the sampled participants on the dates, times and venues of the discussion as it suited them. During the discussions, the researcher played the role of the moderator of the discussion and was taking down the responses from the group members in a note book.

The researcher observed one *siyeke* session and one coming out ceremony of the initiate in order to see the rituals that were performed and also to find out the meanings and beliefs attached to them. During the *siyeke* sessions, the researcher was not allowed to take pictures or to record what was happening, but at the coming out ceremony, she was allowed to take pictures after the initiate and her *Kashambeli* were dressed.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

In order to collect data, some form of measuring instrument has to be employed. In human sciences, 'measuring instruments refer to such instruments as questionnaires, observation schedules, interviewing schedules and psychological test', (Mouton, 2012: 100). These measuring instruments need to satisfy certain conditions if they have to produce true results. They have to be reliable as well as to be valid. Reliability according to Khan and Best, (1989: 160), is 'the degree of consistence that an instrument or a procedure demonstrates. Whatever it is measuring, it does so consistently'. Graziano and Raulin (2000: 84), add that 'good measures give the same results each time they are used and regardless of who does the measuring'. In social sciences reliability deals with whether a study can be repeated and avail the same results. In this way reliability is understood to be a measure of how stable or true a concept is, (Bryman, 2008).

Validity, according to Khan and Best (1989: 160), 'is the quality of data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure'. It refers to the accuracy of the measure. These two conditions have to be taken care of when collecting data. It is important to note that instruments could be reliable without being valid but they cannot be valid unless they are reliable. In other words instruments can produce the same results each time they are used without producing the intended results but they cannot produce the intended results if they are not consistent. The implication here is that validity is not a condition for reliability whereas reliability is a condition for validity.

In order to satisfy the two conditions, this study engaged three instruments in the process of gathering of data which are the interview, focus group discussions and observation checklist as a way of verifying the responses. The sample that was involved in the study comprised three sub-groups who were the initiators, initiated women and recently initiated girls. This idea of involving three groups of respondents and using three different types of data collection instruments is what is referred to as triangulation. Triangulating both the instruments and the respondents helped the researcher to ensure that the instruments tested what they intended and the responses or findings are hoped to be valid because the responses from the three sub-groups and from the three research instruments were compared and scrutinised to come up with valid findings.

3.9 Data Analysis

Isaac and Michael (1971) define data analysis as 'a critical examination of data for drawing meaningful inferences with known facts'. For other scholars such as Sidhu (2013), 'analysis of data means studying the tabulated information in order to determine inherent facts or meanings'. The two meanings given above imply that data analysis is about making sense of the data that has been collected or giving meaning to the data. This process of data analysis involves grouping responses according to the sub groups of the sample in order for the researcher to compare and contrast them. The process of data analysis begins while interview is still underway. This preliminary analysis helps in

redesigning questions aimed at focussing on central themes as one continues interviewing.

In this study, data was analysed qualitatively through categorisation of themes that respond to the objectives of the study. According to Johnson (1994), 'categorisation means organising data according to questions'. This means that related responses for each research question were discussed under one section. The first research question is analysed under the theme spiritual education provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. All the responses that were perceived to have a religious belief, values or practice are categorised here. The study attempts to provide a justification for holding such beliefs. The second research question is analysed under the theme social values emphasised in the *Sikenge* Initiation Rite. It must be made clear that while religious aspects are also social the second part of the analysis only comprises of those aspects of life that deal with how women relate with other people in the community. The third research question is analysed under the theme moral education provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. All the responses that described what is considered to be the right or good and wrong or bad behaviour or actions are categorised here. The final analysis of this study has been done under the theme the spiritual, social and moral changes in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. Going by the responses that were given the study has categorised them into three sub sections and it has attempted to supply validations for the changes.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics concern what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research. Since research is a form of human conduct, it therefore follows that such conduct has to follow generally accepted norms and values. Just like in many spheres of human life, certain kind of conduct is morally acceptable while other is not, (Mouton, 2012). Ethical issues arise from our interaction with other people, other beings and the environment, especially where there is potential or actual conflict of interests. It is obvious that research cannot proceed without the participation of human and animal subjects because it involves the acquisition of material and information that is provided on the basis of mutual

understanding, therefore, the rights, interests and sensitivities of those studied should be protected, (Bless and Achola, 1988).

According to Mouton, the subjects have the following basic rights:

the right to privacy which includes the right to refuse to participate; the right to anonymity and confidentiality; the right to full disclosure about the research (informed consent) and the right not to be harmed in any manner (Mouton, 2012: 243).

In this study the researcher ensured that the participation was voluntary, no one was forced to participate in anyway. Before the beginning of the interview or discussion, the participants were told what the research was all about and the importance of them giving correct information, they were also informed that they had the right not to take part in this activity if they so wished. In the case where initiated girls were involved, the researcher obtained permission from their parents or guardians prior to the interview. The names of the participants have not been disclosed to anybody or in anyway, they have been concealed. The researcher made sure that the information that was gathered has only been used for the intended and stated purpose.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has described the research design and methodology that have been used in gathering data. It has explained the population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments and procedure, reliability and validity conditions, data analysis and the ethical considerations that were employed in the study.

The next Chapter presents the findings of the study according to the groups that were involved.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

The previous Chapter discussed in detail the methodology employed in this study. This Chapter presents the findings of the study on the Exploration of *Sikenge* Initiation Rite in the Promotion of *Lozi* Cultural Heritage in Mongu district of Western Province. The findings were guided by emerging themes especially from the four research questions: The research questions for this dissertation were:

- i. What spiritual education is taught in the *Sikenge* Initiation Rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district?
- ii. What social values are emphasised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite?
- iii. What is the extent to which moral education is provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu?
- iv. What changes have taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of the *Sikenge* initiation rite?

The findings to all the research questions came from the responses obtained from the semi-structured interviews with the initiated girls and the initiators, the focus group discussions with initiated women and the observations of some *Sikenge* sessions. Special attention was put on the meaning and significance of the rituals and taboos conducted and emphasised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite.

4.1 Spiritual Education Taught

Responses to the first research question are presented in such a way that only the salient beliefs, values and practices said to constitute the rite by the three sub-groups of the sample have been presented.

According to the eighteen respondents “*Sikenge* is a tradition that was instituted before even our grandparents were born”. In stressing, the point, one of the initiators succinctly noted that:

We practice *Sikenge* because it is a tradition which was instituted by our great grandparents and we also do it to teach the young generation what tradition demands. Traditionally, it is not right for a girl to fall pregnant before she enters *Sikenge*, it is believed to be a bad omen that can bring bad luck to herself or her family. To prevent this from happening, we initiate the girl as soon as we realise that she has started menstruation (Interview with Initiator: September, 2014).

The initiators interviewed indicated that when a girl sees her first menstruation, she is expected to report it to one of her close female relatives who in turn informs the other female relatives especially the mother to the girl so that planning for her seclusion commences.

The processes of initiating a *Mwalanjo* (initiate) starts when it is dark because it is believed that the novice is like a ghost. Two initiators aged 75 and 72 years explained that the *Mwalanjo* was like a 'ghost', that is why they initiate her when it is dark because bad things happen in the dark. Twenty-three of the participants said initiation was conducted when it was dark in order to hide from men and children.

All the twenty-five respondents narrated that after the seclusion ritual, the novice was carried on the back by the initiator or tutor into the house. Twenty out of the twenty-five respondents explained that the *Mwalanjo* was carried on the back by the initiator after the first ritual to protect her from wicked people who seek to pick some soil from her footprints and use it to make charms that could render her barren or prevent her from getting married. Five of the respondents gave different reasons for carrying the *Mwalanjo* on the back. They said it was a tradition that was done by their grandparents.

All the respondents disclosed that the *nshima* that was spit together with the crumps and the bones that remained at the *Kulumisa* ritual were picked by the *Mwalanjo*'s grandmother for disposal by burying or hiding them in the river, stream or riverweed known as *Matindi*. The remains were not to be eaten by dogs, cats or chickens let alone be picked by wicked people who might make charms out of them.

All the respondents revealed that before the start of the coming out celebrations the novice was taken by women to the stream or river or *Lushoko* which is an extension of

the courtyard normally used as a bathroom for a ritual bath to remove the *Sikenge* dirt. An initiated girl said, “From the *Lushoko*, my tutor carried me on her back to the *Siyeke*”. *Siyeke* is a place where women gather to instruct the *Mwalanjo*. All the respondents confirmed that the reason for carrying the initiate on the initiator’s or tutor’s back was to prevent wicked people from getting soil from her footmarks to use it to make charms to make the initiate infertile or not to get married.

During the seclusion process, several rituals are conducted and all the participants narrated these in the same manner. One of the members of the focus group discussions explained as follows:

Seclusion took place in the evening when it was dark at the backyard or nearby in the nearby bush or in the house. The initiator whips the girl, commands her to sit down and clap. Thereafter the initiator covers the girl in a blanket and tells her that she is now a *Mwalanjo* (FGD with Initiated women: October, 2014).

The respondents explained that the ritual had some symbolic meanings. All the respondents said that the whipping symbolised that the girl was now grown up and no longer a child. Clapping was a sign to show respect to the women. Covering the girl with a blanket meant hiding her from being seen by men. All the respondents agreed that the whip that was used for the ritual was taken from special trees that produced fruits such as *Mulya* tree or *Mwangalala* tree or a river reed or a *Ling’ele* weed. A mulberry tree whip was used in cases where the other trees were not found. Six initiators and seven initiated women disclosed that whipping the novice with a whip sourced from a fruit bearing tree brought about fertility. Twelve of the participants did not know the reason for using a whip sourced from the above mentioned trees.

During the whole period of *Sikenge* the initiate was subjected to a lot of rules. All the initiated girls confirmed having been taught the rules. A recently initiated girl said:

A *Mwalanjo* was instructed to always face the east whenever she was seated at home; she was to speak in a low tone. The initiate was not to be called by her name, she was to be referred to as *Mwalanjo*; she was not allowed to have her meals with everybody except the *Kashambeli* and was not supposed to finish the food she

was served (Interviews with Initiated girl: October 2014).

The above findings were confirmed by all the initiated women who explained that the *Mwalanjo* faced the east because it was where the sun rose from, where light came from and light was believed to bring good things. The initiate lost her name the very day she was secluded because that name was a childhood name and after seclusion she was no longer a child therefore she could not be referred to by it. The initiate shared meals only with the *Kashambeli* because she was believed to be unclean. Therefore to prevent other family members from being infected she ate with the *Kashambeli*. She was not allowed to finish the food she was served, this was aimed at teaching her not to be stingy.

All the respondents agreed that the *Mwalanjo* was supposed to hide by covering her head with a cloth whenever she went out of the yard or house. They said this was meant to hide from being seen by men because it was believed to be a taboo for men to see the initiate. Eighty per cent of the participants explained that they prohibited the initiate from seeing or talking to men to prevent them from proposing love to her and if she accepted it was believed she would forever remain a prostitute.

Apart from the rituals that were conducted at seclusion, the *Sikenge* had several rituals that were conducted during the *Liminal* stage. All the ten initiated women and the ten initiators explained that early in the morning of the second day, the initiator performs another ritual on the *Mwalanjo* known as *Kulumisa* which means 'to make her bite'. The initiator prepared *nshima* accompanied with either fish, meat or sour milk. An initiator with over fifteen years of experience narrated that:

During *Kulumisa*, the initiator got a small piece of *nshima* dipped it in soup, put it on the stone and gave the *Mwalanjo* to pick it with her teeth and spat it in front of her (the east). The initiator repeated the same process and the *Mwalanjo* spat in the south, then the north, then the west and the last piece she swallowed without chewing. After swallowing the last piece of *nshima* the initiator used the same stone to tap the *Mwalanjo's* chest and back on the position opposite the one that was tapped on the chest (Interviews with Initiator: October, 2014).

All the twenty-five participants explained that the ritual is meant to enable the *Mwalanjo* to retain all the information she was to be told so that she did not forget it. She was to keep it in her heart. Fifteen respondents further revealed that the tapping of the stone on the *Mwalanjo's* chest was meant to enable the initiate to have a cool heart that was heavy enough to keep the secrets of the *Sikenge* and marriage. After the above ritual, the initiator invited elderly women, those who had reached menopause and small girls who had not started menstruating to join the initiate in finishing the meal because these were believed to be clean.

Eleven respondents out of twenty-five claimed that the initiate's condition was considered contaminated and to purify it, a ritual had to be conducted on the morning of the third day of seclusion. One of the initiators narrated that:

Early in the morning before sunrise, the initiator led the initiate into the *Situngu* a traditional kitchen while covered in a blanket. A young male relative who lived with the initiate in the same household threw a piece of charcoal at her known as *ku muposa lishala* in *Lozi*. The throwing of a piece of charcoal was meant to purify the initiate from her contagious status so that the male family members would eat the food she would be cooking or interact with her without causing them any harm (interview with initiator: October, 2014).

Eleven respondents elucidated that the throwing of a piece of charcoal ritual was performed so that the *Mwalanjo* would not grow thin if she happened to be seen by men. Fourteen of the respondents were not sure about the meaning behind throwing of a piece of charcoal.

Twenty-one respondents revealed that the *Mwalanjo* was supposed to come out of the *Sikenge* in the cold and wet season. They explained that the initiate is supposed to come out of the *Sikenge* in the cold or wet season so that her heart could be cool. An initiated girl explained that, "if a *Mwalanjo* was brought out in the hot season, she would have a hot temper which is not good for a woman". Four of the respondents were not sure about the appropriate season for initiations.

Other rituals were performed on the coming out day. All the participants revealed that one of the rituals conducted on the final day of the *Sikenge* was the cutting of the finger and toe nails and few strands of hair from the front and behind. These nails and hair were given to the grandmother for disposal by burying in a cool place like in water or in the ground.

The next ritual as observed by the researcher was where the initiator applied Vaseline or petroleum jelly on the initiate's body. Using Vaseline, the initiator drew a line starting from below the navel up to the sternum and drew another line starting from where the buttocks start up to the base of the head following where the backbone passes. All the ten initiators said the ritual of applying Vaseline in such a manner was meant to induce the initiate's fertility. The initiator also put white beads on the novice's neck after dressing and beautifying her. All the ten initiators and the ten initiated women explained that the white beads were meant to wish the *Mwalanjo* good luck and fertility. The beads had to be white, because the colour white, symbolised pure and good things, the beads length went down to the navel because it was believed fertility originated from there.

During the coming out cerebation *Mwalanjo* danced to a song that instructed her to choose a new name. All the twenty five participants confirmed this event. The name she acquired at this stage is a maternal title with a prefix of 'ma' to symbolise that she was a prospective mother. An initiator explained that this initiatory name signals the end of being a *Mwalanjo* and the beginning of adulthood. An initiated girl added that the initiatory name signalled that the girl had acquired a new identity, that she was a woman and no longer a girl.

The next ritual the *Mwalanjo* performed was carrying a cup of water on her head without holding it. She walks with it for a few metres to the point where her parents stood. When she reaches the parents, her father would get the cup of water from her head and drink a bit of the water and spit some of it on her chest as *Kupailela*, symbolising a blessing. Then her mother would repeat the same ritual. All the ten initiated women and three girls explained that the *Kupailela* ritual was aimed at blessing the young woman who had just come out of the *Sikenge*.

All the ten initiators and the ten initiated women who were involved in this study disclosed that in the event that a close relative died while there was a *Mwalanjo*, the *Siyemboka* would not be held because it was believed the *Mwalanjo* had brought bad omen. This is called *Mwalanjo Utolezi* in *Lozi*. All the rituals that are conducted on the coming out ceremony would be conducted except the dancing and drumming. This kind of coming out ceremony is known as *Kutapisa* meaning bathing off the *Sikenge* dirt.

4.2 Social Values Emphasised

The second research question of this study aimed at assessing the social values emphasised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. The following findings reveal the social values emphasised in the *Sikenge*.

All the twenty-five respondents said respect was a very important social value that was highly promoted in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. One of the initiators narrated that:

On the night the *Mwalanjo* is secluded, the first instruction we give her is to show respect to the women who have come to be part of her seclusion by clapping. We also emphasise to her to start respecting her parents and never to be rude to them (Interview with initiator: September, 2014).

The researcher observed that respect involved a lot of things as confirmed by what the women alluded to. In clarifying and agreeing with what all the participants said, one initiator with 20 years of experience succinctly narrated:

When a girl attained puberty, she is not supposed to enter her parents' bedroom because she now knows what a man and woman do when they enter the bedroom to sleep, so it is disrespectful for her to see where her parents sleep. She is not expected to search her mother's private bag because she can find things that she should not see such as beads, medicines and material her mother used during her monthly menstruation period (Interview with Initiator: September, 2014).

All the ten initiators and the ten initiated women said they instructed the *Mwalanjo* how to relate well with her husband and his parents by loving and showing them respect. They said she was advised to respect her husband and his parents and never to talk rudely or

arrogantly to them. All the five initiated girls confirmed they were prohibited from being rude to elderly people either through actions or utterances. The girls added that they were prohibited from joining conversations or discussion engaged by elderly people saying it was disrespectful to do so. One of the girls added, “I was advised to give way to elders when we meet on a path and never to stand in their presence when they were seated”.

All the twenty-five respondents pointed out that the novice was given advice concerning food taboos. They said a married woman was not expected to eat foods like bananas, sugar cane, groundnuts, peas, *Mang'ende* traditional scones in the presence of her in-laws because the foods were believed to depict some insults. Twenty participants disclosed that a woman was not supposed to give her husband, elderly male relatives and in-laws at least three pieces of food, for instance, three slices of bread, three pieces of meat because three signified insults, the three genital organs.

All the five initiated girls disclosed that they were taught other taboos that were not related to food. They confirmed they were forbidden from talking to boys or men whilst still in seclusion. They claimed that if they did so whilst still in seclusion they would become prostitutes. The girls went further to reveal that they were prohibited from beating male children with cooking sticks because the children could become impotent; meeting their fathers when they were still in seclusion; and sharing meals with other people especially men or boys.

All the ten initiators and the ten initiated women revealed that they instructed the novice that in the event that she received visitors after a quarrel with her husband she should not show it, but rather put up a face like everything was just fine, pretending nothing happened. All the twenty-five respondents stressed that the novice was advised on how to receive visitors; not to be moody when she had visitors; to be generous to visitors and other people she lived with. They explained that the novice was advised to treat both her family members and her husband's in the same manner. They said the novice was discouraged from maltreating her husband's relatives. During an observation, the researcher witnessed initiators advising an initiate on how to treat her step children or in laws the same way she would treat her own children or siblings. They emphasised that she should be humble to people around her and not to be proud.

Decent dressing was another social issue that the women said was emphasised to the initiates. All the respondents disclosed that dressing was stressed so much during the *Sikenge*. To confirm the emphasis placed on dressing, one initiated girl said, “My tutor told me to always wrap a *Chitenge* cloth round my waist if I’m wearing tight and short dresses, skirts or trousers. Due to that emphasis my dressing has changed, I now know how to dress when I am with elderly people, I wrap a *Chitenge* cloth round my waist.” The respondents said that initiated girls were taught to dress decently when they were with elderly people such as the male relatives and their in-laws. One initiated woman in a focus group discussion explained that:

Grown up girls should be instructed to dress decently in the presence of their fathers or other male relatives. If we do not teach these girls how to dress in the presence of their male relatives, they can wear clothes which are not appropriate such as tight trousers, short skirts and dresses or see-through clothes, which are sexually offensive to men and they could end up being defiled or sexually harassed (Discussion with Initiated women: September, 2014).

The researcher observed women at a *Siyeke* session emphasising the way a grown up girl was supposed to dress in the presence of her parents or other elderly people like her parents in-law. They advised the girl to always wrap a *Chitenge* cloth round her waist when she was in the presence of the elderly people such as her male relatives or in-laws. Sixty percent of the respondents confirmed that the *Sikenge* also taught the girls how to sit, they advised them to cover their thighs and not to show their under wears when they were seated.

The researcher also observed that the *Sikenge* rite brought women together for a common purpose. At the *Siyeke* women were very keen to teach the *Mwalanjo* all those things mentioned above. It was observed that the coming out ceremony brought both men and women together to celebrate. Whilst some women were busy singing and dancing for the novice in the *Siyeke*, some men and other women were also busy singing and dancing outside the house in the yard. It was noticed that *siyemboka*, which is the coming out ceremony, provided entertainment to men, women and children in the community.

4.3 Moral Education Provided

The findings showed the morals stressed in the rite. This was indicated by all the participants when they said hygiene was one of the virtues that were highly stressed during the *Sikenge*. All the respondents disclosed that lessons on hygiene included shaving of one's private parts such as the genital area and the arm pits, cutting nails and general body cleanliness. All the ten initiated women and the ten initiators alluded to the fact that they advised the initiates to always have sanitary pads and razor blades, to keep their clothes clean, ironed and well packed. One initiator in cementing education on hygiene added that she always advised the girls to always keep their bedrooms very clean by sweeping and arranging things in an orderly manner.

Lessons on hygiene included issues to do with menstruation. All the ten initiators disclosed that they taught the girls how to take care of themselves during menstruation. They advised the girls to bathe at least once a day. The initiators also instructed the girls to be cautious with the way they handled the used menstrual materials or sanitary pads as one initiator said:

I instruct the girls to wash their menstrual materials and hang them where no one else can see them. For those who use the modern sanitary pads I instruct them to either bury, burn or throw them in a pit latrine. These materials are not supposed to be seen by anyone because if left carelessly, some people could pick and use them for charms that could cause prolonged periods, infertility or failure to get married (Interview with Initiator: September, 2014).

During discussions, all the initiated women confirmed that one of the reasons for initiating the girls was to teach them how to take care of themselves when they 'go to the moon', meaning when they have their menses. The women explained that they advised the girls to bath twice in a day when they had 'gone to the moon'. A woman in a group justified that this kind of teaching was very important because if the girls were not taught, they would not be bathing as they were supposed to and they would end up developing a bad odour. The women went further to explain that they taught the girls how to wear the materials used during the monthly period and how to dispose them.

All the initiators and the initiated women justified that teaching girls how to handle their menstrual blood was very important because menstrual blood was very dangerous to men's health and if a woman was not careful with the way she handled her blood, she could bewitch her husband because if he came in contact with it, he could fall sick or fail to have genital erection.

All the five initiated girls confirmed having been taught the above issues and they admitted having been instructed not to share a bed with their husbands when they were having their menses. They also admitted having been instructed not to add salt to the relish when they were attending the monthly period because doing so would make any male who ate the relish to suffer from a terrible chest disease known as *Mwiili*. Ten of the participants still believed the disease could even cause a man to be impotent.

All the ten initiators and the ten initiated women revealed that the girls were taught sex education in order to sensitise them in the way they were to conduct themselves sexually. They all explained that the girls were forbidden from having sexual intercourse while attending their monthly period because it was believed to be a taboo. They all said the girls were taught how to handle men during sexual intercourse. All the five initiated girls admitted having been taught how to have sexual intercourse. All the initiators and the initiated women admitted that they demonstrated to the initiate how to dance in bed and how to clean a man after sexual intercourse.

Fornication was one of the vices that were prohibited in *Sikenge*. Despite the above lessons twenty of the participants argued that the *Sikenge* forbade the girls from indulging in sexual activities before they got married because they could fall pregnant. All the five girls acknowledged having been instructed to abstain from 'playing with boys' meaning having sexual intercourse during and after the *Sikenge*. They said the information on handling a man during sexual intercourse is for women to apply in marriage not before that. One girl in stressing the point on sex abstinence before marriage said, she was advised to wait until she got married and was cautioned that if she indulged in sexual activities at her age, she could fall pregnant before completing school or getting married or could contract sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Another girl

added that during her *Sikenge*, some women cautioned her that what she was taught was not meant for every man that would propose love to her, it was meant for her husband.

During the two times the researcher observed the *Siyeke* sessions where women gave counsel to the initiate, they discouraged the initiate from indulging in fornication. The women discouraged the initiate from indulging in sexual activities lest she fell pregnant before marriage. They warned her of contraction of HIV and AIDS because they know it has no cure.

All the initiated girls said confidentiality was another virtue that was highly stressed to them during the *Sikenge*. They confirmed having been instructed never to reveal to anyone what they were taught while in the *Sikenge* as one of the initiated girls noted that:

My *Nang'ongo* told me never to reveal to those who have not been initiated what they were teaching me in the *Sikenge*. She said if I did so I would run mad, so I was forbidden from associating with those who had not yet been initiated lest I revealed to them what I had been taught and become mad (Interview with Initiated Girl: October, 2014).

All the ten initiated women and the ten initiators confirmed they forbade initiates from disclosing to any uninitiated person what they were taught in the *Sikenge*. They further said they stressed to them to keep certain information confidential not only while they were still in *Sikenge* but even in their marriage life. During a focus group discussion, four initiated women substantiated that during initiation the girls were instructed that when they get married they should never disclose the bedroom issues to their parents or friends. One woman stressed that whatever happened in the bedroom between a wife and husband should not be shared with anybody because it was a taboo. The researcher also heard the women cautioning the initiate not to disclose the information they were revealing to her to any person who had not undergone initiation. During the *Siyeke* women sang and danced to songs that forbade the initiate from revealing secrets.

Other virtues that were mentioned by the five initiated girls were honest, trustworthy and truthfulness. These virtues were highly stressed by most women during the *Siyeke*

sessions. They advised that the *Mwalanjo* was to be honest and truthful. Vices such as stealing and deceit were discouraged. A recently initiated girl confirmed that she was cautioned against telling lies while still in the *Sikenge* that if she did so, she would carry on with that trait even when she got married. She also said during the *Kulumisa* ritual, her tutor cautioned her by tapping her chest with a stone and advised her never to steal or tell lies because the habits could lead her into problems at one time in her life.

4.4 Findings on the Changes that have taken place in the *Sikenge* Initiation Rite

The last research question was to determine the changes that had taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of the *Sikenge* initiation rite. Findings showed that there were changes that had taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of the *Sikenge* initiation rite. The changes revealed include the following:

4.4.1 Spiritual Changes

Twenty of the respondents lamented that nowadays most girls were not initiated when they reached puberty because their parents did not want to initiate them. Previously it was a must for every *Lozi* girl to be initiated into the *Sikenge* initiation rite immediately she attained puberty but this is not the case anymore. Three women during a FGD observed that a lot of women out there have never undergone initiation because they were never subjected to it.

All the participants pointed out that the girls were not put in the *Sikenge* immediately when they had their first menses. Previously a girl was put in the *Sikenge* immediately she reported that she had seen her first menses. Twenty-one of the respondents said girls were initiated years after they had started menstruating at the ages between sixteen and eighteen years. One of the girls confirmed that, “a long time ago, girls were initiated at the onset of the first monthly period but this was not the case with me. I was initiated at seventeen, four years after I had my first menses.” The other girls also confirmed this change that they were initiated between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years after they had their menses for years.

All the participants noted that the duration for seclusion of the novice had tremendously reduced from one year or six months to one week. An initiated woman said she had observed this and added that:

Of late what was happening was that the *Mwalanjo* is put in the house on a Friday evening and the next week on a Monday her parents started preparations for the coming out ceremony. By Friday the next week people would be gathered for the *Siyemboka* (FGD with initiated women: September, 2014).

Seven initiators and ten initiated women pointed out that the place for initial initiation rituals had changed. They explained that previously the rituals took place in the bush or outside the village but nowadays the rituals were performed right inside the houses. The women attributed this change to environmental changes. Previously people lived in the villages but this is no longer the case, some people now live in urban areas where the bush is far from their residential areas.

Thirteen out of twenty-five respondents pointed out that during their time, the first rituals of seclusion were performed when it was dark at around 20:00 hours. Four initiators admitted they sometimes initiated the girls during the day time because they had to trick the girls who did not want to enter the *Sikenge*. One of the initiated girls confirmed the above justification and pointed out that:

I was secluded around 16:00 hours, my mother told me to visit my aunt and when I reached her place she sent me to pick a chair from her house. She followed me inside the house, whipped me then told me to seat down and clap because I was now a *Mwalanjo* (Interview with Initiated girl: October, 2014).

Fifteen of the twenty-five respondents observed that previously initiations were conducted in the cold and wet seasons but of late they observed that some girls were initiated during the August school holidays and the coming out ceremonies were conducted just a few weeks later which was a hot and dry season. During the process of data collection, the researcher found two girls who had been secluded in the August

school holiday. The researcher attended the coming out ceremony for one of them which was held in October 2014.

Sixteen of the respondents noted that in the past the whip that was used on the *Mwalanjo* was gotten from specific indigenous trees such as *Mulya*, *Mwangelala*, *Ling'ele* or *Lutaka Lwa Nuka* but of late the initiators used whips gotten from trees such as mulberry which are not indigenous. One initiator clarified that she at times used a whip from non-indigenous trees such as mulberry tree when she could not find the indigenous trees that were listed above. She further said that the original indigenous trees that were used in her time are now found in the bush very far from the residential area. Six initiators justified the use of mulberry whips saying all what was needed was a whip plucked from a tree that produced fruits.

Twenty respondents observed that at the beginning of the coming out ceremony, the novice was taken to a river or stream to be bathed off the *Sikenge* dirt but not anymore. The novice is bathed in the *Lushoko* or in the bathroom. The women said the change had come because they lived in the townships where rivers and streams were far away. All the initiated girls confirmed that they were not taken to a stream or river to be bathed before the commencement of the coming out ceremony instead they were either bathed in the bathroom or at the *Lushoko*.

Eighteen participants revealed that during the *Kushukula* ritual the *Mwalanjo's* head was shaved the *Ngulawela* style. This was an act of removing all the hair on the *Mwalanjo's* head but nowadays this practice was no longer done, instead the initiators just cut a few strands of hair from the front and the back of the head. The researcher too observed this practice at the coming out ceremony.

Another change that was observed at the *Kushukula* ritual concerned the cosmetics used for beautifying the novice. A long time ago, women used traditional cosmetics known as *Lukumba* to beautify the novice. Nowadays, the women use baby powder and Vaseline to beautify the initiate. One initiator explained that *Lukumba* is an indigenous plant with a nice scent which is found in the flood plains. All the ten initiators and four initiated

women admitted not using the traditional cosmetics because they were hard to find. The women said they used modern cosmetics because these were easier to find.

Fifteen respondents lamented that at their time an initiate wore a necklace made from white beads on her graduation day to wish her fertility. The girl was expected to wear the necklace up to the time she would deliver her first child. Then the necklace was tied around the baby's waist. The women observed that nowadays girls do not wear the necklace for that long. All the five girls admitted they wore the white beads on the coming out ceremony but just for that occasion and since then they had not worn the necklace.

Five initiators and five initiated women recalled that sometime back before the 1950s, the *Mwalanjo* was tattooed during *Sikenge* but not anymore. They validated that the tattoos were meant to sexually arouse men during sexual intercourse.

4.4.2 Social Changes

All the participants acknowledged that the *Sikenge* initiation rite had undergone some social changes.

Twenty-two participants pointed out that previously the novice had a uniform for identify in the community. The initiate wore a necklace known as *Kakenge* the whole period she was in seclusion. The women said things had changed because now the initiates no longer wore *Tukenge* (plural of *Kakenge*) for identity in the community. Three of the respondents were not aware of the *Kakenge*.

All the ten initiators observed that the initiates of today no longer clapped for elderly women when they met outside their homes. They attributed this change to the lack of some form of identity saying it was no longer possible for anyone to identify a *Mwalanjo* when they met outside her home hence the initiates had taken advantage and had stopped the practice. All the initiated women confirmed this change in the manner initiates conducted themselves. Four out of the five initiates said they never clapped for elderly people because they never met them, they were secluded after completing school and were not allowed to go out during the time they were in seclusion.

Before it was a taboo to refer to a novice by her real name because she was believed to have no other name except to be called *Mwalanjo* but now it was no longer the case. Sixteen respondents observed that the novice was referred to by her real name. The women explained that now the *Mwalanjo* was called by her real name at school or by people who were not aware of her status.

Thirteen respondents alluded to the fact that it had become almost impossible for some initiates to adhere to some of the instructions given to them. They mentioned rules such as the one that prohibited the *Mwalanjo* from interacting with men or boys in anyway not even her father or brothers. The women said some initiates attended school while in seclusion and interacted with boys and male teachers there at school thus violating the rule. It was impossible for a girl attending school to avoid talking to her male teachers and male schoolmates. In addition, eighteen of the respondents observed that in the past the novice covered her head in a *Chitenge* material to hide from men when going out of the yard. The women said this practice was no longer there, the initiates went out of their homes without covering their heads. However, one of the initiated girls secluded towards the end of the school term said her mother had advised her to cover her head when approaching the yard and not when she was in public.

Six of the initiators and seven initiated recalled that during their time, the *Mwalanjo* was a responsibility of all the women in community. The women in the community would visit the *Mwalanjo* at their own time to teach her about their expectations. Some would bring her food, others would give her tasks to do for them or punish her if she was found wanting. They noted that of late there were some changes like women in the community no longer visited the *Mwalanjo* at their own time to give some lessons. They did not even take food to her neither did they give her tasks to do nor did they punish her when found wanting. All these responsibilities have been left to the *Mwalanjo's* family and her initiator.

When the researcher attended the *Siyeke* session, she observed there were a lot of *Mbunda* and *Luvale* songs and dances. Even when they were taking the *Mwalanjo* for presentation to the public, the women sang a song in *Mbunda*. Throughout the two occasions it was observed that the songs that were sung were either in *Silози* or *Sibunda*

or *Luvale*. It was also noticed that to attend a session where the *Mwalanjo* was being tutored, one had to be invited and the participants had to know the invited guests so well otherwise the organisers could throw out a guest.

Nine of the twenty-five respondents observed that in the past during preparations for the coming out ceremony, the women in the village came together to brew the local beer, other women would brew the local beverages such as *Ilya* and *Maheu* for the children and the adults who did not partake of alcohol but nowadays it was no longer the case.

Another change that the researcher noticed at the coming out ceremony was the absence of the traditionally brewed beer and beverages such as *Sipesu*, *Ilya* and *Maheu*. At the *Siyemboka* people drunk the locally brewed wine and *chibuku* shake-shake, a few drunk *Mosi* and Castle lager. In the *Siyeke* enclosure the host provided the women with the locally brewed wine while some women who seemed to be well to do and in their thirties drunk the modern wines and ciders such as Redds, Savannah and Smirnoff. The researcher did not see any drinks for those who did not take alcohol.

It was also noticed that there were no traditional musical instrument that were played to entertain people instead there was a Disco Jokey just like at a kitchen party who played a lot of recorded music composed by the famous musicians and some of the songs were not even is *Silozi*. Three initiated women, six initiators and one girl pointed out that in the olden days the young men came in groups with their *Lilimba*, the xylophones, *Bingubu* or *Milupa* or drums to compete against each other. Nowadays the kind of musical instruments played at the *Siyemboka* are modern. People dance to recorded music, because the traditional music has been abandoned.

4.4.3 Moral Changes

Concerning personal hygiene, all the initiators admitted that they advised the *Balanjo* to bath at least once a day. They said that times have changed, long time ago *Mwalanjo* was not allowed to bath until the day she came out of *Sikenge*. One initiator observed that it was not possible for a girl to go without bathing for days because for some they could develop some skin infections or bad odour. All the five initiated girls confirmed that in the past it was believed to be a taboo for the *Mwalanjo* to bathe but things had changed,

now she was advised to bath at least once in a day and comb or plait hair but was not allowed to apply nail polish and lip stick.

All the Initiated women revealed that some taboos concerning menstruation were no longer adhered to. The women noted that the taboos emphasised in *Sikenge* were outdated. They cited taboos such as the one that prohibits a woman in her monthly menstrual period from adding salt to the relish to be eaten by men saying that they will develop a serious chest disease known as *Mwiili* as being outdated. All the initiated women confirmed that they added salt to the relish but their husbands and male siblings never had chest diseases.

The women further mentioned that the *Sikenge* prohibited a woman having her monthly menstrual period from having sexual intercourse with a man or her husband and did not even allow the two to share a same bed. All the initiated women admitted that they shared a bed with their husbands during the times they had their menses despite having been instructed that it was a taboo. One initiated woman who has been married for thirty-three years narrated her experience that:

On the night of my traditional wedding it so happened that I was menstruating, I told my aunt about it and she advised me not to sleep with my husband on the same bed. Upon reaching my husband's home, I told him what had happened and asked him to find me a mattress or mat so that I could make a floor bed for myself on which I could be sleeping until the period ended. My husband objected to this arrangement, he insisted that we sleep on the same bed and we had sexual intercourse. We have been married for thirty three years but my husband has never suffered from any serious chest disease (FGD with Initiated women: October, 2014).

All the women in the FGDs attributed the changes concerning menstruation to the Western type of education.

4.5 Summary

This Chapter presented findings of the study which aimed at exploring the extent to which *Sikenge* initiation rite promotes the cultural heritage of the *Lozi* people to the girls and women in Mongu district. The findings revealed that through its teaching, rituals and taboos *Sikenge* still promoted the *Lozi* cultural heritage by providing the some spiritual, social and moral education to the girls who had undergone it. The findings have also showed that the *Sikenge* initiation rite had undergone some changes over the years. The next Chapter aims at discussing the just presented findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

The previous Chapter presented the findings to the study. This Chapter discusses the findings. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which the *Sikenge* initiation rite promoted the cultural heritage of the *Lozi* by providing spiritual, social and moral education to girls and women in Mongu district. The discussion is in accordance with the emerging themes discussing the four specific objectives that guided the study. The first objective was to explore the spiritual education taught in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu. The second objective was to assess the social values emphasised by the *Sikenge* initiation rite. The third objective was to establish the extent to which moral education was provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite among the *Lozi* people of Mongu district. The last objective was to determine the changes that had taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, social and moral aspects of *Sikenge* initiation rite.

5.1 Spiritual Education Taught

The study established that there were no teachings concerning belief in the supreme-being in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. According to the literature reviewed, the *Lozi* people believe in one God called *Nyambe* who is responsible for the creation of everything that exists, the earth, the sun, rivers, rain, plants, stones, mountains (Jalla, 1969; Jonson, 2012). Although the above is true, the study did not establish any beliefs related to the supreme-being. This finding is justified by Kalu (2000) who argues that God is remote and hidden in the daily cultic ritual of the Africans hence the ancestors deputise or are intermediaries.

The study also established that the participants still believed in ancestral spirits that was why they still performed some of the rituals and observed certain taboos. This finding was confirmed by the most common justification for performing rituals in the *Sikenge* that this tradition was instituted by the ancestors. This view is supported by Zahan when he states that:

Tradition is a kind of tacit agreement between the past and the present. As the word of the dead remains, tradition remains the most vital means of assuring the link between the dead and the living. Each time the living follow their tradition the presence of the ancestors is assured. By conforming to the legacy of the dead, the living in turn recognise their authority and avoid 'dangerous' undertaking (Zahan, 1979: 48).

Some of the outstanding rituals that prove the belief in ancestors are the *Kulumisa*, *Kushukula* and name choosing. The *Kulumisa* ritual is conducted on the second and last day of the *Sikenge*. It involves spitting food which is believed it is offered to the ancestors. Confirming the above view Mundumuko (1990) stated that, 'the spitting of food had a religious connotation related to offering food to the *Mwalanjo*'s ancestors. The offering of food to the ancestors was a reminder that the ancestors had not been forgotten'. Mundumuko (1990) further declared that the *Kulumisa* ritual was performed for three reasons with two of them pointing to the belief in ancestral spirits.

At the beginning of the rite, a ritual was conducted in order 'to provide the *Mwalanjo* with the medium through which she could get in touch with her ancestral spirits. At the end of the rite, the ritual was conducted in order 'to thank the ancestral spirits for the successful completion of the *Sikenge*'. Since the ritual is still conducted by the participants it implies they still have the same intentions for conducting it as was the case with the ancestors. Therefore, it proves that belief in ancestral spirits is part of the spiritual education provided in *Sikenge*.

In line with the above view, the study also ascertained that the whip that was used on the *Mwalanjo*, the clothes that she used to wear during the *Liminal* stage, the hair and nails that were cut on the *Kushukula* ritual were buried in a cool place either in water or in the ground at the foot of a tree. The act of burying things in the ground is related to the beliefs in ancestors. To support the above view Mbiti (2002: 123) postulates that 'the act of burying some cut body parts such as nails and hair in the ground or river bound the initiate mystically to the living dead who are symbolically believed to be living in the ground or river'. The finding is further supported by claims that burying of things in the ground had a religious significance. Zahan (1979: 23) claims that 'the earth is considered

to be a place of worship it is a nourishing force and a place of burial. It made things to grow and consumed things. It united within itself the two opposite poles of existence, life and death’.

The study also established that the choosing of a new name at the coming out ceremony indicated the belief in ancestral spirits. In the *Lozi* culture just like in other cultures found in Zambia, there are no new names that are created, all the names that are there were there before. Names are just transferred from one generation to another. The name chosen by the *Mwalanjo* was usually another person’s name either living or dead. The above reasoning is in agreement with Mwewa who suggests that:

A name is a significant sign through which the family members call upon the ancestor whose name is assumed by the new being in order to protect it. In a name lies a plea that the dead should exercise guardianship over this new creation to see to it that it grows up and attains the intended and desired old age (Mwewa, 2011: 30).

The fact that graduates of *Sikenge* still acquire new names at the end of the graduation ceremony is an indication that the performers still hold the original owners of the names in high esteem. The above view points to the fact that name giving has a religious attachment hence answering the research question on the spiritual education offered in *Sikenge* initiation rite.

Furthermore, the study established that a novice was believed to be non-human. This belief was confirmed by two elderly initiators who explained that the initiation of the *Mwalanjo* was done when it was dark because she was considered to be a ghost. According to Magesa (1998: 56) ‘Ghosts are spirits of the dead who had passed out of the memory of the living. They are spirits of children who passed away without proper initiation or elderly people without children of their own, or spirits of people who upon death, did not receive a proper burial’.

The above view is further confirmed by Rasing (2010: 167) states that ‘during the *Liminal* stage the novice might be in contact with a spirit. She is between two worlds. The world of the living and the dead, and has contacts with both worlds’. She further explains that many societies think women are possessed by spirits, demons or gods

during their menstrual periods. Associating the *Mwalanjo* to spirits is a clear testimony that there is still a belief of their spirits' existence. The above discussion provides an answer to the kind of spiritual education provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite by showing that the novice was still believed to be non-human and associated to spirits.

In connection to the above thoughts, Van Gennep (1909) postulated that the separation stage involved metaphorical "death" which was confirmed by the elderly initiators. By their nature spirits are invisible and the *Mwalanjo* was initiated in the dark so that she was not visible to certain people. During the day time she covered herself with a cloth in order to maintain the invisibility and to symbolise the death of the child in her.

Additionally, the study established that the performers of the *Sikenge* initiation rite still believed in the existence of witchcraft. The belief in witchcraft was confirmed severally during the presentation of findings. Firstly, the *Mwalanjo* was carried on the back of her initiator to protect her from the wicked people who could pick soil from her footmarks if she was to walk. The soil would be used to make charms to make her not to get married or be unable to have children. Secondly, at the coming out ceremony, the *Mwalanjo's* footmarks were destroyed, again, to prevent the wicked people from picking the soil to make bad charms.

Thirdly, the initiators cautioned the girls to be extra careful in the manner they disposed off their menstrual materials. They instructed the girls to hide their menstrual materials from everybody because if these were picked by wicked people, they would use them to make charms that would cause the victim have prolonged menstrual periods, be barren or fail to get married. These explanations showed that the performers of *Sikenge* still believed in witchcraft and this is why they took these precautions to protect the *Mwalanjo*. The above observations confirm the claim made by Gluckman (1951) and Paul (1996) that the *Lozi* people believed in witchcraft.

However, the above views are contrary to Mundumuko (1990) who argues that the act of carrying the *Mwalanjo* on the back of her initiator was meant to demonstrate the relationship that existed between the two. He argues that being a 'newly born' the novice was to be carried by her 'mother' in the same way the babies are carried by their mother.

While Mundumuko's view may be one of the motives for performing the act it seems there is another one which is to protect the novice from being harmed by witches.

To affirm the earlier stated views, Evans-Pritchard (1937) who studied witchcraft among the *Azande* confirms that no aspect of culture however small or insignificant was uninfluenced with the powers of witchcraft. The findings are further supported by Namooobe (1999) who studied witchcraft among the *Kamba* people of Kenya, Namooobe states that 'If a witch does not like a certain woman, he or she may cause her to have a continuous menstrual flow. The other difficulty that a witch can bring about to a woman is to make her barren or, worse still, to make her have stillbirths' (Namooobe 1999: 53). This observation adds to the list of solutions regarding the spiritual education offered in the rite by showing that some *Lozi* people still believed that witchcraft exists.

The study ascertained that fertility was highly valued in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. The girls were initiated so that they avoided falling pregnant before the initiation because it is believed to be a taboo for a girl to fall pregnant before being initiated. It is believed that the girl brought a bad omen to the family. In *Lozi* they say *Mwalanjo utolezi*. This belief is acknowledged by Mundumuko when he states that:

Sikenge was meant to celebrate the first menstrual blood flow of a girl which was miraculously seen as a divine event when she received the gift of sexuality from her forebears. It was a stage during which a pubescent girl came close to her ancestors and received her gift of parenthood. It was believed that without *Sikenge*, a girl would never bear children because she was never blessed by her ancestors (Mundumuko 1990: 19).

Richards (1956) also confirms the above belief that fertility was highly valued because it was believed to be a blessing from the ancestors, chiefs and senior relatives. She goes further to declare that fertility was also secured through magic and protection from witchcraft. The same belief is again confirmed by Rasing (2001: 170) that 'fertility is given by the ancestors', especially the *Nasenge* who happens to be the paternal aunt. Therefore, rituals had to be performed in honour of the ancestor for blessing the girl with motherhood which if not performed, a calamity or misfortune befell the *Mwalanjo's* or her family.

The study further discovered that the *Sikenge* attached a lot of beliefs to nature. The beliefs based on how people perceived nature such as darkness, the sun, the moon, rivers, the ground or earth, plants and the seasons. Several findings presented in the previous Chapter referred to the above natural entities. This observation is confirmed by Zahan that:

African spirituality has a natural tendency of maintaining a close contact with the cosmos. People do not detach themselves from nature because they have no calendar or idea of time. Therefore humans did not separate with the universe at any moment of their existence.... The liturgical cycle was regulated by the sun, moon, stars, earth, animals and plants. The hieratic cycle of spiritual life was founded on the processional rhythm of the stars and the seasons, on the movement and cycle of the year, and on the succession and metamorphosis of natural events, independent of the life and will of humans (Zahan, 1979: 20).

For instance, the novice was taken to the river to bath before coming out. The reason for conducting the ritual bath at the river or stream could be connected to some religious beliefs which might be similar to what Zahan claims that:

Water is considered a source of life. It is indissolubly tied to human existence as a means of subsistence. Fresh water is seen as surging up from the depths, as the return of the souls of the dead to the world. Bodies of water are sometimes considered to be residents of ancestral deities and are believed to have significance in connection to fecundity. People perform rites on river banks so as to best assure the fertility of people and material wealth and abundance. Prayers for fecundity of women are usually personal if conducted on the banks of the river or stream (Zahan, 1979: 21).

Since rivers and water are part of the *Lozi* culture, the above claim may be true, except that with the passing of time the current generation of initiators have lost some of the religious thoughts of their ancestors.

Although individuals come to learn the beliefs held by their society through socialisation, the channels of socialisation only transmit beliefs which are relevant at a particular time Persell (1990). This is in reference to the established fact that the *Sikenge* did not provide

any information on the *Lozi* God *Nyambe* to its initiates. All the discussions concerning the findings on the beliefs in spirits, ancestors, witchcraft and fertility are in line with socialisation theory which states that individuals come to know the beliefs held by society through the process of socialisation which is continuous throughout their life (Giddens, 2006). In other words, the findings of this study are in conformity with the socialisation theory which states that religious beliefs are acquired through the process of socialisation (Giddens, 2006).

From the discussions of the first research objective the study has shown that the spiritual education provided in the *Sikenge* emanates from the beliefs in ancestors, spirits and witchcraft. The study also established that the performers of the rite still believed that it was a bad omen for a girl to fall pregnant before entering the *Sikenge*. Furthermore, the study discovered that the local environment contributed to the religious knowledge that was provided in the rite.

5.2 Social Values Emphasised

The *Sikenge* rite as a socialisation agent aimed at acquainting girls who had reached puberty with the norms of womanhood. The study established various norms that a girl was socialised into such as respect for elders, parents, authority and oneself; good marriages, unity in the community and provided entertainment to the community.

First and foremost the study found out that respect for the elderly was highly emphasised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. Respect in this case entailed polite behaviour towards or care for someone valued. In the African society, the elderly are highly valued because they are believed to be the earthly gods. This finding is supported by Mbiti (2002: 83) who stated that ‘the elderly are next to the ancestors on the ladder of beings as such they are held in high esteem because they lead prayers and rituals in the community’. Simon (1999: 71) adds that ‘the elderly are held in high esteem because they give counsel and guidance to younger people and help them know which behaviours are acceptable and which ones are not’. In the *Lozi* culture respect for the elderly as well as authority was emphasised from a very tender age and at adolescent stage. It was stressed in order for someone not to grow up into adulthood without appreciating this virtue.

The study further discovered that there were several gestures that the novice was instructed to observe as a way of showing respect to the elders. Clapping and kneeling down are some of them. For instance, the young are expected to clap when greeting or when greeted by elderly people, when receiving a gift from an elderly person, when about to eat and after eating. When in the presence of elderly people the young were supposed to sit down. These gestures were also practised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite not just to teach the *Mwalanjo* but to emphasise their importance so that as the girl goes into marriage she knows what was expected of her. This observation is of the same view with that stated by Munthali and Zulu (2007) that ‘respect is a central theme in initiation rites, the initiates are taught never to be rude to their parents or to the elderly people, they were to kneel down when talking to adults and never to enter their parents’ bedroom’.

Respect was an important virtue because it promoted good behaviour and it was meant to control people’s conduct towards others. If it was not emphasised at a tender age the young would behave rudely towards their parents and it would become difficult to discipline them (Mwila, 2014).

Apart from respecting the elders, the study further established that the girls were advised to respect other people’s privacy. They were instructed never to search their mother’s private bags and this was even extended even to the in-laws. These instructions are in line with Chama (2006) and Paul (1996) who state that the initiates were forbidden from searching or going through their mothers’ private bags because they would see their beads or charms. By respecting other people’s privacy, the girls learnt to live in harmony with other people. They learnt to be responsible members of their community who would not involve themselves in matters that did not concern them.

The study discovered that as they learnt to respect other people, the girls also learnt to respect themselves by behaving in an acceptable manner. They learnt to conduct themselves in the way society expected them to.

The findings further ascertained that decent dressing was highly emphasised orally or dramatically. This was observed at the *Siyeke* session when the women instructed the girl to always wrap a *Chitenge* material round her waist when she wore short or tight clothes

in the presence of elderly people, especially men or in-laws. These views are supported by Mugala and Miti (2012: 65) that 'Girls were expected to dress modestly. They were encouraged to wrap a *Chitenge* traditional material around their waists to cover the lower part their bodies or below the waist to the ankle'. The study also found out that wearing of short and tight clothes in the presence of men was discouraged because it was believed to sexually provoke some of them. It was not in order for a girl to provoke people older than her in such a way. The above observations are supported by Mayaka (2012) who claims that some males were sexually offended when they saw a female dressed in a manner regarded to be indecent such as the one mentioned above. Dressing in the acceptable way was one way of showing decency to oneself and to other people in the community.

Additionally, the study established that during the *Sikenge*, the girls were forbidden from talking loudly. They were advised to talk in low tones and to remain silent most of the time. They were taught that it was a taboo for men to hear their voices. This teaching was intended to signify that a woman must be soft spoken. The above findings are converse to those established by Rasing (1995) concerning silence. She claims that while in *Liminality* the initiate is not allowed to speak because the novice is regarded as an unborn baby which is speechless. Perhaps these contradictions are due to the fact that some initiators had lost the meaning and value of certain virtues with the passing of time.

The study further established that girls were supposed to conduct themselves in a certain way when 'at the moon' that is during the monthly menstruation period. The *Sikenge* prohibited a girl who was attending monthly menses from adding salt to relish because it was believed the men who ate the food would be afflicted with chest diseases. It is not clear how the adding of salt to relish is related to a woman menstruating and how this would cause the men who ate the food to suffer from a chest diseases but this is what the elders believe in. Nevertheless, Mugala and Miti claim that:

The reason for prohibiting a woman attending her menses from adding salt to relish was to reinforce proper sanitation and personal hygiene. Since there was no running water in the villages, keeping one's hands thoroughly clean during this time could have been a challenge and so to avoid blood contamination of food,

girls were told it was a taboo to cook until they were done with their monthly periods (Mugala and Miti, 2012: 61).

On the other hand, Rasing (1995: 28 and 2001: 182) explicates that 'Salt makes the body hot and boost up the sex libido therefore it is advisable that a menstruation woman should refrain from anything that can make her hot because she is symbolically in the cold world of the ancestors.' Since salt gives sexual appetite and sexual intercourse was not allowed during menstruation, it was logical not to arouse the sexual desires by avoiding consuming salt.

Furthermore, the study ascertained that a menstruating woman was not supposed to have sexual intercourse or to sleep with a man on the same bed because he could develop a chest disease or become impotent. Some of these teachings could be true while others could be just mere myths but this is what society demands and it must be followed. The cardinal point in this teaching is that human blood is dangerous to come in contact with because it can transmit diseases and it must be avoided at all costs. Even modern health practices forbid any contact with human blood. In line with the above analysis Mayaka (2012) confirms that teachings on avoiding sexual activities during menstruation could be used to fight against HIV and AIDS.

This study found out that marriage was highly emphasised in the *Sikenge*. It established that the *Sikenge* provided a lot of information on how a woman was to conduct herself when she was married. Marriage in Zambia is still considered to be very important because it is the only acceptable way through which people were blessed with children. This view is supported by Gluckman (1951) who states that one of the reasons *Lozi* people marry was to bear children. Furthermore, Richards (1956) and Mushaukwa (2011) attested to the above view that bearing of children outside wedlock was frowned upon. For Africans, marriage was valued because it involved not only interpersonal relations but also community relations. 'Through marriage the communities that were involved shared their being and became one people' (Magesa, 1998: 110). To cement the importance of marriage in the society, Rasing (1995) adds that if the marriages were stable, the communities would be stable too.

It was also discovered in this study that during the *Sikenge* women in the community came together to teach another woman's daughter because they knew that they too will need the same support when they initiated their daughters. The above statement is supported by Rasing (2001) when she states that initiation rites are a necessary part of humanity because they create solidarity among women. They formed a community of women. She went on further to state that initiation rites created a common corpus of knowledge among women and contributed to their solidarity as mature contributors to their families and communities.

Although the *Sikenge* was a women's affair, the study established that the rite also promoted solidarity among men. At the *Siyemboka*, men from the community came together, to give support to the *Mwalanjo's* family. They were responsible for providing entertainment to the men and women who were not part of the *Siyeke*, they played music for them. Some men attended the *Siyemboka* to give support to the *Mwalanjo's* father who was part of the celebration. This study has shown that initiation rites did not just promote solidarity among women as Rasings (2001) suggests but they promoted solidarity in the whole community.

Furthermore, the study established that the coming out ceremony, the *Siyemboka*, provided entertainment to the community. It was discovered that people liked attending the coming out ceremony because there was free food and beer served to the guests. This is in line with Mushaukwa (2011: 84) who remarks that 'the ceremony is usually characterised by a lot of eating and drinking.' It was observed that at the *Siyeke* some women drunk alcohol so that they become drunk and would dance to the best of their ability without any shame. Similar observations were made by Mugala and Miti with regards to the coming out ceremony that:

Excitement fills the air because it will be the first time ever that the public sets their eyes on her to see the transformation which has taken place in the young woman. As soon as she is uncovered, the public breaks into shouts of jubilation, men whistling and women ululating while the booming sounds of drums and song pierced the air (Mugala and Miti, 2012: 60).

All those instructions on respect for the elders, parents and oneself and taboos to be observed during marriage were provided to the girls in order to socialise them into the world of women. Arnett (1995), states that one of the roles of socialisation was to teach people, in this case the girls, to identify what is important and valued within a particular culture. The teaching is important because it made the learners to become acceptable members of the society. Furthermore, Giddens (2006) states that the role of socialisation is to acquaint individuals with the norms of a social group or society. In line with this case of the *Sikenge* initiation rite the girls who had reached puberty were socialised with the norms of womanhood that they were about to become members to.

Along the lines of research question two, the study shows that the *Sikenge* emphasised the following social values: respect for elders, parents, authority and oneself, good marriages, unity in the community and provided entertainment to the community. The girls were prepared by the elderly women to participate in the society as mature and acceptable women by teaching them the expectations held by other women in their society.

5.3 Moral Education Provided

It was discovered that cleanliness was one of the virtues that was taught in the *Sikenge* initiation rite. Cleanliness in this case covered both personal and environmental cleanliness. Instructions on personal cleanliness involved how to take care of oneself during menstruation period. The girls were instructed to bath at least once a day even when they were not menstruating because they could develop odours if they did not bath more than once. These findings are like those discovered by Mushaukwa (2011); Rasing (2001); Rasing (1995) and Richards (1956). The study also established that cleanliness protected a girl's health. By not exposing her menstrual materials to anybody the girl was denying wicked people or witches access to them hence preventing them from bewitching her. There was a belief that if wicked people or witches came across someone's menstrual materials for someone, they could use them for charms to tamper with her fertility and chances of getting married. The findings are confirmed by Namooobe (1999: 53) as cited on page 65. The belief could have some logic in it because menstrual blood is

as a result of some ovaries breaking before they are fertilised and if charms are used they could permanently prevent fertilisation from taking place thereby making someone infertile. The charms could cause prolonged periods which could lead to anaemia and later death.

Additionally, the study discovered that a woman's cleanliness had a potential to protect her husband's healthy. By keeping her menstrual materials away from him and abstaining from sex during menses, the wife could protect her husband from becoming impotent. These findings are alluded to by Mushaukwa (2011); Rasing (2001); Rasing (1995) and Richards (1956).

The study further found out that environmental cleanliness was emphasised by teaching girls ways of disposing their menstrual materials. The girls were told to dispose of these materials by either burying or burning them. Burying and burning of menstrual material is an environmental friendly way of disposing the used cloths or sanitary towels because if they are thrown in the rubbish pits, the dogs could scatter them all over the places and males could see them or jump over them. If the used materials are flushed in water bone toilets the consequence could be blockages of the sewer lines causing sewer to flood the environment thus leading to outbreaks of diarrhea diseases such as chlorella, typhoid or and dysentery. It is therefore safe to say that the environmental cleanliness emphasised in the *Sikenge* rite promoted a healthy society.

The study found out that confidentiality was highly encouraged in the *Sikenge*. The girls were told never to reveal the information taught in the *Sikenge* to anyone especially those who had not been initiated. In order to emphasise the value of keeping information secrets a ritual was performed, where the *Mwalanjo* was tapped on the chest with a stone to scare her from revealing anything. This finding is supported by Mundumuko (1990) that the *Kulumisa* ritual has a symbolic meaning, the participants believed that by tapping the *Mwalanjo's* chest with a heavy substance like a broken potsherd, her heart would be heavy and be able to keep secrets. The practice of confidentiality helped the girls to keep information secret as they grow up into women. It is believed that initiated women do not reveal their marriage secrets anyhow because of this teaching.

Furthermore, the study established that abstinence was one of the morals that were exceedingly stressed in the rite. Although the *Sikenge* provided the girls with knowledge on sex with men, it forbade them from indulging in sexual activities before marriage. The stressing of abstinence from sex before marriage was one of the good practices that the *Sikenge* initiation rite had always championed since it was established. Abstinence is a very important virtue to champion because of its healthy benefits, through abstinence the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS could be reduced and cases of early and unwanted pregnancies could also be reduced. This finding is in agreement with that of Munthali and Zulu (2007: 79) that ‘girl’s initiation ceremonies stress avoiding indulging in sex activities as a way of avoiding unwanted pregnancies, they emphasise abstinence as a way of avoiding early pregnancies and contracting sexually transmitted diseases’. Other studies that support this finding are those of Mushaukwa (2011); Chama (2006); Rasing (2001 and 1995) and Mundumuko (1990).

The other reason for encouraging abstinence from sex was to maintain virginity because according to the *Lozi* culture, a virgin fetched a higher *Lobola* than the one who was not. This observation is alluded to by Gluckman (1951) that when charging *Lobola* a virgin fetched more cows than someone who was not. It is for this reason that parents wished their daughters could marry while still virgins so that they could charge more animals or money for their *Lobola*.

Aside stressing abstinence from sex before marriage, the study further ascertained that the *Sikenge* forbid the girls from having more than one sexual partner besides the husband because it is believed to be immoral and not trustworthy. Emphasising the issue of sticking to one sexual partner is important because just like abstinence, it has health benefits. It prevents the spread of sexually transmitted infections or diseases such as HIV and AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhoea. The above observations are confirmed by Mushaukwa (2011). The vice of having more than one sexual partner could bring about social conflicts in the community. It could cause death by victims killing each other once it is known that the partner is having an extra marital affair. Some people have lost lives because of having sexual relationships outside marriage. According to Gefland (1989),

adultery is one of the vices that were rejected in traditional societies and the findings show that this vice is still not condoned.

In addition, the study established that *Sikenge* also encouraged other morals such as honest, truthfulness, trustworthy, no stealing and hard work. The hard work that the girls were subjected to during the seclusion period taught them to be self reliant. The girls were encouraged to be very supportive wives, mothers and family members through being hard workers. These findings are confirmed by Mojola (1988) who states that in traditional Africa morals such as respect, decency, good behaviour, truthfulness, confidentiality, courage, generosity, pity helped the individuals to be integrated people and also helped the society to remain integrated.

The above discussions on moral education are confirmed by Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Kohlberg (1981) suggests that moral development is an important part of the socialisation process and he defined it as the way people learn what society considered to be "good" or "bad", which was important for a smooth functioning of society Kohlberg (1981). He further states that moral development prevented people from acting on unchecked urges, instead considers what is right for society and good for others. This theory perfectly justifies what *Sikenge* does from the time of its inception. The rite educates the girls on what is considered to be good and right and discourages them from doing the things considered to be bad or wrong.

The discussion so far showed that the extent to which moral education was provided in the *Sikenge* was still good. The rite still aimed at shaping the character of the girls by encouraging them to uphold very high moral standards through emphasising good morals such as cleanliness, abstinence from sex before marriage, sticking to one sexual partner, confidentiality, honest and hard work.

5.4 The Spiritual, Social and Moral Changes that have Occurred

This section discusses the changes that have taken place in the *Sikenge* initiation rite over the years. The discussion is presented in three headlines which are the spiritual, social and moral changes.

5.4.1 The Spiritual Changes

The study established that the spiritual changes that have occurred concerned the time, place, people involved, content and process of the rite. Spiritual in this case refers to the religious beliefs, values and norms that were or are emphasised in the *Sikenge* initiation rite.

The study found out that the *Sikenge* initiation rite was no longer conducted on the onset of the first menarche. Initially the girls were initiated on the onset of the first menstrual period but now they are initiated years after. The initiators and the initiated women attributed the change to the fact that girls nowadays started menstruating early at about twelve years whereas before menstruation came at around fifteen to sixteen years old. In her studies Rasing (1995 and 2001) observes the changes in the manner in which initiations are conducted. She notes that the girls are initiated some years after the onset of the menstruation and this implies that the focus is no longer the biological changes but the social ones.

However, in this study this change is perceived as a religious one because menses were believed to be connected to spirits but it is no longer perceived to be something to do with the ancestors blessing someone with fertility. The reasons for the change could be attributed to most people's religious outlook. Most people are Christians and would not want to associate themselves with anything that was connected to ancestral spirits (Mundumuko, 1990; Rasing, 2001: 195). It should also be clarified here that even in the past initiations were not held immediately on the start of first menses because some people had their first menses in the hot and dry season so their initiation had to be postponed until the appropriate season. The change that is highlighted here is that initiations come some years after the first menses not just months after.

The study also established that the duration for the *Sikenge* had tremendously reduced from one year to one week. The reasons for the reduction in duration were not clear. Nevertheless, the study is of the view that most parents claimed to be Christians and did not want their churches to know that they still took part in practices believed to be unchristian so they shorten the seclusion period in order to avoid being noticed and face castigation. In conformity with this change both Mundumuko (1990) and Mushaukwa

(2011) attributed the reduction of the seclusion period to the school calendar. They both state that the long periods of seclusion were shortened to allow the girls attend school since in the past it was a taboo for a novice to go out into the public. The consequence for reducing the course to one week was that the girls graduated before they fully mastered the knowledge and skills expected of them. The outcome was failure to meet the good standards of womanhood in adulthood.

The study discovered that previously girls were only secluded in the night, at around 20:00 hours but things have changed. Some girls were secluded during the day time. Earlier on in this discussion it was stated that the *Mwalanjo* was secluded in the night because she was likened to a ghost or spirit and by their nature spirits are invisible hence the seclusion at night to maintain the invisibility. The change of time may be attributed to the fact that most people have embraced Christian beliefs that regard beliefs in spirits as evil and as such people do not want to be associated with anything to do with spirits. This reasoning is still in line with the assertion by Mundumuko (1990); Rasing (1995 and 2001) and Mushaukwa (2011) who state that taking part in *Chisungu* or any pagan cult received punishment of some form from the church such as not receiving Holy communion in case of Catholics (Rasing, 2001: 195).

Additionally, the study established that the season for seclusion had changed. In the past seclusion was only conducted in the cold and wet season but of late things have changed some girls are secluded in the hot and dry season. It was believed at that time that if a girl was secluded in the hot and dry season, her body would remain hot for good, others said she would have a hot temper which is not good for a woman (Rasing, 2001: 169). However, some literature showed that in the past, seclusions were conducted during the cold and wet seasons because at the time people had a lot of food to feed the *Mwalanjo* and to host the coming out ceremony (Mundumuko, 1990 and Rasing, 2001).

In the pre-colonial period agriculture was the only means of providing food to the family but with the introduction of the money economy in the colonial period and thereafter, most people have income earning related jobs which enabled them to provide food to their families without relying on agriculture (Arowolo, 2010). The implication is that

people do not need to wait for the harvest period for them to host functions such as initiations because they can buy food and everything they need any time.

Furthermore, the study established that the place for the initial seclusion rituals was outside the village but not anymore since the *Mwalanjo* was now secluded in the house or just outside the house in the yard. The reason for secluding a *Mwalanjo* in the bush or at the *Malako* was that these are the places that were believed to be the residences for the spirits so the *Mwalanjo* was taken there to pay homage to them (Rasing, 2001: 167). The change in the seclusion place is caused by the long distance between the bushes and the residential areas in towns. This assertion was confirmed by one initiator who explained that she initiated the girls either in the house or backyard because there is no bush nearby. Due to urbanisation, people have left their villages where there were *Malako* and bushes nearby and have moved to the urban areas where there are no such places. This has brought about change in the place for conducting the rituals (Colson, 2006). Since the women have to hide from men and children, they have resorted to using the houses for seclusion of the *Mwalanjo*. This shift in the place of seclusion has led to people neglecting the courtesy calls on the spirits who are believed to live in the bushes. This change implies that the issue of spirits is no longer at play.

The study again observed that the main celebrant of the *Sikenge* who happens to be the *Ma-Mwalanjo* or *Nangóngo* or *Chilombola* no longer has the qualities that she once held. Some initiators have no blood relations with the *Mwalanjo*, they are just hired persons who have the knowledge and skills required in the *Sikenge*. Some of them do not even have children as was the case with one that the researcher interacted with. According to Mundumuko (1990) the *Ma-Mwalanjo* was a close relative of the *Mwalanjo*, of good character and above all had a surviving first born child. It was believed that such a person was blessed with motherhood by the ancestors and was expected to be a medium through which the *Mwalanjo* would be blessed with motherhood.

Mbiti (2002) attributes the disruption of traditional societies to urbanisation. He argues that many people have lived most of their working lives in the cities and when they retire they do not go back to their villages because they do not quite know what to do there hence they continue to live in the cities. This kind of scenario causes a break from the

family so when faced with issues that need family members to undertake, such people tend to hire anyone who can provide the service.

Furthermore, the study established that the status of *Mwalanjo* had changed, long before now she was a young girl, who was still a virgin, but from the observation she is a big girl who in some cases had a suitor to marry and could have even lost her virginity. The reason for initiating the girl in this case is no longer to celebrate her blessing of fertility from the ancestors as suggested by Mundumuko (1990) but rather to prepare her for marriage. This observation is in agreement with Rasing (2001) who notes that while in the past the girls were initiated when they were still virgins this time it is not the case, they have knowledge about sexuality because it is well known that some of them have sexual relationships.

The content of the *Sikenge* has also been affected in some way over the years. *Sikenge* has incorporated issues to with use of condoms and HIV and AIDS. These findings are confirmed by Mushaukwa (2011) who argues that *Sikenge* had repositioned itself to incorporate issues to do with HIV and AIDS related issues. According to Mundumuko (1990) *Sikenge* taught girls crafts skills. They were taught how to make kitchen utensils and equipment such as clay pots, baskets, brooms and *Maselo* (trays made out of grass) but these skills were no longer part of the *Sikenge* content. Although Mundumuko (1990) has not given reasons for abandoning the teaching of crafts, the change could be as a result of modern technology that was introduced in the colonial period. The colonial masters as well as the Christian missionaries established stores with modern utensils and equipment in places where they settled hence the traditional ones were abandoned.

The study established that the procedure of conducting the rite had changed. The use of certain indigenous trees such as *Mulya*, *Mwangalala*, *Lingéle* or *Lutaka Iwa Nuka* for whips had changed. Due to relocation of people from their local environments to urban areas, they were unable to trace these trees because in urban areas these trees were not found or they were found in places very far from the residential areas. In such cases the initiators had to improvise by using any tree that produced fruits in order to maintain the belief that whipping a *Mwalanjo* with a whip from a fruit producing tree could enhance her fertility. The change in the procedure is therefore attributed to urbanisation because

the people had just replaced the instrument to suit the environment. These views are shared by Arowolo (2010) who observes that urbanisation which is a result of Western civilisation changed the way of life of Africans.

It was also discovered that the *Mwalanjo* was no longer taken to the river or stream to bath the *Sikenge* dirt because people live in urban areas and they do not bath from the rivers or streams but from the bathrooms or *Lushoko*. The change was as a result of modernity. Technology has made life easier and better, people have running water in their homes and they would not go to the river to bath (Jionet, 2010). However, the ritual of bathing at the river or stream had a religious belief attached to it. It was a channel through which the novice paid homage to the spirits and requested them for fecundity. Bodies of water are sometimes considered to be residents of ancestral deities and are believed to have significance connected to fecundity (Zahan, 1979).

Besides the above observations, the study established that the white bead the *Mwalanjo* wore on the *Kushukula* ritual was no longer worn up to the time she delivered her first born child. Equally the white beads were intended to induce the *Mwalanjo's* fertility. The reason for not wearing the beads up to the expected time was attributed to the fact that people were now learned, they knew that a bead could not bring fertility. This view is supported by Arowolo (2010) who states that the knowledge of science acquired through Western education explains nature in a more convincing fashion compared to the traditional way. Wearing the white beads had become a formality or one of those things done in the rite which had lost the religious significance especially that some girls fell pregnant even without undergoing initiation.

Additionally, the study established that in the *Kulumisa* ritual, the *Mwalanjo* was beautified with traditional cosmetics using the *Lukumba* powder but this was no longer the case because modern powder was used. This change was as a result of modernity and most people wanted to be associated with what was modern. The other reason was that some people live in urban areas where the sources of traditional powders such as *Lukumba* powder are not available. This change and its causes are confirmed by Mundumko (1990) and Mushaukwa (2011). It was further established that the *Mwalanjo* was tattooed on her back so that the tattoos could sexually arouse a man during

intercourse. But with the coming of missionaries to *Barotseland*, the practice was discouraged on health grounds. The observation is supported by Mundumuko (1990).

5.4.2 The Social Changes

The study established that the *Mwalanjo* no longer was a responsibility of the entire community. Women in the community were no longer responsible for feeding the *Mwalanjo* and they did not give her tasks to perform on their behalf or maltreat her. The change could be due to some people shifting from the villages where they lived as members of the same kinship and now lived in urban areas where they were not related to their neighbours and sometimes they did not even know their neighbours (Mbiti, 2002). Therefore the *Mwalanjo* would not be a responsibility of everybody in the community, they would not give her tasks to do for them neither would they maltreat her because they were not related to her. Which brings us to another point that urbanisation has smashed the traditional solidarity in which the individual felt 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' (Mbiti, 2002: 224). There is no such solidarity in the urban areas because people came from different parts of the country and had different cultures.

Besides urbanisation causing these changes, economic factors could also contribute to the diminished community responsibility over the *Mwalanjo*. The financial status of most people in the communities where these initiations were pervasive was very poor. Most of them are just merely surviving, they had difficulties to provide food for their families hence they could not stretch themselves to take care of another person who was not even related to them. The above views are noted by Simona, Imbwae and Lewanika (2010) who conducted a survey on the economic status of women in Western province and observed that women in Western province were the poorest in the country and those in Mongu district topped the list in the Province.

Additionally, the study established that the *Mwalanjo* no longer clapped for the elderly women when they meet on the way. The reason for this change in behaviour was due to lack of some form of identity for the *Balanjo*. Previously *Mwalanjo* wore a necklace known as *Kakenge* which was meant to symbolise her status but these days the initiators did not make *Tukenge* for them. This is in conformity with the views made by

Mundumuko (1990) and Musahukwa (2011) in their studies. Therefore, the *Balanjo* had taken advantage of the situation and stopped showing respect to the elderly women through clapping.

The study established that the *Mwalanjo* did not cover her head when going out of the home. From the findings it was established that most parents initiate their daughters during the school holidays therefore it had become almost impossible to meet a *Mwalanjo* because they are not allowed to go to public places. This therefore implies that the *Sikenge* had adjusted to suit the school calendar which echoes the views of Mundumuko (1990) and Mushaukwa (2011). Nonetheless it was discovered that for those who did not observe the school calendar, the only time the *Mwalanjo* was allowed out of the home was when she went to school. She was permitted to go out without covering her head to avoid ridicule from other pupils.

Furthermore, the study established that there were no locally brewed beers and beverages such as *Sipesu* and *Ilya* during the coming out ceremony. Most people who attended the function drank the locally brewed wine, *Chibuku* shake-shake and a few of them took modern lagers such as *Mosi* and *Castle*. This change could be attributed to urbanisation as well as economic factors. Most people in urban areas did not take the locally brewed beers and beverages because most of them were not familiar with the brews since they had lived in town for some time. Others opted to give their guests modern beers and beverages because they had some stable sources of income that enabled them to buy the brews of their choice. These views are similar to what Mundumuko (1990) and Rasing (2001) put across that money was a determinant in hosting an initiation rite such as the *Sikenge*. The other factor that could have contributed to the change in beverages was time. Most people who have money valued time. They would rather buy already prepared food and beverages than to spend time preparing them.

Besides the change in beers and beverages, the study established that the kind of music people danced to was modern. There were no traditional musical instruments used to entertain people instead there was modern music system with big sound boxes. People sang and danced to the modern songs performed by the local and foreign artists. The change could be as a result of technology which had affected almost all circles of life.

This is supported by Joinet (2000) who states that listening to the radio had become an integral part of the lives of many people. Most people preferred dancing to modern music to traditional music therefore the *Sikenge* was modified to suit the taste of the majority of people.

The study further found out that the songs in the *Siyeke* incorporated the *Mbunda* and *Luvale* ones. This confirms the view by Mundumuko (1990) and Mushaukwa (2011) that *Siyeke* was an innovation of the *Mbunda* people. Consequently, it is not possible to have a *Siyeke* session where there are only *Silozi* songs and dances because the three tribes had lived together for over a century now and there were a lot of inter-marriages between these tribes (Sumbwa, 2000). This implies that most of the *Lozi* families now had some of their members married to either *Mbunda* or *Luvale* people. So when such functions are held the people who attend are from all the three tribes.

In addition, the study established that the coming out ceremony was poorly attended. The reasons for the poor attendance were several. The first one was that people could have been tired because they danced throughout the night therefore, at the time the *Mwalanjo* was coming out some of them would have gone back to their homes to sleep. Secondly, if the drinks and food stuffs were not sufficient to cater for everybody most of them would have opted to leave the function. Thirdly, the *Siyemboka* may not be valued in urban areas the way it was in the rural areas. In the villages it used to be a function that was well attended by people from far flung villages because at the *Siyemboka* men wanted to see the young woman for consideration for marriage but this may not be the case in the urban areas. The low turnout is in conformity with Rasing (2001) who observes that attendance at initiation rites conducted in towns was lower compared to those rites that are conducted in the village.

5.4.3 The Moral Changes

Although *Sikenge* has undergone many changes, the study established that the moral aspect of the rite has not been seriously affected. Most of the morals that were emphasised long time ago were still emphasised in the same way, only a few of them had been modified. The study discovered that the hygienic lessons had changed, the girls

were advised to be clean by bathing at least twice in a day, but this was not the case before, the *Mwalanjo* was not allowed to bath because her status was likened to that of a ghost or corpse or a foetus (Van Gennep, 1909; Richards, 1956; Rasing 2001). With the introduction of Western education by missionaries this practice was exterminated because it was regarded to be one of the pagan practices (Mundumuko, 1990). Instead, the missionaries encouraged the people to uphold good hygienic standards (Snelson, 1974). As a result of the education introduced by missionaries, people have known that going without a bath for some days or weeks is a health hazard.

Finally, the study established that at the coming out ceremony the *Mwalanjo*'s hair was not completely removed but only a few strands were removed from the front and a few from behind. It was also discovered that the girls were allowed to comb their hair. Again this change was necessitated by the knowledge that people had continued to acquire through Western education which encouraged upholding good hygienic practices in order to promote a healthful living. This is supported by Mundumuko (1990) and Mushaukwa (2011).

The changes that have been discussed above confirm the theory on which the study is anchored on that 'through socialisation people learn to identify what is important and valued within a particular culture' (Persell, 1990: 98). In other words it can be said that as the social and economic status of women is changing only those aspects of their culture that match their changed status are carried forward and passed to the new generation.

In conclusion, the study has shown that the *Sikenge* has undergone spiritual, social and moral changes due to the changed way of life of the *Lozi* people. These changes in the culture were as a result of the adoption of Christianity, the introduction of Western education by missionaries, urbanisation, modernity and the introduction of a money economy.

5.5 Summary

The Chapter has discussed the three aspects of the *Sikenge* initiation rite that have guided this study. The first research question established that the spiritual aspect of the *Sikenge*

initiation rite was provided by conducting rituals and stressing the religious beliefs and values that had continued to be passed on from the time of the ancestors. The second research question aimed at assessing the social aspects of *Sikenge*. The study established that the *Sikenge* socialised the girls into marriage by stressing respect for old people and authority and encouraging the girls to conduct themselves in the acceptable way. The study further showed that the rite was still a source of solidarity for the whole community and a form of entertainment. The third research question aimed at establishing the extent to which moral education was provided in the *Sikenge*. The study established that moral education was still highly stressed in the rite and very few changes had occurred concerning morals. Lastly, the Chapter has discussed the changes that have taken place in the rite over the years in relation to its spiritual, social and moral aspects. The study indicated that there were a lot of changes that had occurred over the years which were as a result of Western education, Christianity, urbanisation, modernity and economic factors. The next Chapter discusses the conclusion and the recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

The previous Chapter discussed the findings of the study and now this chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study of the exploration of the *Sikenge* initiation rite in promoting the *Lozi* cultural heritage in Mongu district. The study has so far attempted to establish the extent to which spiritual, social and moral education are provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite and has determined the changes that have taken place in the rite over the years.

6.1 Conclusion

The study has shown that the *Sikenge* initiation rite promotes the culture heritage of the *Lozi* people by teaching spiritual, social and moral beliefs and values to girls in Mongu district. In line with the objectives of the study concluded that:

The spiritual education provided in the *Sikenge* initiation rite to the girls and women comprised of the beliefs in ancestors, spirits and witchcraft. The performers of the rite still believed that fertility and children were a blessing from the ancestors therefore it was a bad omen for a girl to fall pregnant before entering the *Sikenge*. Furthermore, the *Lozi* people still utilised the local environment and nature to cement the spiritual or religious knowledge provided to the young generation of women. So long as the *Lozi* people continued to educate the young women with the beliefs once held by their ancestors through the practise of the *Sikenge* initiation rite their culture heritage would continue to live on.

Socially, the *Sikenge* initiation rite promoted good and stable marriages in the community by encouraging the girls and women to respect and to take care of their husbands and families. In order to maintain good relations and discipline in the community, the *Sikenge* emphasised that the young ones should continue to respect elders, authority and how to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner.

Additionally, the *Sikenge* united the community in that where there was *Sikenge*, women, men and children in the community gathered to give support to the host family by celebrating with them. By coming together to give support to others when they had a *Sikenge*, communalism, *ubuntu* and/or oneness was promoted. This would result in the *Lozi* culture heritage continuing into the future.

The extent to which the rite provided moral education to girls and women in Mongu district as revealed by the findings and discussions in this study was still reasonable. The initiators, initiated girls and women acknowledged that the *Sikenge* provided knowledge to girls on the virtues and/or moral habits that helped them individually to live good lives and to become productive members of their communities. The findings had shown that cleanliness, confidentiality, abstinence from sex before marriage, sticking to one sexual partner in marriage, honest, generosity and hard work were the most emphasised morals.

The findings and discussions further indicated that the rite had undergone some changes with the passing of time. The spiritual aspect of the rite was the most affected area. The changes had affected the time in which to conduct the rite, the people involved, the place where to conduct the rite, the content and the procedures. The social changes showed that the *Mwalanjo* was no longer the responsibility of everybody in the community. The attendance at the coming out ceremony had significantly reduced because not everyone attended such functions as before. Some taboos were no longer adhered to as they were long time ago and the kind of entertainment and refreshments provided during the *Siyeke* sessions had changed. The coming out ceremony had changed to suit the modern times.

Morally, the changes were very minimal because morals took time to change if ever they do. These changes were attributed to Western education, adoption of Christianity, urbanisation, modernisation and economic factors. People had moved on with the wind of change in the world and the *Lozi* people were no exception.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The performers of *Sikenge* initiation rite especially the initiators should explain comprehensively the beliefs attached to the rituals and taboos in order to equip the initiates with the correct knowledge to enable them pass it on to the next generations. The rite was still one of the few remaining channels through which traditional religious beliefs were presented to the next generations and this could enhance and promote continuity of the *Lozi* cultural heritage.
- ii. Since the rite aims at promoting good and stable marriages in the community, the initiators in Mongu district should work together to revise the *Sikenge* curriculum and incorporate new issues that have emerged due to development, social and economic changes. In particular, the new curriculum should include issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, early pregnancies and marriages.
- iii. Initiators to bring in issues to do with modern safe methods of practicing sex for those who cannot abstain and methods of avoiding unwanted pregnancies through moral education.
- iv. The *Lozi* people should continue to modify the rite in order to match the changing times. Girls who were still in school should not be subjected to the teachings of *Sikenge* because they were too young to be sensitised to the beauty of marriage. In order to achieve this, various stakeholders in the community like the *Indunas*, village headmen, politicians such as councillors, church leaders should work together to sensitise their communities on the dangers of exposing girls who have not completed school to *Sikenge* education.

Recommendations for Further Research

For further research a similar study could also be conducted among the rural women to establish the extent to which they still promote the traditional religious education and morals.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE STUDY

	Description	Quantity	Unity Price in ZMK	Total in ZMK
1.	Transport	One trip to Mongu to collect data	150.00	300.00
2.	Food and Drinks	Breakfast Lunch Supper For 20 days	20.00 30.00 30.00	1,600.00
3.	Transport during data collection	To research site from home per day for twenty days	50.00	1,000.00
4.	Printing and binding of research Proposal	Three copies	100.00	300.00
5.	Purchase Voice recorder Stationery	1	2000	2,000.00 150.00
6.	Printing and binding of final report	Four copies	150.00	600.00
7.	Incidentals			1,200.00
			Grant Total	7,150.00

APPENDIX 2

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

EXPLORATION OF SIKENGE INITIATION RITE IN THE PROMOTION OF LOZI CULTURAL HERITAGE: A CASE OF MONGU DISTRICT

Interview Guide for Initiated Girls

Researcher introduces herself and talks about the research being undertaken and its relevance.

Questions

1. What is your name and how old are you?
2. What is *Sikenge*?
3. Explain to me the whole process of the *Sikenge* you underwent?
4. What is the meaning of the rituals that you were subjected to in this rite?
5. What spiritual aspects were emphasised to you in this whole process of *Sikenge*?
6. What moral values were you taught in *Sikenge*?
7. What social aspects were emphasised to you while in *Sikenge*?
8. How different are you from a girl who has not undergone *Sikenge*?
9. What are the benefits of being initiated?
10. What changes have taken place in the *Sikenge* initiation rite?
11. Do you have any comments or clarifications?

Thank the respondent.

APPENDIX 3

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

EXPLORATION OF SIKENGE INITIATION RITE IN THE PROMOTION OF LOZI CULTURAL HERITAGE: A CASE OF MONGU DISTRICT

Interview Guide for Initiators

Researcher introduces herself and talks about the research being undertaken and its relevance.

Questions

1. Kindly introduce yourself.
2. What is *Sikenge*?
3. Why do you still initiate girls into *Sikenge*?
4. Kindly explain to me the procedure of the *Sikenge* initiation rite?
5. What is the significance of these rituals you perform in *Sikenge*?
6. What spiritual values do you teach in *Sikenge*?
7. What moral values do you teach in *Sikenge*?
8. What taboos do you emphasise in *Sikenge* ?
9. What social aspects do you emphasise during *Sikenge*?
10. What changes have taken place over the years regarding the spiritual, moral and social aspects of *Sikenge* initiation rite?
11. What are the benefits of initiating a girl into *Sikenge*?
12. Any comments or clarifications concerning our discussion?

Thank you for sparing me your precious time.

APPENDIX 4

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

EXPLORATION OF SIKENGE INITIATION RITE IN THE PROMOTION OF LOZI CULTURAL HERITAGE: A CASE OF MONGU DISTRICT

Focus Group Discussion for Initiated Women

Researcher introduces herself and talks about the research being undertaken and its relevance.

The discussants are requested to introduce themselves.

Questions

1. What is *Sikenge*?
2. Why do people still practice *Sikenge* in this era?
3. What spiritual values are emphasised in *Sikenge*?
4. Is this spiritual education still of significance to women and the community in this era?
5. What moral values are emphasised in *Sikenge*?
6. How significant are they to women in this era?
7. Are there any social values that are emphasised during *Sikenge*?
8. If yes, what are these social values that are emphasised to the initiate?
9. What changes have taken place over the years with regards the spiritual, moral and social aspects of this initiation rite?
10. Do you have any comments or clarifications concerning the discussions?

Thank the participants for their active participation.

APPENDIX 5

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

EXPLORATION OF SIKENGE INITIATION RITE IN THE PROMOTION OF LOZI CULTURAL HERITAGE: A CASE OF MONGU DISTRICT

Observation Checklist

Researcher introduces herself and talks about the research being undertaken and its relevance.

What to look for:

1. The rituals that will be performed during the *siyeke* and the coming out ceremony; the procedures that will be followed.
2. The behaviour of the *Ma-mwalanjo*, the *mwalanjo* and the other people that will be present.
3. The teachings that will be emphasised during these sessions.