

**AN EVALUATION OF THE CHRISTIAN AND
MUSLIM VIEWS ON THE SCHOOL RE-ENTRY
POLICY IN ZAMBIA**

BY

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Declaration

I, **FELISTERS KAPELE LUCHEMBE**, do hereby declare that “**An Evaluation of the Christian and Muslim Views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia**” is my own work, and that all the work of other people has been duly acknowledged and that this study has not been presented before by anyone at this University and indeed any other university for similar purposes.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by **LUCHEMBE KAPELE FELISTERS** is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Religious Studies of the University of Zambia.

Signature of Examiners and Date

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband and my late mother.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. M. Simuchimba, who worked very hard in ensuring the success of this work. His commitment and enthusiasm to this work encouraged me to do my best.

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To you all, I say I am very grateful.

List of Acronyms

CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalist
FAWEZA	Forum for African Women Educationalist in Zambia
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome
HIV	Human Immune deficiency Virus
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOESVTEE	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
PAGE	Programme for Advancement of Girl Child Education
ZEC	Zambia Episcopal Conference

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Abstract

In 1997, the government of the Republic of Zambia introduced the School Re-entry Policy which allowed school girls that fell pregnant to return to school after giving birth. This was because all pregnant school girls were being expelled from school and were not allowed to continue with education as such pregnant girls could not contribute to the national development.

However, the School Re-entry Policy has been received with mixed feelings. While some sections of society support the initiative, other sections especially the religious organisations do not support and implement the School Re-entry Policy. The main objective of this study was to evaluate the Christians and Muslims views on the School Re-entry Policy.

The research used the qualitative design which helped to describe the views of the Christians and Muslims about the School Re-entry Policy. The views were collected through interviewing key respondents who among them were the Education Secretaries and the Executive Director of the three church umbrella bodies, the Education Administrative Manager for the Muslim, head teachers, ordinary members of the religious organisations.

The study used some evaluation criteria which helped to evaluate the findings. The evaluation criteria were derived from some educational policy statements. The main findings of the study were that the Christians and Muslims had mixed feelings about the School Re-entry Policy. They cited the School Re-entry Policy to be immoral as it encouraged school girls to fall pregnant since they would still re-enter, they wanted to promote the idea of no sex before marriage and instil sense of responsibility in the school girls so that they may be good people in society.

Therefore, Christian and Muslim expelled pregnant school girls from their schools in order to prevent more girls falling pregnant. Moreover, Christian and Muslim official position on the School Re-entry Policy did not promote the education of girls and women in Zambia.

Some of the recommendations were that the Christians and Muslims should continue to provide good morals and values to the pupils in their schools for the benefit of the society at large. In addition, the government should engage in dialogue with the Christians and Muslims on the way forward for the pregnant school girls based on the root cause of pregnancies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter states and defines the problem that the study attempted to address. In addition, it discusses in detail the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and definition of key terms related to the study.

1.1 Background

The School Re-entry Policy was introduced in Zambia in 1997 in an effort to promote the education of the girl-child. The specific purpose of the policy is to allow girls who fall pregnant while in school to continue with their education after giving birth. It mandates all schools in Zambia to give a second chance to pregnant school girls to return to school and complete their education and be able to participate in the development of the country. Namuunda and Mumbuna (2010) report that since its introduction in 1997, the policy has reduced the drop-out rate among girls in the government run schools as many pregnant girls have returned to school after delivery and breast feeding of their babies.

According to the Ministry of Education (2007), the main purpose of the School Re-entry Policy is to promote girls' education so that later on they can fully participate in national development. Similarly, many non-governmental organisations such as the Forum for African Women Educationists in Zambia (FAWEZA) and the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) emphasise that it is important for pregnant school girls to be given a second chance to complete their education. They argue that over the years there have been few women completing education partly due to the high drop-out rates as the pregnant school girls were expelled from school.

However, Christians and Muslims in Zambia seem not to have complied with the School Re-entry Policy. They fear that the School Re-entry Policy might compromise discipline in their schools. The major mandate of the Christian and Muslim schools is the promotion of good morals among the pupils so that this can even be extended to the larger society after pupils have completed school.

In line with their mandate, the religious organisations seem to be strongly opposed to the School Re-entry Policy because they believe that it is immoral to bring back pregnant school girls to school. For example, in *The Post* of 16th October 2007, the Catholic Church, through the Archbishop of Lusaka, stated that the Catholic Church would never change their stand on the non-admission of girls that fall pregnant.

According to the Catholic Church, girls and boys are supposed to learn that the gift of sex comes from God and that it comes with responsibilities. It is for this reason that pregnant school girls in the Church-run schools are not given a second chance to return to school. Kapele (2008), noted that the stand of the Catholic Church is shared by other main-line churches such as the United Church of Zambia and the Seventh Day Adventists. The Christians sentiments on the School Re-entry Policy are also very similar to those of the Muslims in Zambia. For instance, when girls in Muslim schools fall pregnant they are sent away and they are not allowed re-entry into their school after delivery.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In 1997, the Government of the Republic of Zambia introduced the School Re-entry Policy which allowed school girls that fell pregnant to return to school after giving birth. However, the School Re-entry Policy has been received with mixed feelings. While some sections of society support the initiative, other sections especially Christians and Muslims, do not support and implement the School Re-entry Policy in their schools. This situation is not good for the education system in Zambia because Christians and Muslims are important stake-holders in the provision and delivery of education in the country. It is in this light that this study evaluated Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

1.4 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

- i. To establish Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy.
- ii. To establish Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy.
- iii. To evaluate Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What are Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy?
- ii. What are Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy?
- iii. How do these views affect the pregnant girls' education and development?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that its findings may help the Christians and Muslims to re-examine their views and approach to dealing with the problem of pregnant school girls in their schools. The findings may also help the educational policy makers to come up with policies that may contribute to the improvement of girl-child education. The girls who fall pregnant in religious-run schools may be assisted to have a second chance to complete their education. The findings of this study may lead to action and the changing of current practices. Finally, the report on this study will also add to the already existing literature on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

1.7 Delimitation

This study only targeted the Christian and Muslim as the main religious organisations involved in providing education in Zambia. It was conducted in Lusaka Province because that was where the key respondents such as the Church mother bodies and the Muslim education administrator in-charge of religious organisation-run schools were based.

1.8 Limitations

Since this study involved only two of the main religions in Zambia, namely Christianity and Islam, the findings may not be generalised to other religions. However, data collected from the members of the religious organisations was generalised to other areas outside Lusaka Province.

1.9 Definition of key terms

Church-run schools:

These are schools that are administered by Christian churches through the Education Secretariat of individual churches to provide education to boys and girls in Zambia.

Evaluation:

The general meaning of evaluation is assessment. However, the definition of the word 'evaluation' varies according to different scholars. Alkin (1969) explains that evaluation is a process of ascertaining decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and analysing information in order to report summary data useful to decision makers in selecting alternatives. Stufflebeam *et al.* (1971) also defined education evaluation as being the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives. This study used the word 'evaluation' as used by Alkin and Stufflebeam. The study identified some educational policy statements which were used as evaluation criteria to measure how the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy affected the pregnant school girls in Zambia. The evaluation criteria were as explained in section 1.10 below.

Progression:

The returning to school of the girls who had fallen pregnant after giving birth so that they continue school from where they had stopped until they finish school is what is being referred to as 'progression' in this study.

1.10 Evaluation Criteria

The study identified six criteria for the evaluation of the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy. The criteria were derived from national policies on gender, human rights and education. These were:

a) *Elimination of all gender disparities within the education sector*

According to the *Zambia Millennium Development Goals* (GRZ, 2008) goal Number 3 and *Zambia Vision 2030* (GRZ, 2006), all forms of gender disparities in education in primary and secondary schools should be eliminated preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education not later than 2015. This is to ensure that there are no differences between boys and girls, men and women in the education sector.

b) *Right to education for all citizens of Zambia*

All citizens have the right to education regardless of their status. Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education is a human right. This is also stated in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Education is also guaranteed by the policy of *Education for All* (MOE, 2004).

c) *Empowerment of girls through education*

This is aimed at enabling girls to be socially and economically independent. This is to be achieved by promoting and creating public awareness of the importance of girls' education and empowerment at national level, within the framework of the *Education for All* programmes and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

d) *Improvement of literacy for girls and women through education*

This refers to improved skills for reading and writing among girls and women. Kelly (2006) shows how the rate of adult illiteracy has remained very high. He explains that one third of the population aged 15 and above cannot read and write. The female illiteracy rate that stood at 42.7% in 1996 was almost double that of the male. The high rates of female illiteracy are strongly correlated with low rates of primary school and secondary completion, especially on the part of girls.

e) *Elimination of factors that hinder access, progression and accomplishment of girls in schools*

According to the national policy on education (MOE, 1996) the Ministry of Education seeks to eliminate factors that hinder the access, progression and accomplishment of girls in schools. In order to achieve this, the Education Boards are supposed to prepare actions for the promotion of equal opportunities of access and participation in educational institutions for which they are responsible (ibid).

f) *Access and Participation*

In cooperation with relevant partner ministries, and with communities, non-governmental organisations and religious groups, the Ministry of Education explores ways of establishing out-reach learning programmes that will bring the benefits of school education to children who, due to valid reasons, are not able to attend school in the conventional way (MOE, 1996).

In conclusion, this chapter has given the background to the study and the problem statement. It has also highlighted the purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study as well as its limitations. The definition of terms has also been given. Finally, the criteria of evaluation to be used later have been explained. The next chapter reviews the literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature related to this study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2009), ‘the literature’ means works the researcher consulted in order to understand and investigate the research problem. A literature review, therefore, they conclude, ‘is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers.’ As well known, the importance of literature review is that it helps the researcher to identify gaps that need to be researched upon. Accordingly, the literature review for this study was done under the following headings: History of girls’ education in Zambia, the School Re-entry Policy in Europe and America, the School Re-entry Policy in Africa, and the Introduction of the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

2.1 History of Girls’ Education in Zambia

Snelson (1974) explains that education is a means through which one generation transmits wisdom, knowledge and experiences which prepare the next generation for life’s duties and pleasure. In line with this definition, Datta (1984) outlines the main aims of traditional education as that which preserves the cultural heritage of the extended family, the clan and tribe. It adapts members of the new generation to the physical environment and teach them how to control and use it and explains to them that their own future and that of their community depends on the understanding and perpetuation of the institutions, laws, language and values inherited from the past. Africans, who included Zambians, depended on this traditional education before the introduction of Western education.

Apart from that, Mwanakatwe (1968) revealed that traditional education helped to instil sex education into the young women in the preparation to adult life. Most ethnic groups gave instructions to girls who became of age. This was called initiation ceremony. The main teaching during girl’s initiation ceremonies was the importance of becoming a wife, mother.

Therefore, if tradition education provided for initiation ceremonies, then the importance of such type of education cannot be over emphasized. It is for this reason that my study finds the traditional education to be very important because it gives a background and history of girls' education in Zambia, as I look at the views of the Christian and Muslim on the School Re-entry Policy.

In the pre-colonial and post colonial Zambia, apart from evangelisation, the missionaries provided education to boys and girls in order to improve the peoples' standard of living. However, missionary education did not place the education of boys and girls at the same level. Sitali (2009) notes that married women were not allowed to ask questions relating to the Bible in public. Usually they waited to ask their husbands when they went home. Snelson (1974) reveals that these missionaries were coming from a male dominated culture as evidenced by the large number of male missionaries that came to Zambia. Nevertheless, girls were not excluded from catechetical schools, though they were outnumbered by boys. Some of the single men who were later employed as teachers were seen as a danger to the girls. For this reason, parents were not ready to send their daughters to be taught by the young male teachers in these schools. As a result there were many girls that remained at home without going to school and some of them ended up getting married.

In addition, the coming of the British South African Company and the Colonial government did not change the way education was provided to the Africans. They were mainly concerned with providing basic education to Africans which could only enable them to read and write. In this regard, the government emphasised primary education rather than secondary education. At that time the education policy was aimed at mass education at a basic level. The government avoided providing Zambians with secondary and tertiary education. This was because providing higher education to Zambians would result in many of them taking up high positions thereby accelerating nationalisation. Carmody (2004) explains that even when secondary schools were introduced they were more for boys than girls. For example, while there were three boys' secondary schools namely Canisius, Munali and David Kaunda by 1951, girls' secondary schools were only two namely Mable Shaw

and Chipembi. Besides some missionaries did not even encourage the girl-child education, for example, Fr Moureal at Chikuni. The girl's school at Chikuni was only opened twenty (20) years after Canisius boys' school was opened.

According to Snelson (1974), the idea of boarding facilities for girls was a critical concern even in the colonial period. Many girls were sponsored as boarders in about 17 different schools. All this was done to increase the number of educated girls and women. However, the missionaries did not see the need to build boarding facilities in order to facilitate girls' education. Lack of interest in providing girl's boarding facilities could have made a lot of girls fail to complete their education. This was because the girls who lived far from schools dropped out as they could not walk long distances to existing schools.

Furthermore, Gadsden (1992) reported that by 1963, the number of females who had attained formal education was lower than that for boys. However, it is worth noting that though the colonial government did not do much to encourage girls' education, they at least provided more financial assistance to girls' boarding schools than boys' schools. All the same such efforts were not very significant because there were few girls' boarding schools at that time.

Gadsden (ibid) further explained the small number of women in decision making positions in government and the administration just after independence. This was because few educated women qualified to take up high positions. That left the men taking up almost all positions. For example, at independence there were only two women graduates. However, there were a few women who had trained as teachers and nurses. The lack of qualified women to take up high position could have been as a result of dropping out of school before completion. If that was the case, did pregnant school girls contribute to the small number of educated women? My study, therefore, goes beyond the explanation of lack of educated women after independence as it evaluates the Christian and Muslim views as education providers on the School Re-entry Policy.

Kelly (1996) mentions some factors hindering girl-child education since independence among them; cultural, social, historical, economical, religious, administrative and negative school environment. Cultural factors include values, beliefs and practices at home and in the community. For example, in a harsh economy where most parents could not afford to finance the education of their large number of children, given a choice between the boy and girl's education, many parents would choose to send the boy-child to school at the expense of the girl-child.

Kelly (ibid) further explains that the school environment also presented negative factors which discouraged girls from progressing in their education. For example, a very long distance to school, especially in rural areas, would not encourage many girls to continue with school compared to boys who would manage to walk the long distance. Further, a school girl who fell pregnant would immediately be expelled from school, while the boy-child responsible for the pregnancy would continue with his education. However, there was a steady attrition of girls relative to boys over the twelve years of primary and secondary school such that by Grade twelve (12), female students accounted for only about 35 % of the total enrolment.

Though there seemed to be steady attrition of girls' enrolment, there were still more factors relating to girls' low ratio to boys. For example, there were still very few schools in the country. Indeed, the small number of secondary schools for girls contributed to low numbers of educated girls as many still remained at home.

According to Mwanakatwe (1968), after independence, the Ministry of Education took long to review the existing policy affecting the pregnant school girls. The policy was that any school girl who got pregnant had to be expelled from school. Speaking during the Parliament debate on the policy affecting pregnant school girls, the Minister of Education announced the school function as that of "transmitting social values and tradition, the goal always being pursuit of self control, respect for decent human institutions such as marriage and the pride of raising legitimate offspring." Even though that being the case, there was still an urgent need to review the policy because school girls continued falling pregnant and

were being expelled. As result few girls and women were completing education to participate in the national development.

Mwanakatwe (ibid) reports that in 1966 one Member of Parliament advocated for the idea that a pregnant school girl should be granted leave and retains her school place after delivery. The idea of allowing a pregnant school girl to return to school after delivery was not supported by most Zambian citizens, missionaries and other education stakeholders. It was argued that a policy allowing a pregnant girl to return to school would degrade education institutions and unwanted pregnancies among school girls would increase. It was further argued that the implication of a girl getting involved in sexual activities was that she had made a decision to stop school and become a mother.

However, the advent of democracy, human rights and consequently the change in the thinking about the girls' education after 1966 gave the pregnant school girls a second chance to complete their education.

2.2 The School Re-entry Policy in Europe and North America

Zambia is not the only country in the world and region which is faced with the problem of school girls becoming pregnant. The problem of teenage pregnancy is a social problem worldwide. Therefore, the School Re-entry Policy has been introduced in many countries including those in Europe and America in order to help pregnant school girls return to school and complete their education.

Kasonde-Ng'andu (2010) revealed that there were many adolescent pregnancies in Britain which resulted in teenage births. France, Germany and the Netherlands also were reported to have double, three times and six times more cases of adolescent pregnancies. Consequently the governments of these countries were trying to do everything possible to contain and reduce the 'unacceptable levels of pregnancies among adolescents'. Among the measures taken was the introduction of sex education for girls and boys and also returning young mothers to regular schools. However, authoritative research found that in schools where more sex education was taught, there were higher cases of children getting involved in

sexual activities. It was, therefore, concluded that sex education would not reduce the frequency of pregnancies among school children in the affected countries.

However, *Online News* (2013) revealed that in Britain, the Children's Secretary Education Bill was still pushed for legislation through Parliament so that all schools, including the faith established schools, could make sex education compulsory in their schools. Research revealed that the major reason for the high number of teenage pregnancies in Britain was attributed to the breakdown of family life. It was argued that the breakdown of family life had left the children from these broken homes without any role models to show them the importance of love and good relationships. It was the role of parents to give a good example of life style to their children which could promote good relationships. Children should not be left to find love and care outside their home because they would end up indulging themselves in sexual relationships which would result in unwanted pregnancies.

In the United States of America and Canada, the picture was not different. For example, in his 2004 study, Gardner reported that in these two countries there were 425,000 babies born from school-going girls in 2002. This finding supported the idea that these school going girls would need to return to school after delivery because they were still young and would not have a career if they stopped school at that age.

Despite the pregnant school girls being given a second chance to return to school in Ireland, the government did not give clear guidelines on how pregnant school girls should be treated. In reaction to the School Re-entry Policy, Fitzgerald (2003), a member of the Ireland House of Representatives, did not understand how the pregnant school girls should be cared for during pregnancy and after the delivery of their babies. He, therefore, proposed that the guidelines and a short payment should be prepared by the Department of Education so that teenage mothers would be encouraged to return to school. The guidelines would give instructions on the care of pregnant and teenage mothers. That would encourage many teenage mothers to continue with their education.

The studies referred to above were concerned with the plight of pregnant school girls in all schools including faith established schools. The studies are similar in some way to this study because they all show efforts made by different governments to help pregnant schools girls retain their school places after giving birth. Although these studies are important to this study, there is one important aspect which is lacking in them. None of them addresses the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy which this study sought to investigate in Zambia.

2.3 The School Re-entry Policy in Africa

In 2010 Kasonde-Ng'andu conducted an evaluation of the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia. According to her, many African countries maintained the school rule of expelling girls who got pregnant. Expelling the pregnant school girls without meting out the same punishment on the boys responsible for the pregnancy was in itself gender discrimination because it meant that the pregnant school girls would not complete their education. This was unfortunate because it reduced the chance of having more educated girls and women that would participate in the development of the nation. For instance, in 1996 alone, Malawi and Kenya had about 10,000 cases of pregnancy among school girls each, which contributed to a high school drop-out rate. In Ghana the drop-out rate among school girls due to pregnancy was 70%. In Zambia, the education statistics indicated that there were about 34,104 girls in basic schools that fell pregnant while 5,329 girls became pregnant in high schools between 2002 and 2006.

Kasonde-Ng'andu's study revealed a high number of pregnant school girls in Zambia. However, the study did not bring out the views of the religious organisations which did not implement the School Re-entry Policy in their schools. This current study went beyond her work by evaluating the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy and how such views affected the education of the pregnant school girls in Zambia.

According to Sitali (2009), before the School Re-entry Policy was introduced in Tanzania, there was a law that allowed young girls even as young as fifteen years to get married whenever they wanted as long as the parents consented to the marriage. This led to a lot of

young girls not progressing in education. Another reason for girls dropping out of school was the distances at which the schools were located from several villages in the rural areas. Long distances to schools exposed many girls, especially the young, to rape and abduction into marriages. As a result, such girls got pregnant while others contracted sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS. Sitali further explains that with the introduction of the School Re-entry Policy in 2007, the government of Tanzania built more schools for easy access and boarding schools to cut down on the long distances for young girls who could not walk long distances to school. Sitali's study gives out the solutions that were implored in Tanzania in order to reduce drop-out cases among school girls due to pregnancies. Sitali's study differs from this study because it does not deal with other education providers other than the government, to find out their views on the School Re-entry Policy. This study evaluated the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy because apart from government, they are the main private providers of education in Zambia.

According to FAWE (1999) most African countries which have introduced the School Re-entry Policy have maintained different guidelines. For example, Kenya started considering the plight of pregnant school girls from 1994, although the policy was only introduced in 1996. Zimbabwe introduced the policy in 1999 but pregnant girls are not allowed to go back to the same schools. In order to help the pregnant school girls that failed to re-enter their previous schools, the Counselling and Guidance teachers have a responsibility to find the pregnant school girls alternative schools after delivery (FAWE, 1999).

However, reports from many countries show that there have been a lot of challenges in the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy. For example, FAWE (2001) reported that the school administrators in Kenya did not sensitize the girls on the School Re-entry Policy and that the pregnant school girls were not aware of it. This was because pregnant school girls had been seen as 'bad potatoes' that could influence other girls. Furthermore, the Programmes Director at the Kenyan Chapter of the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWEK) observed that the School Re-entry Policy was merely pronounced but the

implementation was left to the discretion of the school managers. Thus they would or would not allow pregnant girls to come back to school.

Similarly, Kasonde-Ng'andu (2010) cites the situation in Malawi which was not very different as teachers were not willing to teach pregnant school girls while some parents did not favour the School Re-entry Policy because traditionally they felt such girls should just get married. Further, in Zimbabwe, there were no well-qualified members of staff at school level to take up the responsibility of guidance and counselling. Without qualified members of staff who would guide and counsel the girls, the School Re-entry Policy was bound to be compromised. It was, therefore, the duty of the government to train guidance and counselling teachers in all schools for the sake of sustaining the School Re-entry Policy in Zimbabwe.

The foregoing studies show that the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy for pregnant school girls in many African countries was faced with many challenges. These studies are helpful to this study because they highlight some of the challenges faced in the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy in different countries which may be similar to what has been happening in Zambia. However, this study goes further by evaluating some key stakeholders (Christian and Muslim)'s views on the School Re-entry Policy in the country as a way of addressing the challenges.

2.4 The Introduction of the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia

The Ministry of Education and other stake holders have been making efforts to address factors that have hindered the girl-child from progressing in education. For example, in the early 1990s a number of women lobby organisations advocated for government's reconsideration of the gender imbalances in education. In 1994, FAWE organised a ministerial consultation at which the Zambian Minister of Education was present. This consultation was about school drop-out and adolescent pregnancy under the theme 'Counting the Cost' (FAWEZA, 2000). After the Mauritius meeting, the Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE) was introduced in 1995. Its main purpose was to

help the girls who fell pregnant to retain their school places after delivery. However, just like in many other countries, PAGE was not well implemented in Zambia (Kelly, 1996).

Kasonde-Ng'andu (2010) reports that in 1995, a conference was organised by the Zambia Association for University Women on the plight of the girl-child in the nation as a preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. During that conference, one of the important issues discussed was the fate of the school girls who were expelled after becoming pregnant. The women proposed to the government the re-admission of the girls who became pregnant after delivery and subsequent care of the babies. Subsequently, Zambian women educationists joined FAWE and the Zambian Chapter of FAWE was formed on 8th March, 1996 under the name, 'Forum for African Women Educationist in Zambia' (FAWEZA). With the formation of FAWEZA, the call for the re-admission of pregnant school girls became even stronger. All the women organisations in Zambia demanded for a change of policy with regard to the fate of the expelled pregnant school girls.

Eventually, a new national education policy entitled, '*Educating Our Future*' MOE (1996) was introduced by the Ministry of Education in which human resource development was to be promoted at every level. Among other issues, this policy document considered the plight of girls' education with a view to removing the imbalances in the provision, access equity and quality in the education system. As a result the government took up steps to help more girls complete their education. For example, more secondary schools were built to allow more girls to enter secondary schools.

In addition, Kasonde-Ng'andu (2010) reports that at a conference in Dakar, ministers from different countries, including Zambia, made a commitment to urgently address the issue of adolescent pregnancies and high school drop-out rates again. It was agreed that the school Re-entry Policy be introduced in all countries present at the Dakar Conference. As earlier alluded to, although the policy has been introduced differently in other countries, the policy has the same meaning. Some of the countries which introduced the School Re-entry Policy at the same time as Zambia were Botswana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Swaziland and South

Africa. Tanzania and Swaziland were some of the countries that introduced the School Re-entry Policy more recently.

As a result of the Dakar Conference of 1997, the Ministry of Education announced the introduction of the School Re-entry Policy for pregnant school girls at a conference on girl's education held at Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka in September of the same year. The School Re-entry Policy gave pregnant school girls a chance to re-enter school after giving birth. It mandated all schools to allow into the school system girls who previously left due to pregnancy in order for them to continue with education and contribute to national development.

The following were the main School Re-entry Policy Guidelines:

- a. Girls who were in the non-examination grades were to be allowed to return to schools unconditionally after delivery to continue from where they had left.
- b. The policy would become effective from January, 1997 and earlier cases would not benefit.
- c. There would be no repeated or subsequent pregnancy as re-entry would be once. In a case where the girl fell pregnant for the second time, such a girl would join continuing education or night school.
- d. Re-entry would be in the same school, but arrangements were to be made for automatic transfer to another school, when and where this was requested (MOE, Circular 13: 1997).

The foregoing events that culminated in the introduction of the School Re-entry Policy in the country were very important as different groups of stakeholders advocated for the education of pregnant school girls. It was due to their persistence that the School Re-entry Policy was finally introduced. Guideline on how to implement the school Re-entry Policy was provided. This guideline is very important because it shows how the School Re-entry Policy can be administered by schools in Zambia.

Even though the government schools have been implementing the School Re-entry Policy, they have been facing a lot of challenges just like in other African countries. For example, in their research paper entitled, 'The Promotion of Girl's Education in Basic Schools', Simuchimba and Luangala (2007) reported a case at one of the Basic schools in Ndola in the Copperbelt Province which revealed that pregnant girls who were given chance to remain in the same school with the boys responsible for the pregnancies started parading as couples. They reported that these 'couples' became more intimate as they walked to and from school together. By the time the parents stopped implementation of the School Re-entry Policy in the school, there were about ten couples. The study by Simuchimba and Luangala is important to this study in that it provides background to the evaluation of the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

In her study on FAWEZA's Campaign for Enabling Re-admission Policy for Adolescent Mothers, Sifuniso (2006) reported that seventy-two per cent of Church members interviewed were against the policy while twenty-eight per cent were in support. Sifuniso's study is similar to mine in that I also interviewed religious organisations on the School Re-entry Policy. However, my study went further by evaluating the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy and tried to show how these views affect girls' education and development.

In 2004, Ziwa did a study entitled, 'Abortion: A Woman's Dilemma.' She observed that our society condemns a girl who falls pregnant but keeps quiet when a married man has sexual relations outside marriage; the girls are seen as the drivers of sexual immorality in the education system. Ziwa further pointed out that in most cases the boys responsible for the pregnancies were left in schools while the girls remained home with the hope of getting married to the same boys. However, most of the boys have ended up marrying different girls after completing their education. This is where the School Re-entry Policy comes in to support the pregnant school girls to also complete their education and participate in national development than to condemn them. On the other hand, society needs to give good guidance to the school boys and girls to abstain from sexual activities.

Although Ziwa's study was a few years after the introduction of the School Re-entry Policy, it brought out the need for the policy. It is, therefore, important to this study because it includes some evaluation of the society's views on the school girl pregnancies. However, my study particularly evaluates the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia because these are among the main providers of education in the country.

According to a 2008 study conducted by Kapele on the 'Reactions to the Re-entry Policy for pregnant school girls by the Church-run schools in the Southern Province,' the Church-run schools claimed that the School Re-entry Policy was only meant for government schools. The Church-run schools declared that they could not comply with the School Re-entry Policy because it promoted immoral behaviour among girls in schools.

Kapele's study is important because it gives a background to this study in terms of what was happening in the Church-run schools in the Southern Province of Zambia. However, the present study goes further by evaluating Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy.

In addition, Sitali (2009) carried out a study on 'the effectiveness of the Re-entry Policy in selected high schools in Kabwe district.' The findings were that the policy was received with mixed feelings most of which were negative. The reason for the negative feelings was that in Zambia pregnancy outside marriage was considered to be morally wrong. Thus, schools are expected to uphold good morals among pupils. The study further showed that there was a negative attitude towards pregnant school girls. Some of the girls were rejected both at home and school. This could have contributed to fewer pregnant school girls returning to school after delivery. According to Sitali only 54% of them progressed up to grade 12 while the rest dropped out due to rejection and stigma. Sitali, therefore, recommended that the Ministry of Education should sensitize all education stake holders on the rationale for the School Re-entry Policy.

Sitali's study is relevant to my study because it brings out vital information regarding factors that hinder pregnant school girls from re-entering school. However, it does not

evaluate the stake holders' views which are the root cause of the low progression rate. This study, therefore, set out to evaluate the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy.

Kasonde-Ng'andu *et al* (2008) conducted a study on behalf of FAWEZA in which they tried to establish how gender and equity policies in education have impacted on girls' education. In this study the primary data was gathered for the Re-entry Policy from pupils, teachers and head teachers in selected schools in Northern, Eastern, Central, Western and Lusaka Provinces. The majority of teachers and head teachers' views on the effects of the School Re-entry Policy were that the policy was working well in their schools. They based their argument on the high number of pupils who were returning to school after delivery. On the other hand, there were those who had a contrary view, pointing out that the Re-entry Policy encouraged promiscuity and unnecessary pregnancies in schools since the girls knew that they would come back to school after delivery.

The study by Kasonde-Ng'andu *et al* is very important to this study because it brings out views of the teachers and head teachers about the School Re-entry Policy. The teachers and head teachers are the ones who are the main implementers of the educational policies on behalf of the government. However, since the study was done in government schools only, this study went beyond by involving other stake holders in education namely, the Christians and Muslims through their education administrative officers.

In her 2010 study referred to earlier, Kasonde-Ng'andu partly wanted to 'ascertain the extent to which the School Re-entry Policy has contributed to the increase in participation and completion rates among girls in basic and high schools.' The study concluded that 23 countries that introduced the School Re-entry Policy hoped that the pregnancy-related dropouts would reduce the magnitude of the current gender gaps in education. In addition, the female to male ratio in secondary school completion would increase from the current level of 0.51 to 0.68 if all pregnancy related drop outs were averted. Kasonde-Ng'andu contends that addressing pregnancy- related drop outs is a step in the right direction, though

the policy intervention should not be implemented in isolation as there could be other factors at play.

Kasonde-Ng'andu's conclusion above is very important because it creates the need to find out the other factors that should be considered in addressing pregnancy related drop-out cases among school girls. Accordingly, this study hoped to discover such factors through an evaluation of the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy. In order to increase the female to male ratio in the education completion rates in Zambia, the views of the Christians and Muslims may be very vital because they are among the main private education providers in the country.

Luangala (2008) reported findings of a survey of some basic schools in Central and Lusaka Provinces of Zambia on the implementation of the Re-entry Policy. The study concluded that the reasons for failure to return to school were the lack of interest by the pregnant girls themselves, no support for care of the babies, and parents' desire for girls to marry the man responsible for the pregnancy.

Luangala's study is not different from Kasonde-Ng'andu and Sitali's studies. All these studies raise relevant issues to the present study because they give information on what was prevailing in both primary and secondary schools. However, this study brings in the new angle of evaluating the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy.

In 2010, Namuunda and Mumbuna carried out a Review of the School Re-entry Policy on behalf of the Ministry of Education. In their report, the statistics on pregnancy and admission in basic schools showed that out of 13,663 school girls that fell pregnant in Zambia, only 5,517 managed to go back to school for re-admission. This is a very recent review and it brings out the real situation in the country with regard to the effectiveness of the School Re-entry Policy. However, the review did not present what was happening in the Christian and Muslim-run schools as it only dwelt on government schools. The report may also be misleading and may not be wholly valid because the figures of the girls who fell

pregnant could have been higher had the pregnant school girls in the Christian and Muslim schools been included.

Similarly, *The Post* of 11th August, 2013, editorial comment on the School Re-entry Policy stated that “the re-entry policy should not be seen as an end in itself, but simply as a mitigation measure, the main focus should be to deal with the root cause of teenage pregnancies”. This is the call by most stake holders, but the question is; who should investigate what could be the root cause of teenage pregnancy in Zambia? Another question could be who can help resolve the issue of pregnancies among school girls? The answers may come from an evaluation of the Christian and Muslim views on the matter, which is what this study endeavours to do. Indeed, once the root cause is identified, a solution to help school girls avoid pregnancy would have been found.

This chapter reviewed literature related to this study under the headings: History of Girls’ education in Zambia, The School Re-entry Policy in European and Western countries, School Re-entry policy in African countries, and the Introduction of the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia. The foregoing events that culminated in the introduction of the School Re-entry Policy in Europe, America and Africa were very important as different groups of stakeholders advocated for the education of pregnant school girls. The next chapter describes the methodology which the study used in order to collect data and evaluate the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology of this study. It also describes the methods that were used in carrying out the research. To achieve this objective, the chapter is divided into eight sections. These are: research design, research site, population and sample size, sampling procedure, data collection methods and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Kombo and Tromp (2009) give a description of a research design. It can be thought of as the structure of research, or the “glue” that holds all of the elements in a research, to show how all the major parts of the research project work together to try and address the central research questions. Additionally, according to Punch (2006), a research design on a practical level is one that connects the research questions to data. Therefore, a research design sits between research questions and the data, showing how research questions will be connected to data and what tools and procedures to use in answering them. This is exactly what my research design here tries to achieve.

This study fell under the qualitative research paradigm because it aimed at collecting views from the Christians and Muslims on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia. According to Walliman (2006), qualitative research brings out data which cannot be measured or counted but rather expressed in words than numbers. This is a study of human beings (Zambians) and their (Zambian) society and culture. Among other things, qualitative data requires identifying, understanding and interpreting ideas, customs, mores, beliefs and other essentially human activities and decisions in society.

The current study used the descriptive design in order to give an adequate description and evaluation of Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy. Kerlinger (1969)

points out that descriptive studies are not only restricted to finding out facts but may also lead to the formulation of useful knowledge and solutions to significant problems. The issue of school girl pregnancies is a significant problem in Zambia, requiring solutions.

3.2 Research Site

Kombo and Tromp (2009) give clues on how one can select a research site in order to come up with useful data for one's study. They recommend that the researcher should identify a very large area which could be appropriate to the research objectives and questions. The area should be an actual one which could have all the possible characteristics for the study.

Accordingly, this study was conducted in Lusaka, Zambia. Purposive sampling was used to select Lusaka town as the research site since the national administrative offices for the Christianity and Islam as religions were based in Lusaka. The research site was very convenient to the researcher because it was easy to access.

3.3 Population

Punch (2006) defines 'population' as the target group, usually large, about whom we want to develop knowledge, but which we cannot study directly; therefore we need a sample from that population. Walliman (2006) also says that population is a collective term used to describe the total quantity of cases of the type which is a subject of the study. It can consist of objects, people and events to which the findings may be generalised. The population of this study, therefore, consisted of all Christians and Muslims in Zambia.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size was fifty (50) respondents. The key respondents consisted of the Education Secretaries of the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) and Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), the Executive Director for the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and the Muslim Education Administrative Manager. Others were six head teachers under EFZ, ZEC and Muslim schools. There were also forty ordinary members, ten from each of the religious organisations.

In this study all respondents were chosen because of the role they played in the administration, monitoring and implementation of policies on education in their religious organisations. The Education Secretaries from the two church mother bodies, the Executive Director and the Education Administrative Manager were selected because they are the ones in charge of the education department in their religious organisations. They understand and explain educational policies to their religious organisation and government. The head teachers are the implementers of policies in the schools on behalf of the religious organisations. They are the ones on the ground and because of that they understand the day to day running of the schools. Therefore, they are able to provide accurate information on the policy and the challenges faced in the implementation of the policy. Finally, the ordinary religious members were chosen because their views were important and useful. They too were aware of the School Re-entry Policy and may complement or give different views on the matter.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Kombo and Tromp (2009) state that sampling procedure is a process that is used to find a number of individuals from a population such that the selected number of individuals consists of elements representative of characteristics found in the whole group. This study used purposive sampling in selecting the key respondents to provide the desired data. According to Kombo and Tromp (*ibid*), purposive sampling is a method in which the researcher chooses a particular group of people knowledgeable about the study. The method also helps to come up with rich information for in-depth analysis of the issue under study. Additionally, Walliman (2006) noted that purposive sampling helps the researcher to select what he or she thinks is a 'typical' sample based on specialist knowledge or criteria.

3.6 Method of Data Collection and instruments

In this study, structured interview guides were developed and used as the main instrument in the collection of data. The gathered data was accurately recorded. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) structured interview is a method which involves subjecting information of a sample to the same stimuli. For example, every respondent is asked similar questions according to their category. The structured interview method of collecting data was used because of some advantages that the procedure has. For instance, the reliability of information gathered is very high as it gives in-depth information about specific issues that the researcher requires. It is also very systematic and well guided since the questions are prepared before the interviews. Interview schedules are prepared with a series of headings using open-ended questions. Formulating questions before the interview makes the procedure comprehensive and orderly. As a result, the researcher becomes clear of the issues being studied.

Kombo and Tromp (*ibid*) do not only praise the structured interview method but also note that it has some disadvantages too. They include the rigidity displayed by the researcher, which can affect the responses given. This is because the researcher has already planned questions to help in getting desired data. The respondent may feel as if he or she is under investigation and being probed. This may also affect the responses as some of the respondents may even become hostile. However, there were no hostility incidences encountered during the period of data collection for this study.

Barbour (2008) suggests that the interview schedule should be drafted beginning with simple questions and through to the most probing ones. In this study, questions were carefully drafted to allow the continuity of interview without threatening the respondents. The interviews were conducted at the offices of the respondents during working hours. Data were recorded by taking down notes. In order to have more accurate data, all interviews were voice recorded.

The study used two major sources of data namely, primary and secondary. The primary data comprised the responses gathered through interviews to enhance the reliability and

replicability. On the other hand, secondary data came from literature prepared or collected by other scholars and was referred to in order to support or supplement primary data.

3.7 Tools

One of the tools used in the study was a diary in which all appointments and important observations were recorded. The voice recorder was also used to record data during the interviews. However, the use of a voice recorder was dependent on the agreement with the respondents. The voice recorder was not used in cases where its use made the respondents uncomfortable.

3.8 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is one model of narrative analysis. According to Walliman (2006) thematic analysis helps to summarise several data collected about the research questions. Bryman (2004) also states that thematic analysis gives an emphasis on what is said rather than how it is said. Therefore, the focus of attention is directed at how people give meaning to what happened than what exactly happened. In this study, groups of questions that were interconnected and related were identified as themes for the purpose of analysing the views of the Christians and Muslims on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

This chapter has discussed the methodology. The research used the qualitative design which helped to describe the views of the Christians and Muslims about the School Re-entry Policy. The views were collected through interviewing key respondents who among them were the Education Secretaries and the Executive Director of the three church umbrella bodies, the Education Administrative Manager for the Muslim, head teachers, ordinary members of the religious organisations. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings are presented according to the following three main research questions of the study which are also used as headings: i) What are the Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy? ii) What are the Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy? and iii) How do these views affect the pregnant school girls' education and development?

4.1. What are the Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy?

In order to establish the Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy, one representative from the three church mother bodies were interviewed and these included; the Education Secretaries for CCZ and ZEC and the Executive Director of EFZ. Others were two primary school head teachers under EFZ and two secondary school head teachers under ZEC. Ten ordinary church members belonging to each of the above church mother bodies were also interviewed.

a) *Church mother bodies*

The first task was to find out what the Churches' official position on the School Re-entry Policy was. The Education Secretary for CCZ said:

- *Implementing the School Re-entry Policy encourages school girls to get pregnant.*
- *We want to keep our Christian morals and values. So we do not expect them to do otherwise.*
- *We are strict because we want sanity in our schools.*

Similarly, the Education Secretary for ZEC said that he felt that the Churches should be left alone to decide on matters that concerned their ethos or morals. He also said that the churches wanted to bring up children who were going to respect the fundamental values of life such as abstinence and postponement of sex until marriage.

On the other hand, the EFZ Executive Director said that the churches under his religious organisation supported the School Re-entry Policy because it gave girls another chance of pursuing their education. The Executive Director further said that expelling pregnant school girls reduced potential literacy among women and negatively affected their career development.

Since all the three representatives of the three church umbrella bodies were aware of cases of pregnancy among girls in their schools, the next question sought an explanation about how they dealt with pregnant school girls.

The CCZ and ZEC Educational Secretaries said that their schools expelled pregnant school girls. In cases where teachers were responsible for the pregnancy, such teachers were surrendered to the MOESVTEE for deployment. Answering the same question, the EFZ Executive Director said that his religious organisation took back pregnant school girls into schools.

Under the School Re-entry Policy, all schools in Zambia are directed to allow pregnant girls to re-enter school after giving birth. In line with this directive, the church mother bodies were asked if all their schools were complying with the policy.

In response, only the EFZ Executive Director said that the schools under his organisation complied with the School Re-entry Policy because of the ‘compassion message’ of his churches. There were no proper records of pregnant school girls in his organisation. However, he noted that it was important to have records of those who re-entered in order to assess the impact of the policy. The Church needed to have records of pregnancy so that the pregnant school girls who were more vulnerable could be assisted.

On the other hand, the Education Secretaries of the other two church mother bodies said that their schools did not comply with the School Re-entry Policy. The CCZ Education Secretary further said that his schools did not comply with the policy because most of their girls were ready to observe the strict rules. He explained that the girls were aware of the consequences, which included expulsion if they became pregnant. However, CCZ also revealed that two of

their schools in the Southern Province had been complying with the School Re-entry Policy against their official stand as a Church.

As for ZEC, the Education Secretary said that Catholic Church had their reservations though he did not want to use the term 'comply'. He said that their schools were managed according to the principles of the Church, guided by the Statutory Instrument Number 43 of 1993, which stated that 'Schools owned by the Churches should run to the mind of a particular board'.

The representatives of CCZ and ZEC which did not support the School Re-entry Policy were further asked to give the major reasons for not complying with the Policy. In answer to the question, the ZEC Educational Secretary said that Catholics did not allow pre-marital sex in their church and that they believed that the girls' involvement in sexual activities was sin against God.

The ZEC Education Secretary also said:

- *The School Re-entry Policy is a good policy because it accommodates pregnant school girls but it is not an excuse to mess around.*
- *We should not be seen as if we are too adamant or against the School Re-entry Policy.*
- *Dialogue between the Church and government about the School Re-entry Policy should continue. May be in future, there could be avenues found in which we could decide to help the pregnant school girls as a Church.*
- *This can be re-looked at and possible solutions could be found. For example, as a Church we can set up teenage mother schools but we cannot bring them back in schools where they were before getting pregnant.*

Apart from that, the CCZ Education Secretary said that his religious organisation wanted to follow the rules that had been set. These rules called for moral uprightness among all the

members of the Church, including children. Moral uprightness among children would lead to good Christian families and moral values in society. As such unruly girls were supposed to be punished. In CCZ's view, pregnant girls were unruly and needed to be punished by expelling them from school. The Education Secretary also confirmed that CCZ did not have co- education schools because they wanted to prevent pregnancies among school girls.

Nevertheless, the CCZ Education Secretary said it was high time they advocated for the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy in their schools. They should not seem to be more religious by not implementing the Policy even when they could help the pregnant school girls to continue with their education. He acknowledged that it was good to talk about some crucial issues at hand in the education sector like the School Re-entry Policy because the pregnant school girls could only find refuge in the Church.

Moreover, both CCZ and ZEC Educational Secretaries' comments appeared as though there would be room for change from what was earlier said on their official position (i.e. non-compliance) to compliance with the School Re-entry Policy later.

The Executive Director for EFZ insisted that the pregnant school girls should not be expelled from the religious organisation schools because that was intimidation. The Executive Director retaliated that the best way to deal with pregnant school girls would be to give them maternity leave up to the time they would be ready to get back to school.

Furthermore, the EFZ Executive Director said that the School Re-entry Policy was law for all education providers to comply with. Therefore, all the pregnant school girls should be taken back into schools after the delivery and caring of their babies.

b) Head teachers

As well known, head teachers are the ones who manage the schools. The two secondary schools under ZEC which were part of the study were run by sisters belonging to different congregations. Under EFZ, there were two basic schools. As for CCZ, they did not have a girls' school in Lusaka Province. However, they were able to share what was happening in

their schools outside Lusaka Province. Therefore, there were only four head teachers from the Church-run schools who were interviewed.

When asked to explain measures that were put in place to help pregnant girls in their schools, the head teachers running ZEC and EFZ schools said:

- *We bring back pregnant school girls after delivery.*
- *If they feel embarrassed to remain in the same school, we do find them places elsewhere ourselves.*
- *We continue to sponsor those who have been on our bursary if they come back to school or they go to other schools.*
- *We also assign some female married teachers to counsel the girls on the importance of education as they are in a better position to assist the girls further.*

However, one of the head teachers under ZEC said Catholic-run schools had nothing to do with pregnant school girls as her Church did not support the School Re-entry Policy. When the head teachers were asked about what had been the response to the School Re-entry Policy in their schools, the same head teacher under ZEC reaffirmed that her school did not allow the girls back into school once they were pregnant.

The other head teacher under ZEC had the following different position to report:

- *Our response varies, sometimes when the parents of pregnant school girls report in good time we do assess their position. If they are not able to find the school places elsewhere on their own we assist by accepting the girls back in the school.*
- *At other times we do bring back the pregnant school girls in our school, especially if they are in an examination class.*

- *We have managed to bring back a few pregnant girls in our school although they have been labelled and stigmatised by their friends. As a school, we had to counsel them and assure them of our protection.*
- *After counselling they settle down and blend very well.*
- *All the pregnant school girls are closely monitored.*

Although the head teacher above supported the School Re-entry Policy, her church mother body did not allow schools under it to implement it. However, the head teacher used her own discretion in bringing back the pregnant school girls.

One out of the two head teachers under EFZ complained that there were a number of pregnancy cases in his school but they did not have any pregnant school girls that went back to school even with the policy in place. The head teacher bemoaned the non-return of such girls to school and attributed this to the location of the school. The school is located in Kalikiliki Compound, which is situated between Mtendere East and Kabulonga in Lusaka. The head teacher said that in Kalikiliki Compound there were a lot of school girls who stopped school due to pregnancy and in order to get married.

According to the two schools under EFZ which supported the School Re-entry Policy, their church mother body supported the policy in order to help the government reach the millennium development goals on education. Therefore, they expected all schools in Zambia to comply with the School Re-entry Policy because it was a government policy.

The head teachers whose schools did not support the School Re-entry Policy were further asked to explain why some schools did not support it. They explained that they wanted to discourage promiscuity among the girls and further added that they did not want to tarnish the good image of their schools.

In response to the question on why some schools did not support the School Re-entry Policy, three out of four head teachers who supported the School Re-entry Policy said the following:

- *The pregnant school girls should not be thrown out of school. They can have a second chance in other schools.*
- *All schools should implement the policy in order to help the pregnant school girls complete their education.*
- *Helping the vulnerable pregnant school girls is very important.*
- *Pregnant school girls are young and need our help and there could be no good future for them if they are not educated.*
- *We do give talks to all pupils at assembly and in classrooms on how to avoid pregnancy and keep themselves pure.*

One head teacher among those who supported the School Re-entry Policy, however, further said the Policy was not helping the pregnant school girls much. This was because most girls wanted to get married after getting pregnant; the Policy also seemed to encourage promiscuity among school girls. He suggested that it would be better to scrap the School Re-entry Policy because some pregnant school girls were not really interested in getting back to school.

c) Ordinary church members of the religious organisations

Ten ordinary church members from each of the three church mother bodies were also asked for their views on the School Re-entry Policy. The ordinary church members under CCZ and ZEC had mixed feelings about the policy. For example, only four out of ten ordinary church members under ZEC said that the School Re-entry Policy was good. They would want to be helped if their own children fell pregnant. However, six of them said the School Re-entry Policy encouraged pregnancies among school girls. They also explained that most often, girls did not realise that by falling pregnant they would lose time for completing their education. They further said that they were not in support of the Policy because of the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church which seek to promote good morals.

Two of the CCZ ordinary church members said that they did not want to comment on the School Re-entry policy because their church mother body did not consult them. The other eight of them were very happy with the Policy and commended some of their schools which were implementing it.

As for EFZ, all the ten ordinary church members did not condemn the School Re-entry Policy. They would however, encourage school authorities to watch over pregnant school girls when they returned so that they did not influence other girls.

So, twenty-two out of thirty ordinary church members from all three church mother bodies were happy with the School Re-entry Policy because the pregnant school girls were not left in the community without doing anything. They further commended the government for having introduced the School Re-entry Policy as it had made it possible for some of the pregnant school girls to complete school.

However, the other eight ordinary church members from ZEC and CCZ who were against the Policy were of the view that the government should introduce other measures to help the school girls stay focused while at school and avoid falling pregnant.

4.2 What are the Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy?

The second question of the study aimed at finding out what the Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy were. The respondents included one Education Administrative Manager representing the Muslims community, two Muslim secondary school head teachers and ten ordinary Muslim or members of Islam.

a) Education Administrative Manager

When asked what the Muslim community's official position on the School Re-entry Policy was, the Education Administrative Manager said that there had never been reports of cases of pregnancy in their schools. Pupils were given strict rules so that they did not find themselves in a situation where they would fall pregnant. The Education Administrative Manager further said that they would not have accepted the School Re-entry Policy had

there been cases of pregnancy in their schools. He also said that the School Re-entry Policy encouraged school girls to be immoral and irresponsible by indulging in sex before marriage.

According to him, the Muslim schools would not have complied with the School Re-entry Policy had they been experiencing the problem of pregnant school girls. This is because of the rule of 'self-respect' that is instilled in the pupils. Self-respect in this case meant that a Muslim should be self disciplined and controlled. It also required that one does the right thing at the right time. There were school rules put in place which pupils had to abide by and because of that they did not expect any cases of pregnancy in their schools.

Nonetheless, in his final comments, the Education Administrative Manager said that rules in their schools did not allow boys and girls to mix when they were in school except for children below the age of nine. This was in order to make pupils know that according to their Islamic tradition they had nothing to do with the opposite sex until they got married. Therefore, learning was done in different class rooms. However, boys and girls in the Muslim-run schools were only separated within the school environment; outside the school premises they were free to mix.

b) *Head teachers*

Head teachers are the ones who implement (and monitor) education policies in the schools. Responding to the question on whether there had been cases of pregnancy in their schools, one out of the two head teachers said that there had been no cases of pregnancy in Muslim-run schools. However, the other head teacher revealed that there had been a few cases of pregnancies at his school though the school did not implement the School Re-entry Policy.

Answering to the question on how the schools dealt with pregnant school girls, the head teacher who had pregnancy cases in his school said:

- *We are a religious school, so that question is a bit tricky.*

- *We are teaching morals so it is very difficult for us to talk about the School Re-entry Policy.*
- *But we do find school places for the pregnant school girls.*
- *We take on girls from other schools that have already given birth. But we are reluctant to bring back our own girls who fall pregnant.*
- *It is not written anywhere that we cannot take back the pregnant school girls.*

When the head teacher with pregnancy cases at his school was asked what measures were put in place to help the pregnant school girls who were not accepted back, he said that they were advised to look for school places elsewhere and he also helped others to look for schools if they failed to find them. However, the pregnant school girls who found schools elsewhere but did not have school fees were given some financial support by the school in order to assist them return to school.

Further, a follow up question was asked to find out if the school with pregnancy cases complied with the School Re-entry Policy Guidelines. The head teacher of the concerned school said that he was reluctantly helping the pregnant school girls to re-enter his school because the Muslim community did not accept the Policy. However, the procedure followed was different from what the School Re-entry Policy Guideline document contained. The head teacher allowed pregnant girls from other schools while the girls who got pregnant in his school were denied re-entry. The School Re-entry Policy Guideline stipulates that the pregnant school girl should be given chance to re-enter the same school though arrangements can be made by the school to transfer the pregnant school girl to another school if need be.

The two head teachers were asked to give reasons that other Muslim education stake holders who did not support the School Re-entry Policy had for their position. Both head teachers said that the Muslims believed in the Islamic principle of ‘prevention was better than cure.’

This principle was partly implemented by not allowing mixed classes at Muslim-run schools.

However, the head teacher who allowed school girls in his school further said:

- *The policy is good but there should be measures to prevent school girls from getting pregnant, there should be checks and balances so that punishment is given before pregnant girls are brought back to school.*
- *The government could not have publicised the School Re-entry Policy so much. It could have remained silent even when it was allowing pregnant school girls back into schools. The Policy had resulted into children having corrupt morals which are difficult to control.*
- *The government should ban early initiation ceremonies because it is not necessary in this era where children want to experiment everything they learn. However, the initiation ceremony conducted just before marriage should continue.*
- *On the other hand the policy might be good anyway. This is because the children have been spoiled by the same government which does not control bad programmes presented through the electronic media such as radio and television.*
The government is covering up its weaknesses through the introduction of the School Re-entry Policy.

c) Ordinary religious members

The ordinary members of the Islamic faith were asked about their views on the School Re-entry Policy. In answer to the question, the members said that they did not talk about the School Re-entry Policy at all. This was because they found it irrelevant since there had been no cases of pregnancy in their schools. Apart from that, there had never been a forum at which the School Re-entry Policy had been discussed.

In addition, the ordinary Muslims were then asked if they knew what other members of the community said about the School Re-entry Policy. In response they said that they were not aware of what other community members said about the School Re-entry Policy. However, the ordinary religious members did not say anything more but referred all queries to the Education Administrative Manager who had authority over the schools. It was surprising that the ordinary religious members seemed to have had very little knowledge about the School Re-entry Policy.

4.3 How do the Christian and Muslim views affect pregnant school girls' education and development?

The third question of this study was to find out how the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy affected pregnant schoolgirls' education and development. In order to address the question and the objective, an evaluation of the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy for pregnant school girls was done. The evaluation of the Christian and Muslim views was done using the six evaluation criteria which were explained in chapter one. These evaluation criteria were derived from education policy statements that have been formulated to address the problems of girl-child education in Zambia and internationally. Others were from the international protocols on girls' and women's rights and the Zambia constitution section that promotes the education of women and girls.

The following were the evaluation criteria used: elimination of gender disparities, right to education for all citizens in Zambia, empowerment of girls through education, improvement of literacy for girls and women through education, elimination of factors that hinder access, progression and accomplishment of girls in schools, and participation of girls in the education sector. These criteria of evaluation will be used as sub-headings in this section of the chapter.

4.3.1 Elimination of gender disparities within the education sector

The Christians expel pregnant school girls as a way of removing perceived immoral girls from schools so that they may not influence others. This action (of expelling the pregnant school girls) may contribute to promoting the gender gap in the positions of responsibility which require educated human resource as the expelled girls will not be educated enough to take up such responsibilities. It is important to eliminate some of these gender disparities in order to allow more women access education and thereby take up some high jobs and thus contribute to the development of the nation. This will also ensure that there are no differences between boys and girls in the education sector (GRZ, 2006).

Elimination of gender disparities partly means that there should be equal numbers of girls and boys in the enrolment, access and progression in the education sector. The Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy will deny pregnant girls the opportunity to complete their education. Therefore, the Christian and Muslim action of expelling pregnant school girls is not acceptable in the education sector as it promotes gender disparities, which the government and other stake holders would like to eliminate.

4.3.2 Right to education for all citizens of Zambia

The official position of the two church mother bodies, CCZ and ZEC and the Muslim community was that a girl who got pregnant was to be expelled from school. However, this position is not good at all because the expelled pregnant school girls in these religious organisations will not enjoy their full human right to education. The religious organisations do advocate for the observance of human rights for all citizens but the right to education in this case seems not to be their concern. One wonders how the pregnant school girls would be able to properly look after their children if they are not educated. Given the right to education, it would be of great help if all the girls including the pregnant ones were given the chance to be educated. This would uplift the standards of living for all citizens in Zambia as education will equip them with various life skills and abilities. Besides, if a pregnant school girl is educated she may be able to provide for her own children.

Article number 28 of the United Nations Convention on Human Right (UNCHR) clearly states that all citizens have a right to education regardless of their status. The Education for All (MOE, 2004) policy also promotes the right to education for all citizens in Zambia. It is for this reason that all education providers, including religious organisations, should see to it that they help to educate all citizens in the country. In fact, if the pregnant school girl is educated she may also become a role model for her children and help them to get educated too.

4.3.3 Empowerment of girls through education

With respect to the empowerment of girls through education, all education providers have a responsibility to help all pupils including pregnant school girls in their schools complete education so that they could stand on their own in future. It is through education that the pregnant school girls could be empowered with different skills that would help them stand on their own. Only when girls are educated would they be able to be economically and socially stable in society. The educated pregnant school girls are likely to bring up healthy children as they will be able to prepare nutritious foods for them and observe hygiene in caring for them.

Any form of education empowers one with a sense of responsibility over oneself and others. Indeed the religious organisations are education stake holders who should promote the awareness of the importance of girls' education and empowerment in the country than be part of the disempowerment of girls and women through expulsion of pregnant school girls from school.

In fact the religious organisations claim that it is their duty to speak for the voiceless and vulnerable in the society and pregnant school girls should be among the vulnerable people, especially if they come from poor families. So despite the religious organisations' main duty of inculcating good morals in their members, they also have a duty to empower them (including pregnant school girls) socially and economically through education in their schools (Kelly, 2006).

4.3.4 Improvement of literacy for girls and women through education

By not implementing the School Re-entry Policy, the ZEC, CCZ and the Muslims leaders are not contributing to the improvement of girls and women literacy through education in Zambia. Failure to implement the School Re-entry Policy means that the pregnant school girls will remain uneducated and illiterate, with many negative consequences. Kelly (1996) observes that the female illiteracy rate of 42.7% was almost double that of the male because of low rates of primary and secondary education completion. It is hoped that with the increase in numbers of primary and secondary schools in Zambia, the rate of illiteracy for girls and women would reduce.

According to Kelly (2006) the low literacy levels among the girls and women in Zambia could be partly as a result of a big number of pregnant girls who were not allowed to re-enter school after delivery. In light of Kelly's observation, it can be said that the Christian and Muslim practice of expelling pregnant school girl could be a contributing factor to the low literacy levels among women and girls in Zambia.

Although moral uprightness and faithfulness are important values in churches and society, expelling pregnant school girls from their schools may be counterproductive as it might lead the expelled girls into desperation and prostitution.

4.3.5 Elimination of factors hindering access, progression and accomplishment of girls in schools

Elimination of factors hindering access, progression and accomplishment means removing the things, principles or ideas which may not give a girl-child opportunity to become educated. According to MOE (1996) the Ministry of Education seeks to eliminate factors hindering access, progression and accomplishment of girls. Some of these factors which may hinder girls from accessing, progressing and accomplishing school among them are; administrative, socially, culturally, economically, religiously and many more. For example, the administrative factors could be lack of sensitization of girls on the gender issues. Some of the gender issues such as improvement of supportive female facilities in schools and low

quality of school. One of the supportive facilities in the school is a water point which girls can use during their menstruation period so that they feel comfortable to be in the school environment. When there is no water point in a school girls' attendance in school is irregular as they remain home where there are better water points for their needs.

Another administrative factor could be failure to implement education policies that could increase numbers of girls completing school. The School Re-entry policy could be one of the education policies that could help the girls have equal access to school and subsequently improve their progression rate and accomplishment in school.

Social factors that can hinder access, progress and accomplishment of girls in school are among them, giving girls a lot of house chores that leave them with very little time to study. The house chores may affect the girls' education because they remain with little time to study which may affect their performance in class. As a result of this factor the girls end up with poor results which contribute to their inability to progress in their education.

Furthermore, negative attitudes and values are also factors which can hinder access, progression and accomplishment of girls in school. For example, negative remarks that imply that girls are not as academic able as boys, discourage the girls from working hard in school. Christian and Muslims could do well to encourage the girls so that self esteem can be built in them.

Christian and Muslim views of condemning the pregnant school girls as immoral contribute also to the failure by pregnant school girls to access, progress and accomplish school. Despite these religious organisations providing quality education, they discriminate the pregnant school girls by expelling them from their schools. It would be good if the pregnant school girls were given chance to re-enter in the religious-run schools in order to increase the number of educated girls in Zambia. The Christian and Muslim should sensitize the school girls on the gender issues in order to help many girls understand that they can contribute to national development. This, of course, can be done if only the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy changed.

4.3.6 Access and participation

Access and participation in education is giving chance to school children to go to school and complete school so that they can meaningfully participate in national development. Once school children have completed school they become economically active and productive. Access and participation encourages schools to provide quality education to the learners. School children should be given chance to go to school of their parents choice. Access and participation leads to self sustainability. Once educated, one may look after themselves and their families; this may lead to good health and reduction in mortality rates.

The Ministry of Education (1996) states that in cooperation with relevant partners in the community such as non-governmental organisations and religious groups, the Ministry of Education will explore ways of establishing outreach learning programmes that will bring the benefit of school education to children who, due to valid reasons are not able to attend school. The Christian and Muslim views cannot help eliminate the factors that hinder girls' access and participation when the pregnant school girls are expelled from their schools.

This chapter has presented the findings of the study about the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy. The Christian and Muslim expelled pregnant school girls from their school in order to promote discipline among the girls. They did not implement the School Re-entry Policy for fear of compromising the discipline. However, expelling the pregnant school girls was promoting gender disparities in the education sector. Boys and girls need to have equal opportunities in access and participation in school and contribute to national development. The next chapter is a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The discussion will be done under headings derived from the following objectives of the study: i) to establish Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy; ii) to establish Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy; and iii) to evaluate Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy.

5.1 Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia

As stated above, the first objective of the study was to establish Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy. What follows in this section, therefore, is a discussion of the main Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy.

The Christians had mixed feelings about the School Re-entry Policy. Some Christians did not have problems with the policy while others regarded it as one which would encourage the school girls to be promiscuous. This is in line with the findings of Sifuniso (2006) which revealed that some of the religious organisations were opposed to the School Re-entry Policy.

It is important for Christians to continue working hard in keeping good morals and values of Zambian society. However, expelling pregnant school girls should not be part of this. The pregnant school girls could be counselled and then allowed into school. It is unfortunate that two of the church mother bodies believed that expelling pregnant school girls would deter other girls from indulging in sexual activities.

The position taken by ZEC was echoed in the Archbishop of Lusaka's sentiments on the School Re-entry Policy when he said that the Catholic Church would never re-admit the pregnant school girls in their schools (*The Post*, 2007). This therefore, would indicate that the non-compliance with the School Re-entry Policy has been there for quite some time in

the Catholic Church-run schools. As a result many pregnant school girls who were expelled in these schools did not have a chance to continue with school.

However, Namuunda and Mumbuna (2010) reported that Christians would help the pregnant school girls more if they made sure that all the head teachers in their school used the School Re-entry Policy Guideline. By using the Guideline documents, the schools would monitor and track the pregnant school girls to ascertain whether they were still in the education system or not. This would be one way in which Christians would use the School Re-entry Policy Guideline effectively. Fitzgerald (2003) observed that the government should have provided clear instructions on how to use the Guidelines on the care of young mothers. If instructions are not clear, the school administrators may fail to effectively implement the policy. Therefore, the Guidelines are important in ensuring that all procedures in the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy are followed by all education providers. Only then will the policy be effective. In this case the School Re-entry Policy Guideline has clear instructions despite the Christian and Muslim not using it.

Moreover, it is unfortunate for some pregnant school girls to fail to go back to school because the only school in their environment is a Church-run one which may not accept them back. It will mean that the government's efforts to reduce the drop-out rates of school girls due to pregnancy in the education system will be in vain. The pregnant school girls from such an environment may not access school anywhere, anymore.

With regards to the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy, although ZEC's position is that the Catholic Church does not support (and implement) the policy, there was a difference in approach between the two schools under ZEC with one implementing it and the other not implementing it. One reason for this could be the fact that these two schools were run by two different congregations of Sisters. One of the two schools' objectives was to bring up morally upright pupils. This was seen in their school motto which read 'Moral and Excellence'. In their view, sending away pregnant school girls was the best and most appropriate way to promote good morals in their school. All pupils were expected to finish

school with very good results. However, the pregnant school girls found their way out as they were not accepted in that school.

On the other hand, the other school run by a different congregation had a different approach to the School Re-entry Policy. Their ethos of 'charity' compelled them to help the pregnant school girls. This was very good because the pregnant school girls were given a second chance. The school authorities' implementation of the School Re-entry Policy was done with the conviction that whoever made a mistake would be forgiven by giving them another chance to continue with their education. Such type of action is in line with the religious teachings on forgiveness. It is also important to note that the religious organisations teach about love and forgiveness. However, the value of love and forgiveness will not be practical if some of these church mother bodies remain rigid in their principles. The School Re-entry Policy is an opportunity for them to practically express forgiveness to the pregnant school girls especially that the girls would first undergo counselling. So the second school under ZEC was doing the right thing.

However, the difference in approach to the School Re-entry Policy by the two schools under the same church mother body shows that the two church mother bodies, CCZ and ZEC did not give clear instructions to their schools as regards the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy. Neither CCZ nor ZEC had written a secular to their schools to instruct them not to implement the School Re-entry Policy. Had they done so the disparities on how their schools should respond to the School Re-entry Policy would not be there. It would seem that those schools which sent away the pregnant school girls were following the church mother bodies' official position while the schools that implemented the School Re-entry Policy might be considered to have gone against the official position of their church mother body. Besides the congregation that run schools have the right to re-interpret the teachings of their church mother body and also follow the objectives of their congregation.

This situation is surprising as Kapele (2008) also found that one school under CCZ in Southern Province was implementing the School Re-entry Policy against the official position of the church mother body. Kapele's finding was confirmed by CCZ Education

Secretary. In fact CCZ did not reprimand the member churches that were implementing the School Re-entry Policy. This, therefore, meant that the CCZ's official position of expelling pregnant school girls was compromised.

Although Christians hoped to counsel the pregnant school girls so that they are able to cope with their new status and continue their education elsewhere, effective counselling depended on the availability of counsellors in the schools. The pregnant school girls needed to feel comfortable and confident so that they could refrain from indulging themselves in sexual activities. Kasonde-Ng'andu (2010) cited the lack of counselling and guidance teachers as a challenge in most African countries. For this reason, it would be important for the Church-run schools to recruit more counsellors to help girls in these schools. If more counsellors were trained there might be more girls completing their education as they would avoid getting involved in sexual activities.

It is also noteworthy that some ordinary church members were mute on the issue of allowing pregnant school girls to return to school. Why would some ordinary members of the religious organisations remain closed up to the issues of pregnant school girls? Could it be that the church mother bodies which did not accept the School Re-entry Policy did not give chance to people to debate on the issue of pregnant school girls and the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy? It is possible that these members of the religious organisation did not say anything about the School Re-entry Policy for fear of being misunderstood or considered to be against the teachings of the Church. Sometimes, people may fail to speak out if they have not been given proper forum to air their views by their leaders. Therefore, it would be important for the Christian church leaders to provide a forum at which they could dialogue with the ordinary church members on different issues, including the pregnant school girls so that the views of the ordinary church members could also be heard.

Similarly, despite EFZ supporting the School Re-entry Policy, some of their ordinary members had mixed feelings about it. Some members were in favour while others condemned the School Re-entry Policy. For example, studies by Kasonde-Ng'andu (2008) and Luangala (2008) reported that different head teachers had different views about the

School Re-entry Policy. Therefore, it would not be surprising for the ordinary church members to hold different views from those of their church mother bodies.

According to ZEC, the church-run schools were private and so they were not obliged to educate all the citizens in Zambia. It was for that reason that the Christian leaders called upon the government to educate the pregnant school girls who were expelled from the Church-run schools. Though this might be the case, religious organisations should be encouraged to accommodate school girls who become pregnant as they were critically partners of the government in the provision of education. In fact Snelson (1974) reports that early Christians provided education to the people within the communities in which they lived before the government started doing so. Besides, Christians used education as a strategy of evangelisation in Africa. Christians have been providing education for a long time now and their working relation with the government is good. As a result they can negotiate with the government on how to deal with the pregnant school girls. Mwanakatwe (1968) explains that the problem of pregnant school girls is an old problem in the education sector and it is well known by the Christians. It would, therefore, be better if the Christian churches were part of the solution to the problem of pregnant schools by implementing the School Re-entry Policy.

5.2 Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia

The second objective of this study was to establish the Muslim's views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

The Muslims would not have accepted the School Re-entry Policy in their schools because they saw the policy as one that would promote immoral behaviour among school girls. Though this view was clear, the implications would not have been very good. The Muslims could have held this view because the problem (of the prevalence) of pregnant school girls in their schools was not officially known by the Muslim community leaders. As such there would be need for the Education Administrative Manager to find out if there were any cases of pregnancy in his schools rather than deny the existence of pregnancy cases outrightly.

For example, one out of the two Muslim-run secondary schools had cases of pregnancies with the more recent case occurring in 2012. Similarly, Kapele (2008) observes that Church-run schools in Southern Province did not keep records on pregnant girls too and it was difficult for the Church-run schools to give the exact number of pregnant school girls in their schools. The Muslims should have had proper records about the status of their school girls in all their schools. Only when the true record about pregnant school girls is available in the Muslim-run schools will the Muslims be able to find ways of dealing with the pregnant school girls' cases in their religious organisation (in order to reduce the current gender gap in the education sector).

Apart from the Education Administrative manager, a big number of ordinary Muslim members were also against the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy in the Muslim-run schools because it is against their teachings.

According to the Muslims, one solution to the problem would be to send away pregnant school girls to private or government schools where good morals were not emphasised. However, to send Muslim pregnant school girls away from Muslim schools would mean denying them the right to learn at a school of their choice.

It must be recalled that (from the findings) the head teacher who re-entered pregnant school girls used his own discretion when giving out school places to young mothers from other schools but not from the same school. This was unfortunate because the head teacher could have been more sincere in the way he dealt with the pregnant school girls within the school by informing the Education Administrative Manager of the prevalence of pregnancies in some Muslim-run schools like his so that the official position could be revised.

Muslim schools did not allow boys and girls to learn together in the same class room from the age of nine as a way of protecting the girls. However, separating the school girls from boys is not a guarantee that the school girls will avoid getting pregnant as they can still be impregnated by men outside schools. It would, therefore, be better to teach the girls and boys to obey the strict moral rules in addition to separating them.

Moreover, Muslims emphasised inculcating natural laws such as no sex outside marriage as a way of promoting human values. The views of the Muslims here are similar to our African and Zambian traditional views that girls should indulge in sexual activities only when they are married. It would, therefore, be right that the young generations are brought up with such knowledge. The young generation should be taught to abstain until they were married. Such knowledge might help in reducing the numbers of pregnant school girls in Zambia and eventually achieve what the School Re-entry Policy is supposed to achieve.

5.3 Evaluation of Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy

In this section one or two key idea from the description of each of the criteria stated in chapter one will be isolated for further discussion.

As may be recalled, the third objective of the study was to evaluate the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy. This evaluation was done using six criteria derived from policies pertaining to the education of girls and women and development.

The Christians and Muslims expected all members in their religious organisations to be morally upright. Therefore, school girls who fell pregnant were considered to have fallen short morally. In order to prevent girls from becoming pregnant, the Christians and Muslims separate the girls from boys at their learning institutions. However, although this was a reasonable and practical measure, it did not enhance morality among the girls and boys, neither was it a solution to the problem of school girl pregnancies. This is because the girls can still be made pregnant by men outside the school.

So the Christians and Muslims should use other more effective ways of inculcating moral values in the school girls and boys and preventing the unwanted pregnancies than separation of the two sexes. In fact it can be argued that the separation of girls from boys might be a way of promoting gender disparity. Therefore, Muslims and Christians should help to eliminate all forms of gender disparities by implementing the School Re-entry Policy because pregnant school girls would complete education just like the boys who had made

them pregnant. The School Re-entry Policy is another way of promoting equal opportunities for both boys and girls in the education sector.

Ideally, expelling the pregnant school girls may appear to be the correct decision as it may help reduce the number of pregnancies in these institutions. But expelling them without taking any other administrative action was unfair and did not help in increasing the number of educated girls and women in Zambia. For example, these pregnant school girls should be made to report those responsible for their pregnancies so that they could be counselled and cautioned. However, the study revealed that Christians seemed not to be interested in the males involved in these pregnancies as they did not follow the School Re-entry Policy Guidelines (MOE, 1997), which clearly spelt out how to deal with the boy responsible for pregnancy using the form called 'Commitment by male involved in pregnancy'. This form is supposed to be signed by a boy who is responsible for a pregnancy.

Once the male responsible for the pregnancy signs the form, he is expected to take full responsibility for the pregnant school girl. During or at the signing of this form the male is advised that the pregnant school girl is expected to re-enter school after giving birth and that the child should be cared for. The form is signed with the hope that the pregnant school girl will return to school after giving birth.

In light of this, if the male involved in the pregnancy is a pupil, the school should ensure that the boy signs the commitment letter and that he should also go on leave and resume school at the same time with the girl. In this way, gender disparities would be reduced because the boy would also stay away from school until the girl delivers. Kasonde-Ng'andu (2010) explains that the expulsion of pregnant school girls without meting out same punishment is another form of gender discrimination. So the Christian and Muslim could help eliminate this gender disparity by administering the commitment letter for the male responsible to the pregnancy.

The School Re-entry Policy, therefore, aims at giving a second chance to the pregnant school girls to complete their education despite their status. It is for this reason that the

Ministry of Education (1996) declared that all Education Boards should prepare actions to promote ways of equal opportunities of access in education for boys and girls. If equal opportunities of access in education are to be realised then Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy should change. It would be good if the Christians and Muslims came up with some measures to help pregnant school girls continue with schools in order to eliminate factors that hinder access, progression and accomplishment of girls in school.

The danger of Christians and Muslims not changing their official position on the School Re-entry Policy was that there could be a lot of pregnant school girls from their schools that might remain uneducated. Accordingly, the government of the Republic of Zambia (2006) and Ministry of Finance (2008) state that the government of Zambia was striving to attain the millennium development goal number 3 on education which aimed at eliminating gender disparities. Therefore, expelling the pregnant school girls contributed to the gender disparities as they did not get equal opportunities as boys in the education sector.

It must be noted that quality universal education is a right for all citizens in Zambia. Every child has a right to education and this can be achieved by giving both boys and girls equal opportunities to access and progress in their education in order to enhance their economic capabilities. This right is also reinforced by the policy of education for all (MOE, 2004). The Christian and Muslim stance not to accept the School Re-entry Policy has contributed to gender inequality in education. The policy clearly states that pregnant school girls have a right to education. For this reason, Christians and Muslims should respect the policy in order to give chance to all children to be in school.

The Ministry of Education (1996) notes that gender inequality in education can lead to gender gaps in the employment and participation in national development. Therefore, attitudes and values that can hinder access and participation should be removed in order to allow more girls and women become educated and get employed. This is because employers everywhere look for educated and qualified human resource. Elimination of the factors that hinder access and participation can help the government achieve gender equality and empower girls and women.

However, if the Christian and Muslim followed their own purpose of providing education they should also find ways and means to overcome challenges of having pregnant school girls in their quest to uphold morals in their institutions. Though this could be true about the pregnant school girls, the School Re-entry Policy was introduced to redeem the pregnant school girls. Kelly (1994) says society is required to change attitudes in expressing itself in firm determination without discriminating on the basis of gender.

On the other hand, the Christian and Muslim should understand that the pregnant school girls still need to access and participate in school. Therefore, they need to be given an opportunity to re-enter school and increase the number of educated girls and women who can contribute to national development. Carmody (2004) acknowledges that the School Re-entry Policy may cause disciplinary problems though it offers the pregnant school girls another opportunity which seems fair. Similarly, Christians and Muslims believe that the pregnant school girls can influence other girls in schools which might compromise discipline. In order to avoid this, Christian and Muslim are urged to include strategies in their own education policies which could help the pregnant school girls in their schools to access and participate in school. According to the editorial comment of *The Post* 2013, all education stake holders should find and address the root cause of school girls falling pregnant. This does not exclude the Christians and Muslims. Therefore, the Christians and Muslims should be part of the solution to reduce the number of pregnant school girls if more girls and women are to participate in national development.

In light of this, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MOESVTEE) encourages all education providers to give chance to the pregnant school girls to access education because they are still young and need to be helped to develop a career. This is the reason why the Ministry of Education continues to appreciate the important role played by all the voluntary education providers and will welcome and facilitate any extensions of their activities (MOE, 1996). This policy could give the Christian and Muslim an opportunity to discuss the issue of pregnant school girls with the government so that they could find other ways of helping the girls together.

In order to promote the right to education in Zambia, some negative historical factors should be eliminated. Some of these factors are: attitudes, values, beliefs and cultural. For example, girls are not expected to become pregnant outside marriage because it is considered immoral. Indeed, the Christian and Muslim too did not expect girls to be involved in sexual activities and become pregnant as it was against their teachings. This may explain why Christian and Muslim deny the pregnant school girls chance to re-enter school. However, this can be considered to be discrimination as girls lose the chance of completing their education.

Other negative historical factors which should be eliminated are early marriage, sexual cleansing, rituals and other customary practices which deny pregnant school girls the opportunity to access and participate in school. The official position of the Christian and Muslim of not accepting the School Re-entry Policy indirectly encouraged early marriages of the expelled pregnant school girls. The Christian and Muslim should not be part of the society's general view that a pregnant school girl is immoral and cannot be given another chance to continue with education and later participate in national development.

This chapter has discussed the findings of this study. Some of the many findings are that access to education for girls despite their status is the key to increasing their participation in the affairs of the country. In addition, the right to education is a very critical issue which enhances Zambia's social and economic development. Furthermore, the Christian and Muslim views of not accepting the School Re-entry Policy do not contribute to the girls and women's education and development. The next chapter presents the conclusion based on the findings of the study. It will also provide recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion based on the findings of the study of the Christian and Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia. It also makes some appropriate recommendations.

6.1 Conclusion

Christians and Muslims views on the School Re-entry Policy were discussed under the following headings; Christian views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia, Muslim views on the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia and How Christian and Muslim Views affect pregnant school girls' education and development?

The Christians and Muslims views on the School Re-entry were evaluated using six education policies pertaining to the education of girls and women and development. The policies that were used as criteria for evaluation were: a) elimination of all gender disparities within the education sector, b) right to education for all citizens of Zambia, c) empowerment of girls through education, d) improvement of literacy for girls and women through education, e) elimination of factors that hinder the access, progression and accomplishment of girls in schools, and f) access and participation.

From the findings and discussion of this study, it was evident that all the religious organisations were aware of the School Re-entry Policy. In spite of this, they were reluctant to implement it. Further, though Christians and Muslims had some cases of pregnancies they did not have any record to show the frequency of pregnancies in their schools. This was not good because lack of information about the pregnant school girls would make it difficult to view the problem in its right perspective.

The official position of the religious organisation not complying with the School Re-entry Policy for pregnant school girls was strongly defended. One of the major reasons was that they did not want to promote immoral behaviour among school girls. Secondly, they wanted to uphold the social teachings of the church and also to inculcate the idea of abstinence life style and self-respect. In spite of the various reasons given, expulsion of pregnant school girls contributed to the number of illiterate girls and women in the country.

However, there were some schools that were implementing the School Re-entry Policy. This helped in eliminating some forms of gender disparities within the education sector. This was because the schools saw the need to educate the pregnant school girls so that they could attain higher education and be empowered socially and economically. However, some Christians and Muslims believed that the School Re-entry Policy could only be implemented in government schools. In this case the right to education for all pregnant school girls would not be fulfilled. Every child has a right to education and this can be achieved if both boys and girls are given equal opportunities to access and progress in education in order to enhance their economic potential.

Furthermore, expelling pregnant school girls contributes to the gender disparities in the education sector which the government of Zambia was striving to attain through the millennium development goal number 3. This goal aims to eliminate all gender disparities in education. Therefore, Christian and Muslim should help the government to remove all forms of gender disparities in the education sector by implementing the School Re-entry Policy.

The problem of pregnant school girls is an old one in the education sector. It would be better if the Christians and Muslims came up with some measures which would find a solution to the cause of school girls falling pregnant. Only then would pregnant school girls be able to complete school. All factors hindering the access and participation, the right to education and empowerment of girls through education can be achieved if all education stake holders implemented the School Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

6.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the research findings and conclusion above, the following recommendations were made:

1. Christians and Muslims should give chance to the pregnant school girls to re-enter their schools in order to reduce the number of uneducated girls and women because education is a right for all citizens of Zambia.
2. Christians and Muslims should implement the School Re-entry Policy for pregnant school girls as this could improve girls and women's literacy in the country.
3. All education stake holders, Christian and Muslim inclusive, should work together to address the root cause of school girl pregnancies and eliminate all factors hindering girls' access and participation in education and national development.
4. The government should invite the Christian church mother bodies and the Muslims to discuss the best way the School Re-entry Policy can be implemented.

6.3 Recommendations for further study

A study that would establish the number of pregnant school girls from religious organisation-run schools who have been re-admitted into government schools would provide valuable information to studies related to the School Re-entry Policy.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE A (CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SECRETARIES AND MUSLIMS EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER)

NAME:.....

INSTITUTION:.....

POSITION:.....

1. (a) Do you have a record of pregnant girls in your schools?
.....
- (b) If the answer is 'yes,' would you mind giving me the statistics for this?
2. How do you deal with pregnant school girls in your schools?
.....
3. Are you aware of the School Re-entry Policy?
.....
4. What is your official position on the school Re-entry Policy?
.....
5. Do your schools comply with the government directive for all schools to implement the School Re-entry Policy?
.....
6. In your view what would be the best way to deal with pregnant school girls?
.....
7. Finally, do you have anything else to add to what we have discussed?
.....

THANK YOU

INTERVIEW GUIDE B (HEAD TEACHERS)

NAME:.....

INSTITUTION:.....

POSITION:.....

1. What has been the response to the School Re-entry Policy?
.....
.....
2. How effective has been the School Re-entry Policy?
.....
.....
3. Is the School Re-entry policy supported by all stake holders and interest groups in education?
.....
4. If not, what reasons do the non-supporters give for their positions?
.....
.....
5. What is your view on refusal to support the School Re-entry Policy by some stake holders?
.....
.....
6. Are there any measures in place to help pregnant school girls who fail to go back to school?
.....
.....
7. Do you have anything to add to what has been discussed?
.....
.....

THANK YOU

INTERVIEW GUIDE C (ORDINARY RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION MEMBERS)

NAME.....

INSTITUTION.....

POSITION.....

1. Are there cases of girls falling pregnant in your religious organisation school?
2. Are you aware of the School Re-entry Policy?
3. What do you say about the School Re-entry Policy?
4. What do the community members say about the School re-entry policy?
5. Finally, do you have anything else to add to what we have discussed?

THANK YOU