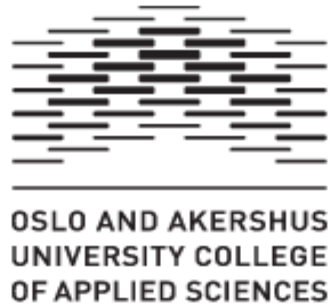


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An investigation into the way African Traditional Religion as a form of Indigenous Knowledge is taught in the two Senior Secondary School Religious Education Syllabuses in Zambia: A case of two Schools in Southern Province in Zambia.



Master thesis

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## **ABSTRACT**

African Traditional Religion, ATR, forms part of African Indigenous Knowledge. The two senior secondary school Religious Education syllabuses in Zambia have a component of African traditional religion or beliefs which the learners are supposed to understand and compare with other religious traditions in the syllabuses. The other religions in the syllabuses are Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. This study sets out to explore how ATR is actually taught and learned in class so as to ascertain whether traditional beliefs are appreciated and given space in the Western hegemonic kind of education.

To get full understanding of the position of ATR in the Religious Education syllabuses, a mixed data collection strategy was employed to allow for methodological triangulation to achieve greater validity and reliability. Document analysis of pupils' text books and teachers' handbooks was done. In addition, semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers, pupils and the Religious Education subject specialist. A questionnaire was also administered to some pupils to augment the responses obtained through semi-structured interviews with pupils. Lastly, classroom ethnography was done to observe the actual teaching of ATR in Religious Education.

Findings of the study show that African Traditional Religion is not given due attention in the syllabuses. To begin with, most of the content of ATR in the pupils' textbooks is presented in a manner which suggests that the religion or belief is dead and no longer applicable in present day Zambia. Secondly, some teachers are not conversant and willing enough to teach this body of knowledge to the pupils. On the other hand, while a small proportion of the pupils in the study did not see the need to learn this part of the Religious Education syllabus, the majority acknowledged that ATR would be beneficial to their lives if it was properly taught to them.

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## ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CLT	Christian Living Today
CSO	Central Statistics Office
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
RE	Religious Education
RI	Religious Instruction
SDA	Seventh Day Adventists

## **CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **1. 1 Introduction**

Religious Education, according to Cheyeka and Chita, is one of “the oldest if not the first subject introduced in formal education that came with the missionaries and colonialists” (2012, p. 18). It is also one of the subjects on the Zambian education curriculum which is taught from Grade one to University level for those who opt to study it at a higher level. The subject is offered as one of the compulsory subjects from grade 1-9. From grade 10-12, it is an optional subject in many government schools but a compulsory one for church-run grant-aided schools.

Over the years the Religious Education syllabuses offered at various learning stages have been developed into educational syllabuses which are multi-faith, interfaith, multicultural and suitable for a liberal democracy. While there is only one syllabus from grade one to grade seven and another one at junior secondary school, grades 8 & 9, there are two syllabuses running at the same time for senior secondary school level, Grades 10-12. The focus of this study is on the two senior secondary school syllabuses. My main concern is to explore how African Traditional Religion, ATR, as a form of Indigenous knowledge, is approached and taught in the two syllabuses.

In this chapter I discuss the background to my undertaking this study on the status of African Traditional Religion in Zambian senior secondary school syllabuses for RE and explain what kind of Religious Education is offered in the Zambian senior secondary schools. In addition I will explore the relationship between Indigenous knowledge and African Traditional Religion. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the objectives of the study, its purpose and the research questions that guided the collection of data, followed by justification for the research. Since the Christian Churches seem to be some of the principal players in the Religious Education discourse, I have given some information about churches in Zambia. To give my readers a better perspective of the places in which I carried out my research, I have included a brief on the

location of my research sites. I have ended this chapter with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

*Educating Our Future*, the current Zambian national policy document on education, states that one of the goals of education is to “produce a learner capable of appreciating Zambia’s ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and uphold national pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 5).

This goal indicates the importance that the Zambian government attaches to indigenous knowledge as a vital element in the formation of an all-round educated person. Consequently, Zambia offers an educational Religious Education which takes into consideration the traditional Zambian beliefs as an important component among other religions (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009, p. iv).

The practical aspect of the teaching of Religious Education has, however, revealed that Zambian indigenous beliefs do not get the due attention in the syllabuses and the actual teaching (Ziwa, J, 2007). It is a concern that all the three other religious traditions in the syllabuses, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, feature more than Zambian religious tradition. It can be argued that strictly speaking these religions are foreign to Zambian tradition and that the Zambian children ought to be exposed more to their indigenous beliefs than to the foreign ones. These are complex issues and will be discussed more thoroughly later.

It is against this background that I want to explore how Zambian traditional beliefs and practices are faring in the two Religious Education syllabuses for senior secondary schools. Concern has been raised by earlier researchers ( Cheyeka,2007; Haambokoma,2007; Ziwa,2007) that Zambian traditional beliefs are marginalized in the syllabuses to the extent that some teachers and pupils even think this segment of corpus of knowledge should completely be eliminated from the syllabuses. I now want to look at the way Religious Education, hereafter referred to as RE, has evolved over the years.

### 1.2.1 The history of Religious Education in Zambia

Religious Education as a subject in the Zambian education curriculum has gone through three main stages of transformation to be at this stage where the country now has two RE syllabuses at the senior secondary school level (Henze,J, 1994). I am using ‘curriculum’ to refer to all the courses of study which are taught in school, while ‘syllabus’ is restricted to a particular subject. Mulenga (2008) calls a syllabus as a subsection of the curriculum with emphasis on what content is to be taught while the curriculum is wider.

The first stage is *the Denominational stage* which starts from the time the Missionaries first arrived in the then Northern Rhodesia in the early 1900s and goes up to the late 1960s. This stage applied mostly to the primary school section which was the one available for the indigenous Zambians.

The first primary schools in Zambia were established by Christian Missionaries. In the primary schools, the subject was first taught as Religious Instruction, RI, and was taught by Missionaries as part of their evangelization. In these schools, all the pupils learnt Religious Instruction as per the Mission organisation running that particular school and followed the same denominational principle. In government primary schools, when it was time for RI, the pupils, who were mostly Christians, broke into separate groups according to their religious denominations and were attended to by someone from their Church, priest or pastor, or a teacher in the school who belonged to that denomination (Ziwa, J, 2007, p. 35).

The few Secondary schools that were there during the denominational stage taught Bible Knowledge based on the Cambridge University syllabus. It is worth noting that Cambridge University was the Examining body of Zambian School Certificate Examinations up to 1979. Bible Knowledge, as the name suggests, put emphasis on the understanding or memorizing of the Bible.

The second stage in the history of Religious Education is *the Ecumenical stage* which ran through the 1970s (Henze,J, 1994). This is the stage when churches, prompted by the government, agreed to come up with a common syllabus for both primary and junior secondary school levels. In

1972, the government introduced an RE primary school syllabus which was accepted by all churches. For junior secondary school, Grades 8 and 9, an East African Religious Education syllabus called 'Developing in Christ' was used. A Zambian supplement of this syllabus was adopted by all Churches in the junior secondary school level in 1973. Later, in 1975, Zambia, together with Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda came up with a syllabus called 'Christian Living Today', CLT, which gradually replaced the Cambridge Bible Knowledge (Simuchimba, 2004, p. 91). The 'Christian Living Today' syllabus covered four dimensions, namely; 'Present situation' which looks at what is obtaining in the life of the pupils or the society in which they live; 'African tradition' which helps the pupils examine the theme they are learning in the light of African indigenous beliefs. The third dimension is Christian Church history, and lastly Bible teachings. The themes in the CLT syllabus, and subsequently in Syllabus 2044, are based on the survey which was carried out concerning the problems and aspirations of East African youths shortly after their countries got independent (Mujdrlica,J, 2004, p. 101). So each theme in the syllabus is covered under these four dimensions.

The third stage in the development of RE, according to Henze, is called *the Educational stage*. At the senior secondary school level, which is the focus of this thesis, two major changes happened to the RE syllabus in 1984. Firstly, the subject was renamed as 'Spiritual and Moral Education' and made more educational and Zambian in its approach. The examples given in the textbooks were particularised to Zambia. In some cases, instead of referring to African tradition, it was narrowed to indigenous Zambian beliefs, which were explicitly referred to as a religious tradition. It will also be noticed in this thesis that African tradition is interchangeably referred to as Zambian tradition in the syllabus. This is, of course, with the understanding that Zambian tradition is a subset of African tradition. The aim of the subject was broadened and spelt out as:

The main aim of Spiritual and Moral Education is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia, namely; Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian beliefs and Islam (Curriculum Development Centre, 1984, p. 4).

It is worth mentioning that although the name of the subject was officially changed to Spiritual and Moral Education, the subject is still popularly referred to as 'Religious Education'.

The second major change at secondary school level was that *two* syllabuses were born, replacing the previous *one*. The first syllabus is the Zambian modification of the previous ‘Christian Living Today’ which was code named ‘Syllabus 2044’. This syllabus had basically the same teaching dimensions as CLT, except the now narrowing down of African tradition to examples from Zambian tradition. CLT had broadened its African tradition to mostly East Africa, which is Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The other addition to the new syllabus was Islam and Hinduism which were not part of CLT. The second syllabus, code named ‘Syllabus 2046’, is a modification of the earlier discarded Cambridge Bible Knowledge. Some stakeholders in the education system, specifically the Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, felt Syllabus 2044 was too much pro-Catholic and had included a lot of Catholic philosophy; so they designed Syllabus 2046 “in line with their long tradition of Bible teaching and their belief in the divine infallibility and authority of the scriptures” (Masterton, 1987, p. 126). Syllabus 2046 has four main learning stages. Its main focus is the Bible, and so the first stage is recalling the Bible content. This is followed by statement of spiritual and moral Bible values, or the interpretation of the Bible. The third stage is relating the Bible values to the present situation. The last stage is where the Christian values are compared with the Zambian tradition, Hinduism and Islam.

It has been observed that nearly all Catholic grant-aided schools offer Syllabus 2044 to their pupils. All other Church-run schools prefer Syllabus 2046 to 2044. To strike a balance some government schools offer both syllabuses to their pupils. If they have four classes doing RE, for example, two may take one and the other two the other. Some government schools however, opt for only one Syllabus, which is 2046. There does not seem to be any government school which offers only Syllabus 2044. I will later explore the reasons for this situation. It is worth mentioning, at this stage, that the teachers of RE have great influence on which syllabus they would offer to their pupils. There are some who say that even though they are trained RE teachers and are capable of teaching both syllabuses, they would not like to teach the other syllabus apart from the one they prefer. Some school administrators too play a major role concerning which syllabus would be offered in their schools. It must further be noted that Churches have contributed to the perpetuation of the existence of the two syllabuses instead of one. Cheyeka and Chita blame this on the Missionaries. They claim that:

Although missionaries have been credited for having developed the RE curriculum, they carry the blame for having introduced two different syllabuses at high school level, a most undesirable and retrogressive thing in the eyes of many scholars of RE in Zambia (Cheyeka,A & Chita,J, 2012, p. 19).

### **1.2.2 African Traditional Religion in Religious Education**

The first secondary school RE syllabus which incorporated ATR was introduced in Zambia in 1971. It was, however, not until 1978 that the ATR perspective was fully included in the secondary school RE syllabus. There are several reasons advanced for the promotion of ATR in RE. Ragsdale states that:

The aim of teaching ATRs was no longer to discuss them as foreshadowing of the gospel or to create African consciousness. They were to be taught as a dialectical interchange with Christianity and other religions in Zambia such as Hinduism and Islam. Thus pupils are made to study the differences in the system of values, concepts and attitudes of these religions (Ragsdale, J.P, 1986, p. 90).

As can be noticed, Ragsdale uses ATR in the plural form instead of the singular form. I will discuss this aspect later below.

However, Muller, in her unpublished dissertation, contends that teaching and learning ATR was still “important for Africans in shaping their identity” (Muller, L.F, 2004, p. 6). At the same time she appears to be in agreement with Ragsdale’s statement above when she claims that the study of ATR in RE fosters intercultural encounters among the learners. Nevertheless, the inclusion of ATR in RE has not been without controversy.

There have been opposing reactions to ATR in general. Within the Zambian society, there are some groups and individuals that see the value of ATR and want to promote it. Conversely, there are those that are appalled by it and want to eliminate it from society. I now proceed to exploring the two opposing reactions to the existence or promotion of ATR.

Among those who recognize the value of ATR is a movement called the ‘Black consciousness.’ This can be regarded as a political movement emanating from the pre-independence era, that is, before 1964. At that time, African identity was used as a uniting force to fight colonialism.

While the movement, as such, may not be recognized as still existing, the mentality which was planted then still continues to filter through the minds of some people. Within this mentality, ATR still plays a big role in the lives of Africans as forging unity.

The Zambian traditional healers are the second group which supports the promotion of ATR. Traditional healers believe in the spiritual world of the traditional African. Muller asserts that, “traditional healers believe that ATR delivers an indispensable healing method” and that the traditional healers cannot even survive without the presence of ATR (Muller, L.F, 2004, p. 20).

The existence of traditional healers and their support of ATR, however, seem to have alienated some African Independent churches, particularly in Zambia, from their support of ATR. An African Independent Church is a “church which has been founded in Africa, by Africans, and primarily for Africans (Turner, H. W., 1967, p. 17). Muller explains that the conflict between traditional healers and African Independent Churches is all about the use of the word ‘spirit’ which in one of the local languages of Zambia is referred to as ‘*muzimu*’. *Muzimu* is singular, while the plural form is *Mizimu*. The fact that the traditional healers carry out their practices with, what they claim, the intervention of the spiritual powers of the living dead whom they call *mizimu* makes the African Independent churches instruct their members not to follow or believe in ATR. The Independent churches claim that salvation is only through the spirit of Jesus Christ which they too locally refer to as *muzimu* (Muller, L.F, 2004). It can then be concluded that Independent churches and traditional healers seem to be in competition over the use of ‘*muzimu*’ and because of this they pull ATR in opposite directions, that is one supports its perpetuation while the one would want it effaced.

Another group which does not support the existence of ATR, but for different reasons than the Independent churches mentioned above, is that of some Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. Muller gives an example of Plymouth Brethren commonly referred to as Christian Missions in Many Lands. She states that:

The Brethren, a fundamental protestant religion, do not allow their members to drink or dance. As carriers of Western culture and Christian religion, they subscribe to the view that if one accepts Christianity, many aspects of ATR become unacceptable. For African orthodox Christians it is like European



Christians forbidden to attend any event in which dancing, drumming and traditional singing occurs. The Christians fear that with these activities, muzimu or evil spirits will be invoked (2004, p. 19).

Quite a good number of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in Zambia are of the above view.

The third group that may be identified as opponents of ATR are the Feminists. One of the leading Feminist groups in Zambia today is 'Women for Change' which is a Non- Governmental organization which champions the interests of women in society. Within this group we find extremists as well as moderates. The moderate feminists accept and respect the existence of ATR but condemn the traditional practice of subjugation of women through some beliefs and practices of sexuality and marriage. They contend that women's liberation is hampered by a strong belief and practice in African tradition. For example, they claim that the traditional practice of paying bride price, *lobola*, subjects women to a lower position in the marriage relationship. Furthermore, the traditional concept of the marriage relationship between man and woman as that of the garden owner and the garden, respectively, is claimed by the feminists, to demean the status of women. The garden concept portrays the man as owning the wife. The seed he plants there belongs to him, not the garden. Furthermore, the garden owner can possess more than one garden, but the garden cannot be owned by two people at the same time. Consequently, the feminists argue that the concept, in addition, gives authority to husbands to get away with unfaithfulness to their wives which they cannot tolerate when it happens to their wives whom they regard as their possessions.

The foregoing reactions to ATR have had an impact on the integration and acceptance of ATR in the RE syllabuses, as evidenced by some Pentecostal churches not favouring Syllabus 2044 which seems to have more content on ATR. This, in part, has even contributed to having two syllabuses instead of one at senior secondary school level with one of them underplaying the ATR perspective.

Having looked at how African Traditional Religion has been integrated in the teaching of Religious Education in Zambia and the various reactions to its being part of the body of knowledge, I now move to one institution which has remained a principal player in the determination of what kind of Religious Education is offered in Zambian schools, the Church

### 1.2.3 Christian churches in Zambia

There are many Christian churches in Zambia. There are mainline churches like the Catholic, the Anglican, Seventh Day Adventists, the Salvation Army, the New Apostolic Church and the United Church of Zambia. In addition, there are a good number of churches that fall under the umbrella of Pentecostals. Pentecostal churches are those which stress the gifts of the Holy Spirit, like speaking in tongues, and personal experience of the Holy Spirit in the individual Christian life. Pentecostalism started to manifest itself in Zambia in the 1970s. The rate at which Pentecostal churches are mushrooming has necessitated the creation of two umbrella bodies to harness them. Cheyeka mentions that in 1998, there were 74 Pentecostal churches under Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) while in 2001, between 800 and 1000 Pentecostal churches were registered under the Independent Churches Organization of Zambia (ICOZ), an umbrella body which was created to take care of the huge number of churches which EFZ could not conveniently administer (Cheyeka, A, 2005). While these two umbrella bodies exist, the individual churches still maintain their independent characteristics as Pentecostal congregations. The rate, at which these churches have come up, especially from 1991, is amazing. Kapembwa (2006) links this to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation in 1991 by the then President, Frederick Chiluba, who was a 'born again' Christian himself. Although Zambia is constitutionally a Christian nation, the other religions have total freedom of worship, and there is no form of discrimination based on religion.

Even though it is widely acknowledged that many Pentecostal churches in Africa are patterned after American Pentecostal churches, Pobe points out that a good number of them have no semblance of the American type but they only reflect an "African dissatisfaction with Christianity that is too cerebral and does not manifest itself in acts of power in the spirit and spirit possession" (Pobe, J & Ostelu, 1988, p. 34). These are the African Independent Churches, which are sometimes referred to as 'African Initiated' or 'African Indigenous' churches. Some of these African Independent churches in Zambia are breakaways from the mainline Missionary churches like the Catholic Church but claim a distinctive African identity unlike the missionary churches, while others have Pentecostal origins.

It must be pointed out that the bulk of the Christian churches still follow the Western missionary style of spirituality, prayer and worship. For instance, the Seventh Day Adventist, SDA, worship services in Zambia follow those of the parent Church in the USA. Similarly, the hymns sang by the Baptists, New Apostolic Church, Pilgrim Wesleyan Churches, to mention a few, are from the standard hymnal from the parent churches in Europe or America, but with only words translated into the local languages. The same goes with the Catholic Church. While the latter has incorporated a lot of locally composed hymns into their worship, the order of the Mass or service is according to the universal church. Colson (2006) points out that these local churches prefer affinity with the universal church. She states that:

The knowledge that they are worshipping as people do in Europe and America gives meaning to the service and provides a sense of belonging to an international community which many Zambians wish to emulate or exploit (2006, p. 240).

However, there has been some degree of inculturation taking place in some of these mainline churches. It should also be noted that a good number of the youths tend to have an inclination towards the modern Pentecostal churches. This has been partly because of their exposure to the American tele-evangelists like T.D. Jakes of Potters House, Joyce Meyer and others. The free-style worship and attention to personal material advancement seem to be an attraction to the youth that they find in Pentecostal churches as Tierney (1985) points out that:

There are many elements in Evangelical spirituality that attract young people. It is in stark contrast with the anonymity and ritualistic nature of mainline Christian worship. It is much more a shared spirituality; non-clerically dominated and certainly more personally exciting (Tierney, M, 1985, p. 19).

The Pentecostal churches' attention to personal material advancement has in some way influenced the way the current senior secondary school RE syllabuses is perceived, especially in relation to ATR. I will discuss this later.

#### 1.2.4 Muslims and Hindus in Zambia

Zambia is also home to some Muslims and Hindus. Leaving out ATR, in the very strict sense of religion, Islam boasts of being the second largest to Christianity and accounts for about 1%, followed by Hinduism, which is less than 1% of the total Zambian population (CSO, 2010). Unlike Hinduism which has no indigenous Zambians within its fold, Islam has a lot of indigenous Zambians who profess the religion.

Having looked at the background to the study where I have outlined the history of Religious Education in Zambia and how adherence to different religions has affected its present state, I now wish to examine the statement of the problem.

### 1.3 Statement of the problem

While the policy of the Ministry of Education is that indigenous knowledge is important in the education system (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 5), not much is known about the actual implementation in the classroom. This study aims at making a follow up on earlier studies made in relation to ATR in the Zambian RE syllabuses. The first study is Cheyeka's (2007) who discussed the danger of teaching ATR only in comparison with Christianity. He claims that ATR in both present RE syllabuses is not given the attention it deserves as indigenous knowledge. He states that traditional religions "should be taught as they are without simultaneously comparing them to other religions" (Cheyeka, 2007, p. 48). If Cheyeka's argument about the actual teaching of ATR are extended to the other religions within the syllabus, he would be in agreement with Chidester's contention that "the primary aim of multi-tradition approach, however, is to provide students with an opportunity to learn about religion by studying actual religions" (1999, p. 45). The views here are that each religion should first be taught before it can be compared to other religions. Cheyeka further endeavours to correct the confusions in the terminologies which are used in the teaching of ATR. He calls for the repositioning of ATR in the RE discourse. He asserts that:

ATRs are part of the mental cultural heritage of indigenous Zambians and are thereby a potential source of identity and consciousness, morality and spirituality.

The teaching of these religions therefore should partly be for the learners to see their practical aspects and not only the theoretical (2007, p. 62).

Like Ragsdale, Cheyeka prefers to use ATR in the plural form. In Chapter two, I will explain why some scholars prefer the plural form to a more common singular form.

The second study was done by Haambokoma who looked at the “*Pupils’ and Religious Education teachers’ perspectives on RE in Zambia: The case of Lusaka schools*” (Haambokoma, N. M, 2007, p. 96). Haambokoma targeted eleven schools in the City of Lusaka, capital city of Zambia. In his study, he captured 3 government schools, 3 Mission grant-aided schools and 5 private schools. A total of 185 pupils and 36 teachers were interviewed. The study indicated that among those pupils doing syllabus 2044 only 16% indicated that ATR was important and necessary body of knowledge while 84% did not see the need for the inclusion of ATR in the syllabus. Haambokoma states that “findings show that pupils consider African tradition and Church history to be irrelevant to them” (2007, p. 101). Teachers, too, considered the African tradition dimension to be ancient and less interesting. As for Syllabus 2046, which has less ATR content than Syllabus 2044, 22% stated that it was irrelevant to do the comparison of Christian values with Hinduism, Islam and African tradition. This study shows that ATR is the least appreciated dimension in the teaching and learning of RE.

Writing about RE teaching methods in Zambian senior secondary schools, Ziwa, similarly, acknowledges the low position that ATR has in RE. She states that “the methodologies should encompass and explore into the beliefs and practices of ATR which has received less importance than other religions” (Ziwa, J, 2007, p. 42).

The last two studies cited here both end at only acknowledging the raw deal that ATR receives in the RE discourse. Cheyeka’s paper appears to be on a philosophical level and appeals to teachers to do justice to ATR but does not come from a lived classroom experience or reaction of the pupils and teachers. So, this project sets to probe into the question of why ATR in Zambian senior secondary school Religious Education seems to be relegated to a position lower than even “foreign” religions. Unlike the previous studies I have referred to, my study includes observations of RE classes in both urban and rural schools.

## **1.4 Objectives of the study and research questions**

The title of my study is “An investigation into the way African Traditional Religion as a form of Indigenous Knowledge is taught in the two Senior secondary school Religious Education syllabuses in Zambia: A case of two schools in Southern Province in Zambia.”

The study has three main objectives:

- i. To explore the content of African Traditional Religion in Religious Education text books and to see how it is put to use in the teaching and examination of senior secondary school Religious Education.
- ii. To explore how teachers, pupils and the subject specialist at the Curriculum Development Centre view the two Religious Education syllabuses in relation to African Traditional Religion.
- iii. To find out the views of teachers and pupils on the methods used to teach ATR in Religious Education.

To achieve these objectives, I set for myself six research questions to guide me in the data collection process. These are:

- i. How is ATR represented in the two Zambian syllabuses and how is the content of ATR represented in the pupils’ text books and the teachers’ handbooks?
- ii. How is ATR examined in the Grade 12 School Certificate Examinations?
- iii. How do the teachers view the syllabuses in relation to ATR?
- iv. How do the pupils view the syllabuses in relation to ATR?
- v. How does the subject specialist at the Curriculum Development Centre view the syllabuses in relation to ATR?
- vi. What are the views of teachers and pupils on methods used to teach ATR in Religious Education?

## **1.5 Justification of the study**

Examining the two RE syllabuses and seeing how ATR is represented in the books and taught in the Zambian senior secondary schools provide enough justification to carry out this study. It is hoped that this study will provide some data which, if taken up later for further research, can change the way indigenous knowledge is considered in the Zambian education system in general, and in particular bring about proper infusion of ATR in the RE syllabuses. The earlier studies relating to Zambian RE, as cited previously, have only pointed out that ATR is the least appreciated, by teachers and pupils, of all the religions in the syllabuses. This study, therefore, goes further by trying to establish what causes this state of affairs.

## **1.6 Location of the study**

The research was conducted in two schools that are situated in two districts of the Southern province of Zambia. Zambia's population, according to the 2010 national census, is 13,046,508 of which 6,394,455 are male and 6,652,053 are female. The country has an annual growth of 2.8%. Although the country is said to be one of the most urbanized countries in Sub-Saharan, only 39% of the population lives in urban areas while 61% is still in rural areas (CSO, 2010).

The urban district from which I picked my urban school for the study has a population of 142,034 and a population density of 204.4. Like many urban areas, it is a melting pot of all tribes in Zambia with the majority of them earning their livelihood through salaried employment in government offices, parastatal companies, trading and hospitality service business.

The rural district from which I selected my rural school for the research has a population of 101,589 with population density of 17.9. It is one of the most rural parts of Zambia but boasts of having the largest herd of cattle in a single district of Zambia. While one could presume that the fact that there are so many cattle in the area the district has a solid economic background, the cattle are kept with a traditional mindset of just being a sign of wealth and a basis of prestige. One villager may have as many as a thousand herds of cattle but living in pole and mud house.

I chose to do my research in both urban and rural schools because I wanted to establish whether the indifference to ATR, as exemplified by Haambokoma's study of some Lusaka schools (2007), was only an urban phenomenon. This will be further discussed in the methodology chapter.

## **1.7 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis has six chapters. In the first chapter, I have given the general background of the study by giving an overview of Religious Education in Zambia. I then moved on to look briefly at how ATR has been infused in RE and the various reactions to the inclusion of this perspective in the subject. Furthermore, the chapter gave the statement of the problem, provided the objectives of the study and the research questions. Finally the chapter provided the justification of the study and gave the structure of the presentation of the study.

Chapter two provides the conceptual and theoretical framework which anchors the study. The chapter starts by looking at the relationship between tradition and modernity before looking at literature which links African traditional religion to Indigenous knowledge. The chapter later outlines some literature which justify that religion plays a role in identity and character formation. In addition, I have outlined how Religious Education can be effectively taught in a multifaith society. To this end, I have given some examples of countries which offer multi-faith Religious education syllabuses.

Chapter three looks at the methods that were employed in the collection and analysis of data. The research design which was used is stated here. Added to this, the chapter provides information on the study population, sampling procedures, research sites and specific data collection procedures that were used. The chapter ends with information on data analysis, reflexivity, validity and reliability and then discusses ethical issues before ending with limitations and difficulties of the study.

Chapter four is a presentation of the findings from the field. Data collected through document analysis, classroom non-participant observation, in-depth interviews and questionnaires form the body of this chapter.



In chapter five, I analyze and discuss my findings presented in chapter four, relate them to the background chapter and place them within the conceptual framework of the study.

Finally, in Chapter Six, I summarize and conclude the results of the study.

Having outlined the background to my research, I now move to the next chapter which looks at the literature that grounds my study.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I provide relevant literature that forms the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Arising from the fieldwork, it has become clear to me that the informants' views express tension between tradition and modernity. I, therefore, begin this chapter by surveying literature under this concept. Since African Traditional Religion has been identified as one aspect of indigenous knowledge (Mbiti, 1991), I will explore literature on indigenous knowledge with a deliberate bias on religion, morality and spirituality, which are relevant to my study. Following this, I find it befitting that I look at religion and its role in identity and character formation. I end this chapter by looking at some literature and previous studies relevant to Religious Education as a subject in school curriculum in a multi-faith society. This chapter is necessary for an enhanced understanding and discussion of the findings, as will appear in Chapter Five.

While many scholars have contributed some materials to the literature relevant to my study, I have only selected a few that this thesis can accommodate. I have picked on these particular scholars because their views and scholarly work help me explore and investigate my topic of study effectively. I now give a brief account of the scholars whose work I have referred to extensively. This background is necessary because it establishes these scholars' viewpoints.

**Breidlid Anders** is a professor of International Education and Development at Oslo and Arkershus University College of Applied Sciences. He has worked and done research in South Africa, Sudan, South Sudan, Chile and Cuba. He has special interest in Indigenous knowledges.

**Cheyeka Austin** is the Head of Religious Studies Department at the University of Zambia. He did his studies at the University of Zambia, Birmingham University and University of Malawi. His PhD dissertation was on "Church, State and Political ethics in a Post-colonial state: a case of Zambia." He has done a lot of research on Churches and their influence in Zambian society. He has a special interest in studies about Independent Churches in Zambia.

**Colson Elizabeth** is an American anthropologist. She went to Zambia in 1946 to work for Rhodes Livingstone Institute now called the Institute of Economic and Social Research at the University of Zambia. She first worked among the Tonga people of Southern province of Zambia and for sixty years, she continued to return to the same villages where she lived with the people and studied them in an ethnographic way.

**Gyekye Kwame** is Professor of Philosophy at University of Ghana and a visiting professor of Philosophy and African-American studies at Temple University. He is a graduate of Harvard University.

**Magesa Laurenti** is a Catholic priest and one of Africa's best known Catholic theologians. He served as a professor of Moral theology at Catholic Institute of Higher Education in Nairobi, Kenya. He now serves as a Parish priest in Tanzania. He is a product of Western education and has a rare combination of promoting Christianity as well as African Traditional religion.

**Mbiti John** is a Kenyan Christian religious philosopher. He is an ordained Anglican priest. He got his education from Cambridge University.

**Kincheloe Joe:** His childhood and family background where his parents were committed to social justice concerning race, class and gender in USA provided a basis for his bias in his future academic work. "Kincheloe developed a unique way of seeing the world grounded on his empathy with the perspectives of those who suffered at the hands of dominant power blocs. He founded the Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for critical Pedagogy. ([www.joekincheole.com/about](http://www.joekincheole.com/about)) retrieved 6/3/13.

**Semali Ladislaus** is Professor of Education at Pennsylvania State University in Learning and Performance Systems Department. He is currently the Co- director of Interinstitutional Consortium for Indigenous Knowledge ([www.ed.psu.edu/educ/adult-education/faculty/dr-ladislaus-ladi-m-semali](http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/adult-education/faculty/dr-ladislaus-ladi-m-semali)) retrieved 6/3/13.

## 2.2 Tradition and modernity

As alluded to in the introduction above, I saw some of the responses of my informants as being influenced by their perception of modernity. In other responses I saw Christianity, which is seen as a vehicle for modernity (Colson, 2006, pp. 242–243), playing a pivotal role in the value formation of the informants. On this premise I have decided to explore the concept of modernity in relation to tradition. There were, of course, also a small number of informants that I saw were hinged on tradition as their driving force. I start with the definition of “tradition”.

Gyekye (1997) defines tradition as “a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another and accepted as authoritative or deferred to” (1997, p. 219). Patricia Weibust cited in Reagan (2005) sees tradition as having three distinct forms. She calls the first one the ‘historical tradition’ which accounts for what really took place or happened historically. The second form is called the ‘defined tradition’ which is what members of a particular culture believe to have taken place historically. Weibust calls the third form ‘contemporary tradition’ which posits the way in which the tradition is manifested in people’s lives today. Weibust further points out that tradition is dynamic and should be regarded as processes. She, thus, claims that at any particular time it is only a snapshot of a tradition that is seen (2005, pp. 10–11). These perceptions of tradition are important for this study and I will return to them in my discussion chapter.

Classifying ATR as irrelevant in the teaching of RE (Haambokoma, N. M, 2007) poses a question of whether this is a result of modernity or if some other phenomenon is at play. I will start by exploring this notion.

Gyekye’s discussion of tradition and modernity illuminates the predicament of a modern African, who is a product of Western hegemonic education, in relation to what is regarded as tradition. Discussing tradition, Gyekye states that:

...every society in our modern world is ‘traditional’ inasmuch as it maintains and cherishes values, practices, outlooks and institutions bequeathed to it by previous

generations and all or much of which on normative grounds it takes pride in ,  
boasts of and builds on (Gyekye, 1997, p. 217).

In the same breath, Gyekye emphasizes that "... modernity is not a rejection of the past..." and continues that modernity and tradition should not be seen as polar opposites (1997, p. 217). Similarly, commenting on the importance of upholding tradition, Breidlid (2002) calls a society without cultural or traditional roots an unstable society ( p. 38).

In an apparent reference to globalization and its effects on indigenous cultures, Gyekye points out that no culture has remained pure without any influence from external cultures. He is , however, quick to point out that what is of primary importance in this case is what a particular culture does with the external influences that are imposed on It (Gyekye, 1997, p. 26).

In addition, Gyekye claims that the issue of modernity and tradition has produced two opposing schools of thought. He calls them the revivalists and the anti-revivalists. To illustrate this he identifies Marcien Towa from Cameroon and Paulin Hantondji from Benin, for example, as belonging to the anti-revivalists who claim that traditional values are no longer relevant and that Africa should move quickly and discard its traditions to catch up with the developed world (Gyekye, 1997, p. 235). This may be where most of the respondents according to the study by Haambokoma I have referred to in Chapter One could belong. Among the revivalists, on the other hand, Gyekye gives an example of N.K. Dzobo who advocated for a return to the past using '*sankofa*', a term in the Akan language of Ghana which means "return to the past to move forward." According to Gyekye, "*Sankofa* is therefore a necessary journey into the past of our indigenous culture, so that we can march into the future with confidence and with a sense of commitment to our cultural heritage" (1997, p. 233). The revivalists, according to Gyekye, claim that returning to tradition gives cultural pride and identity which in turn bring about unity of the people (1997, p. 234). Within the group of revivalist, one may include Ivy Goduka of Central Michigan University who has been strong in the crusade for recognition of indigenous knowledge. She states that she is frustrated "at the extent to which philosophical foundations of indigenous ways of knowing have been in the past and are currently devalued and undermined within the academy" (Goduka, N, 2000, p. 63).

Making reference to some anthropological accounts of Dugald Campbell in Central Africa and R.S. Raltray in Ghana, Gyekye concludes that there are a lot of positive elements of the culture of Africa which now need to be “refined or pruned” (P.238). He, nevertheless, adds that “refinement and pruning would hardly result in the total effacement of that product of the cultural past” (1997, p. 238). This comment will be amplified in my discussion of the research findings. I now look at the Christian Churches which are perceived to be associated with modernity.

Elizabeth Colson (2006) points out that at the beginning of the twentieth century Christian missionaries entered into Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, and introduced Christianity which was shrouded in European culture, and which in turn was perceived to be the modern culture. She argues that even today the situation is still the same:

At the end of the century, churches are associated with modernity as they were early in the twentieth century when people saw mission teaching and patronage as providing a means to achieve the kinds of power exercised by Europeans who then dominated political and economic life (2006, p. 243).

The rejection of African tradition by some ‘modern Africans’ in preference to Western culture introduced to the Zambians through the missionary education is similarly pointed out by Simpson (2003) in his study of a secondary school in the Central Province of Zambia. Commenting on the same study, Colson concludes that:

Often the Western way of life is presented as linked to Christianity, and the boys studied by Simpson saw education as preparing them to become ‘Christian gentlemen.’ Those who live in rural areas share many of the same aspirations, and they resent being looked down upon by urban residents and the educated elite as backward countrymen and women (2006, p. 248).

Making a point about the tendency of the young ‘educated’ Africans rejecting traditional ways of life, Colson makes reference to the Tonga people of Gwembe valley in the Southern province of Zambia whom she studied for fifty years, from 1956-2006. She narrates how a woman school teacher got offended when she asked her when the last time she made an offering to the *mizimo* was. Colson recounts that:

This lady saw herself as an educated woman and a third generation Christian whose parents had never made an offering and it was offensive that anyone might

think she participated in what she regarded as heathen, uncivilized practices (2006, p. 251).

Here, Colson attributes this kind of reaction to the influence of the Christian churches which portrayed traditional practices as being heathen and backward. She, in addition, cites the Catholic Church in the area as having coerced the local people into conformity by its practices of charity, like helping the old people with food, clothing and medicines. Here, Colson seems to imply that material things Christianity had introduced to the local people, rather than the spiritual ones, kept them close to the church. Colson, nevertheless, brings in modernity itself as playing a role. She contends that, “other pressures came from the desire to be seen as modern, and the rituals associated with earlier Tonga life were not associated with modernity” (2006, p. 259). This last statement should be taken to mean that the first pressure the local people faced was getting access to the material things that the church was offering while the second one is much on the assertive side of being seen as modern.

Similarly, Brendan Carmody (2001) argues that at the beginning of the twentieth century, many Africans embraced the Christian religion not so much because of the conviction in what was preached but more so because Christianity was associated with the trappings of modernity, like Western education, a well-paying job and generally what can be called good life and proper assertion in what was referred to as ‘modern life’ (Carmody, B, 2001, p. 87).

Having pointed to some literature showing the apparent struggle or tension between tradition and modernity in the lives of many indigenous Africans, I will now look at the relationship between African Traditional Religion and African indigenous knowledge.

### **2.3 African Traditional Religion as part of African Indigenous Knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge is now getting some increased attention in the academic world. Since the focus of my study is African Traditional Religion, in this section of the chapter, I want to bring out some literature that relates ATR to indigenous knowledge so that, as indigenous knowledge is being promoted, the religious aspect of it would also be brought along.

The relationship between African Traditional Religion and African indigenous knowledge is a contested one. Some scholars like Horsthemke suggest that what the Africans indigenously profess is just belief or practices, not knowledge (Horsthemke, Kai, 2009, p. 11). By implication, Horsthemke is raising knowledge to a higher level than beliefs and practices. This is an issue I plan to explore deeper in the discussion chapter. In this section, however, I will refer to scholars who have a different understanding of African indigenous knowledge from Horsthemke, and who claim that there is a very strong relationship between the African indigenous knowledge, and practices, and what is referred to as African Traditional Religion. I will start by looking at the definition of indigenous knowledge.

### **2.3.1 Indigenous knowledge (IK)**

It must be pointed out from the onset that just as there is debate as to whether one should be referring to African Traditional Religion in the singular or in the plural form, a point I will get back to in the next section, there is similar dissention over the use of ‘indigenous knowledge’ IK. While many scholars use the singular term, some scholars like Breidlid refer to indigenous knowledge in the plural because, according to him, there are multiple knowledges (Breidlid, 2013, p. 2). This means that as diverse and varied as the indigenous people are, so are the knowledges that they hold. Supporting the plural use of knowledge, Reagan, too, claims that knowledge is something that individuals build based on their various experiences and backgrounds, and so “this means that each of us will construct our own knowledges in what is inevitably a unique manner... and thus the need for recognition of multiple perspectives (2005, p. 8). Here I will mostly use the popular singular form but with the understanding that there is not just one single indigenous knowledge even among Africans.

Semali and Kincheloe state that:

...indigenous knowledge reflects the dynamic way in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relationship to their natural environment and how they organize that folk knowledge of flora and fauna, cultural beliefs and history to enhance their lives ( Semali J.& Kincheloe,L 1999, p. 3).



Similarly, Dei defines indigenous knowledge as “Knowledge unique to a given culture or society characterized by the common sense ideas, thoughts, values of people formed as a result of the sustained interactions of society, nature and culture” (Dei, George J. Sefa, 2002, p. 339).

According to the two definitions above, indigenous knowledge is inherently part of a group of people and is naturally acquired and passed on to the next generations if other epistemologies have not influenced the indigenous people’s way of life. Breidlid makes reference to Chabal and Daloz’s description of African belief system as having no boundaries between the religious and the profane, and states that, “a definition of indigenous knowledge must therefore both account for the holistic, metaphysical foundations (worldviews) of indigenous knowledge systems and their various ramifications” (Breidlid, 2009, p. 141). In addition, making reference to his studies among the Xhosa of South Africa, Breidlid contends that “even though there are aspects linked to indigenous, cultural practices other than religion, religion and religious practices are central to the Xhosa epistemology” (Breidlid, 2009, p. 141). I contend that this applies to the Zambian situation as well. The definition of African Traditional Religion, which I discuss below, will show the close relationship between indigenous knowledge and African Traditional Religion even more.

### **2.3.2 African Traditional Religion (ATR)**

As I have earlier hinted, there is debate about whether African Traditional Religion should be referred to in the singular form or the plural. Some scholars, like Mbiti, have argued that Africans have many different beliefs and practices because they fall into many different ethnic groups and so one homogenous religion is not possible (1990). Similarly, Imasogie (1985) claims that there are as many as 800 ethnic groups or language groups in Africa and questions the prudence of talking of African traditional religion in the singular form (1985, p. 5). Others like Magesa, however, argue otherwise. The latter school of thought contends that while Africans have many and various ethnic groups and express their beliefs in many different ways, they, however, acknowledge only one God, the creator of everything including the spirits in their different forms (Magesa, 1997, pp. 24–26). Magesa, therefore, prefers the singular form of ATR. Both sides of the debate have some very valid points, but I would not like, in this study, to be

drawn deeply into this argument. I now go into the definition of ATR, electing to use the singular form.

Awolalu (1975) defines African Traditional Religion as “indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Africans.” He further defines the word traditional as “indigenous, that which is aboriginal or foundational, handed down from generation to generation, upheld and practised by Africans today” (Awolalu, J. O, 1975, p. 1). ATR, according to Awolalu, is practised even by individuals who claim to be Muslims or Christians. In addition, Awolalu indicates that religion is the most important influence in the life of Africans.

According to Mbiti, ATR is found in rituals, ceremonies and festivals, shrines, sacred places and religious objects, art and symbols, music and dance, proverbs, riddles and wise sayings, names of people and places, myths and legends, beliefs and customs (Mbiti, 1991, p. 1). He further argues that African Traditional Religion and life in general is not as it used to be because of the many changes that have taken place on the continent and its people, colonisation being the major one. He is, however, quick to point out that the changes are only on the surface and that the real Africanness is manifested in times of need (1990, p. 28). It is in this line of thought concerning times of need that Fritz Strenger contends that while ATR practices are not visible in many cases, “it remains a fact that the thinking of the people, especially in times of crises, like death, is very much linked to ethnic cultures and religious traditions” (Strenger, F, 2012).

### **2.3.3 The linkage between ATR and Indigenous knowledge**

Arising from the definitions of ATR and indigenous knowledge given above, it can be deduced that the relationship between African Traditional Religion and indigenous knowledge primarily lies in the lack of separation between the profane and the spiritual in traditional African life. In other words, the two have a holistic worldview. This situation even prompts Richard Nnyombi, a Catholic priest in Tanzania, to state that African Traditional Religion is difficult to define. He amplifies that:

Its influence covers all aspects of life, from before birth of a person to long after she has died. It is a way of life, and life is at its centre. It is concerned with life

and how to protect it and augment it. Hence the remark such as: For Africans, religion is literally life, and life is religion (Nnyombi, R, 2012, p. 1).

Nnyombi also confirms that members of established Christian churches adhere to ATR. For this reason Nnyombi contends that ATR will not die because it continues to be “a source of meaning, direction and security of the lives of many Africans, including followers of other established religious traditions” (2012, p. 1).

Mosha (1999), too, asserts that “African indigenous knowledge and African indigenous religions and spirituality are essentially linked” (1999, p. 210). With particular reference to the Chagga people of Tanzania, who are the focus of his study, Mosha generalises the fundamental aim of African indigenous knowledge as provision of intellectual and spiritual formation. Emphasizing the role of spirituality and social relationships, Mosha makes a claim that, “Indigenous knowledge is not indigenous knowledge... if the moral and spiritual aspects are missing” (1999, p. 217). In a similar way, commenting on the holistic nature of traditional African life, Breidlid and Nicolaisen state that in African traditional communities, “what is religious is also common, and what is common is also religious. Reality is not separated into different spheres, but is regarded as a unity” unlike in Europe where there is a clear distinction between the profane and the sacred (Breidlid,H & Nicolaisen T, 1999, p. 153).

Mbiti, as well, adds his voice to the description of the holistic life of an African:

Wherever the African is, there is his religion; he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop, he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or university; if he is a politician he takes it to the house of parliament (Mbiti, 1990, p. 2).

So far, I have introduced some scholars’ perception of African Traditional Religion and the linkage to African indigenous knowledge. I will now present in some more detail efforts that have been made by scholars to promote indigenous knowledge in education and academia, a move that I believe will bring along the religious part as well.

#### 2.3.4 Indigenous knowledge in education and academia

The status of indigenous knowledge in the academia is still not at the level some scholars would wish it to be. Expressing her misgivings about the situation in schools Mahia Maurial (1999) stated fourteen years ago that:

Schools have imposed a foreign curriculum that devalues indigenous knowledge... schools consecrated a Western worldview that isolates human beings from nature. This raised a conflict with indigenous knowledge because schooling broke holisticness; one of the bases of indigenous knowledge (1999, p. 59).

The value of indigenous knowledge has, however, started receiving attention by some scholars. This recognition is the starting point in the process of bringing and integrating indigenous knowledge into the academia.

Breidlid's (2013) statement of his intention of writing his latest book answers the question of why indigenous knowledge should be on the agenda in the transmission of knowledge even in the Western hegemonic set up. Breidlid states:

In this book I attempt to join those scholars and activists who want to resurrect indigenous knowledges from oblivion, both on the micro and macro level, by claiming that indigenous knowledges have important assets that need to be seriously considered in a world that is completely dominated by Western epistemology and knowledge production (Breidlid, 2013, p. 3).

Breidlid further points out that the awakening of Indigenous knowledge usage could start in a small way, for example, at a school level. His statement thus becomes relevant in the proper infusion of ATR in the Religious Education syllabuses in Africa.

In a similar way Waliggo gives justification for attention to be turned to indigenous knowledges. Contributing the foreword to Magesa's book, Waliggo postulates the folly of building a society on the basis of foreign cultures. He points out that:

No sane society chooses to build its future on foreign cultures, values, or systems. Every society is obliged to search deep in its own history, culture, religion and morality in order to discover the values upon which its development and

liberations, its civilization, and its identity should be based. To do otherwise is nothing than communal suicide (Magesa, 1997, p. xi).

Indigenous knowledge has been ignored for a long time because it is judged under Western lenses. What the indigenous people claim as knowledge is sometimes dismissed as mere beliefs or practices, especially that indigenous knowledge is rarely documented and lacks proven scientific specifications (Horsthemke, Kai, 2009, p. 11). Western epistemology is strong on science and the written text. Consequently, its hegemonic nature sometimes gives the impression that beliefs are not important and that if something is not written, then it does not exist. This notion puts African scholars in a dilemma. They believe that for them to be recognized they have to do their research in the Western hegemonic way, or they will be regarded as people only speaking to themselves without communicating with the outside world. Some African scholars claim that Western scholarly way is what would give them a voice in the academia and are, therefore, compelled to follow its principles. Kunnie Julian (2000) claims that lack of written records is one of the reasons some African scholars give for shunning research in Indigenous Knowledge. She, however, lashes at such African intellectuals and calls them ‘narrow minded’ for neglecting or ignoring ‘speaking documents’ and believing that there is nothing of substance in the history of the indigenous because it is not documented. Kunnie declares that, “these men(sic) simply prove that they do not know their country except through the eyes of Whites” (Kunnie, 2000, p. 158).

Breidlid’s intent for his latest book could bring a lot of improvement in the general perception of indigenous knowledge that some Western educated Africans have. It could be a wakeup call for them to take an active role in studying and understanding indigenous traditions, culture and practices so that they could then pass them on to the next generations. These educated Africans have the advantage of being heard over the uneducated. There is a general admiration of educated people, and what they say in society normally carries weight. On this premise, the educated people in society could be very effective promoters of indigenous knowledge. Vilakazi (2000) proposes a route to the realization of this, which is that, the educated should go back to the uneducated that have remained the custodians of this knowledge and learn from them. Vilakazi articulates that:

We are talking here about a massive cultural revolution consisting, in the first place, of intellectuals going back to the ordinary African men and women to

receive education on African culture and civilization (Vilakazi, H. W, 2000, p. 198).

Vilakazi proposes that the ‘uncertificated’ men and women should be incorporated as full and active participants in the process of rebranding Africa as a crucible of indigenous culture and knowledge. Vilakazi is advocating for the incorporation of the ordinary Africans in the promotion of indigenous knowledge because, according to her, the African intellectuals lack the spiritual and intellectual sympathetic relationship with the culture and civilization which many ordinary Africans cherish (2000, p. 198). In a similar way, discussing indigenous ecological knowledges, Breidlid argues that elders and men of titles, whom he calls “carriers of indigenous knowledges”, could play a pivotal role in preservation of the ecology (Breidlid, 2013, p. 39).

At a micro level, Kunnie suggests that schools develop a system of inviting elders to speak to classes on issues that are hinged on indigenous knowledges since these are the custodians of the African wisdom (Kunnie, 2000, p. 167).

Breidlid (2013), maintains that indigenous knowledge should be given some space in the public sphere, particularly in the social, economic and educational arena, more so that the Western hegemonic knowledge system has proved not to be the only solution in the woes that have begotten the world (2013, p. 45). Breidlid proposes complementarity of the two knowledge systems in equitable proportions according to locality; meaning that the South utilizes more of their indigenous knowledges which the West should respect. He seems to suggest that one knowledge system should not kill the other.

Similarly, Semali and Kincheloe regret the dismal position indigenous knowledge occupies in the academy. They claim that:

We find it pedagogically tragic that various indigenous knowledges of how action affects reality in particular locales have been dismissed from academic curricula. Such way of knowing and acting could contribute so much to the educational experiences of all students; but because of the rules of evidence and dominant epistemologies of Western knowledge production, such understandings are deemed irrelevant by the academic gatekeepers... Our intention is to challenge the academy and its ‘normal science’ with questions indigenous knowledges raise about the nature of our existence, our consciousness, our knowledge production and the ‘globalized’ future (1999, p. 15).

In their promotion of IK as part of school curriculum, Semali and Kincheloe, however, argue that their intention is not to make IK become “ a new canon but become a living body of knowledge open to multiple interpretations” (1999, p. 32). The two further posit that when IK is properly infused in the school system, its encounter with Western hegemonic education would allow educators and their students to address the question of what schools are for and would help them reflect on issues like, “cultural humility, a reconsideration of the meaning of development, reflect on identity formation and consciousness construction and an awareness of power difference” (L. M. Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 47). While the hegemonic nature of Western education is acknowledged, what is being proposed is that the current education system be used as a vehicle for IK.

Having recognized ATR as part of IK, one can then see justification in its inclusion in the RE syllabuses in some multi-faith societies in Africa. It is in this vein that Katulushi (1999) lays down the benefits of teaching ATR, or ATRs as he prefers to call it, as:

ATRs have a capacity to be both: a source of understanding something about the African lifestyle, African experience and encounter with the sacred; a resource for the African answers about the sanctity of life, the role of men and women in life and their relationship to each other (Katulushi, 1999, p. 107).

## **2.4 The role of religion in identity and character formation**

I have earlier in this Chapter pointed out that religion plays a very vital role in the lives of Africans. Literature outlined above has also highlighted the holistic nature of an African’s life. In this section of the Chapter I look at literature which shows the role which religion plays in identity and character formation of an African. This is done to underpin the position of ATR in African life.

Of the various definitions of ‘religion’ I find Hans Kung’s as cited by Magesa to be very encompassing for Africa. Kung defines religion as:

A believing view of life, approach to life, way of life and therefore a fundamental pattern embracing the individual and society, man and the world, through which

a person (though only partially conscious of this) sees and experiences, thinks and feels, acts and suffers, everything. It is a transcendentally grounded and immanently operative system of coordinates by which man orients himself intellectually, emotionally and existentially (Kung, 1993, p.xvii in Magesa, 1997, p.24).

In this definition, religion is depicted as everything in the life of a person. This definition befits the African view of what religion is.

It is worth pointing out, from the onset, that there are different ways of viewing religion (Colson, 2006, pp. 235–242). Religion is sometimes perceived as a private affair as in more secular societies while other times it is taken as a public entity, especially in traditional societies. Be it as it may, religion positively or negatively affects humanity. The way one carries his or her religion adds or subtracts to the quality of life that one lives as an individual and the whole community in which one is a member. Consequently, religion is practised for different reasons and has different meanings for different individuals. For some, it is a way of being accepted by the community while others practise religion for more eschatological reasons, that is, beyond life on earth. There is still another group of people for whom religion is life itself. Adherents of ATR fall in this category. Explaining what ATR is, Amin states that:

In traditional African society religion influences every aspect of life of the individual as well as the whole society. There is no difference between believers and non-believers... because everybody is born into the religion (Amin, M.S, et al, 1998, p. 16).

Magesa (1997) takes the debate on religion further by portraying religion in the life of an African as being holistic. He sees it beyond Kung's definition and states that:

For Africans, religion is far more than 'a believing way of life' or 'an approach to life' directed by a book. It is a 'way of life' or life itself, where a distinction or separation is not made between religion and other areas of human existence (Magesa, 1997, p. 25).

Magesa here seems to imply that religions based on holy books, Bible or Quran cannot be put at the same level as a religion which flows in the blood of the adherent. Magesa's definition of religion could fit well with Hinduism. Writing about scriptures in Hinduism, Krishna sets apart Hinduism from the other religions. She states that, "Hinduism, in a wider context, is not a



religion but a way of life as it presents the culture, civilization and religious ethos of our ancient wisdom which is enshrined in the religious scriptures...” (Krishna, 2007, p. 66).

Going by this definition, Hinduism and ATR have something in common, apart from the latter having no scriptures. The two religions do not even proselytize because one is deemed as born into the religion, meaning that he or she can never be converted to it (Magesa, L, 1997; Krishna, 2007).

Since ATR is life itself and means so much to an African, it is imperative that it is infused in the education system in the most effective way so that it benefits the individual as well as the whole society. When one relates religion to the earlier discussion in this paper about the relationship between Indigenous knowledge and African tradition, it becomes important that great attention be paid to the way religion is integrated into the modern or Western hegemonic education. On this subject, Mosha claims that among indigenous people everywhere, and particularly in Africa:

There is an inseparable link between intellectual formation and moral or spiritual formation in their indigenous knowledge and education systems... Indigenous people experience life holistically. Everything that is thought, said and done is done in relation to the whole experience (Mosha ,S.R, 1999, p. 209).

Mosha further asserts that “African indigenous knowledge and African Indigenous Religions and spirituality are essentially linked” (1999, p. 10). This provides a point of departure from Western epistemology which posits a dichotomy between the spiritual and the profane. From Mosha’s statement it can be deduced that religion plays a critical role in the education of the indigenous. It provides a base on which people can be met at their level and be carried to whatever stage in the education system. This means that for an African, his spirituality or religion is the foundation stone on which other knowledges can be erected. Understanding this religion is therefore very important so that the designed education would be tailored to be meaningful to the indigenous people it is planned for. Mosha’s views about the interrelatedness of religion and indigenous knowledge are shared by Mbiti who calls ATR as a mark of identity for an African.

### 2.4.1 African Traditional Religion and African identity

Mbiti states that ATR, as a mark of identity for an African, is not easy to erase because it is formed of many components which constitute the whole person. Writing about the difficulty of total conversion of an African from ATR to Christianity or Islam, Mbiti explains that:

Since traditional religions occupy the whole person and the whole life, conversion to new religion like Christianity and Islam must embrace his language, thought patterns, fears, social relationships, attitudes and philosophical disposition, if that conversion is to make any lasting impact upon the individual and his community (Mbiti, 1990, p. 3).

Following Mbiti's assertion, one can extrapolate that the difficulty which a new religion would have in taking ground in the African spirituality would apply to education if it does not take cognizance of the intricate formation of the African psyche. For education to be meaningful to the African it should consider the belief systems of this person and include them in the education process. There is a saying among some Zambians that 'you can bring an African from the village to the city but you cannot remove the village from the head.' The village is part of his or her identity just as religion is life and his identity.

Linda Smith (1999), similarly, subscribes to the centrality of religion and spirituality in the life of the indigenous people. She asserts that:

Concepts of spirituality which Christianity attempted to destroy, then to appropriate, and then to claim, are critical sites of resistance for indigenous peoples. The values, attitudes, concepts and language embedded in beliefs about spirituality represent, in many cases, the clearest contrasts and mark of difference between indigenous people and the West. It is one of the few parts of ourselves which the West cannot decipher, cannot understand and cannot control...yet (Smith, 1999, p. 74).

In this statement Smith argues that while Christianity seems to have taken root in the lives of many indigenous people and has in certain cases been referred to as a traditional and African religion (Mbiti, 1969:229; Colson, 2006:244) it has not, however, completely wiped out indigenous spirituality and beliefs. Carmody likens the conversion to Christianity by some Tonga of Southern Province of Zambia to "an overcoat, hardly touching the underlying reality of the Zambian personality especially in issues connected with witchcraft" (Carmody, B, 1992, p.

89). Here, Carmody implies that Christianity has not gone deep enough in the lives of some Zambians to affect and eliminate the inborn spirituality of traditional religion which entertains issues of witchcraft. I now turn my attention to scholarly literature addressing the concepts of multiculturalism within which I position multi-faith Religious Education.

## **2.5 Multiculturalism and multicultural education**

Our modern societies today have become pluralistic in many ways. Globalization has brought together people of different cultures, languages, beliefs and religions. Castles (2009) makes a claim that “no nation-state has ever actually been completely homogeneous and monocultural...” (2009, p. 49). Similarly, Maalouf (2003) claims that the nature of the world today has made all people immigrants and minorities, in a way. According to UNESCO, multiculturalism refers to the diverse nature of society and does not restrict itself to ethnic or national culture but includes linguistic, religious and socio-economic diversity (UNESCO, 2006). Consequently, it becomes important that ways of harmonizing the various groups within a society are mooted.

Explaining the operational intricacies of multicultural societies, James Banks (2010) states that the various ethnic groups within a country have their own beliefs, practices and languages which are particular to them and different from the other groups. He calls these as ‘microcultures’. Giving an example of the United States of America, USA, with its many migrant groups, Banks explains that the country has formed a dominant national culture made up of intersections of various microcultures with the indigenous culture. He calls this the ‘macroculture’. Suffice to state that what prevails in the USA could be replicated in other countries, albeit at varying degrees. In addition, the idea of microcultures and macroculture in a nation can be brought to the school level as well.

At school level, all pupils come with their own microcultures which have to blend to form macroculture of the school. The teacher is expected to play a role of harmonizing these various microcultures by giving each microculture enough chance and space to be heard and respected by others. While the easier way of offering education in multicultural society may entail the dominant culture of the nation overriding the minority, multicultural education methodologies demand that schools teach the culture of appreciating and respecting individuals irrespective of

their race, gender, religious beliefs and their stations in life (Castles,2009). According to UNESCO, “multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures” (2006, p. 18). It can be deduced from the foregoing that multi-faith Religious Education forms part of multicultural education. Chidester (1994) posits that multicultural education aims at decompartmentalizing cultures and drawing on the rich diversity of cultural resources that people have in being human. He claims that “similarly, by exploring religious ways of being human, Religion Education is a type of multicultural education” (1994, p. 96) I, therefore, turn my attention to this aspect. It must be noticed that Chidester uses the term “Religion Education” instead of “Religious Education” which I am using in this thesis. This will be explained later.

## **2.6 Religious Education in some multi-faith societies in Africa**

The Religious Education syllabuses which are offered at senior secondary school level in Zambia are meant to be relevant to the Zambian society which, as pointed out earlier, is multi-cultural and multi-faith in composition. In this section of the chapter, I explore literature relevant to proper execution of such syllabuses. I begin by looking at some countries in Africa that have embraced the concept of multicultural education and consequently offer multifaith Religious Education syllabuses. I start with South Africa.

Chidester (1994) reports that the introduction of multifaith RE in the post-apartheid South Africa was preceded by a proper enquiry. The RE syllabus which was in use during the apartheid era was a “Christian Instruction” syllabus. Stakeholders in education weighed three options about the syllabus. Firstly, to eliminate RE from all public schools; secondly, to go for a parallel approach where learners could be taught according to their denominations; or the third option of a “multi-tradition approach” (D. Chidester, D. et al, 1994, p. 7). Chidester concludes that many school Boards opted for an all-inclusive syllabus which is:

a single, unified and academically coherent study of religion; a study of religion in all its diversity; a study of religion that would serve, not special, particular interests, but shared educational aims and goals that would contribute to the creation of a new, democratic South Africa (1994, p. 8).

So, South Africa has in its RE syllabus African Traditional Religion, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. Chidester writes that the introduction of ATR in the Religious Education syllabus received overwhelming acceptance “as an empowering and enriching innovation” (1994, p. 149). He continues that even pupils reacted very positively to the inclusion of ATR in the study of Religion Education. One teacher in the pilot program is quoted to have said:

When I first introduced this in my class, the pupils were so astonished because they thought it was something which they thought was practised in the location. They never linked it with school. I tried to explain to them that the type of education which we had been introduced to had deprived us of our identity. It was now that they understood their identity. They were not to come to school and only learn about Christian faith and forget their roots (1994, p. 150).

It is worth noting that here Chidester is referring to the indigenous African students and teachers, not to the White Africans of South Africa.

South Africa teaches ATR as a living Religious tradition. Another country which has embraced multi-faith RE is Ghana. The Ghanaian RE syllabus which is called “Religious and Moral Education” contains African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. The Ghanaian situation, however, seems to portray contradictions at the policy level, as Thomas Paul (2009) claims. Thomas, who carried out a comparative study of three junior secondary schools in Kumasi, Ghana to ascertain the role Religious Education plays in tolerance, argues that the government authorities in Ghana seem to marginalize ATR, “...it appears that there is a discourse of marginalization which is nourished by authorities themselves. The practice of denying passports to those who enter ‘Traditional Religion’ is a case in point” (2009, p. 96). By ‘entering’ Thomas means filling on an official form which requires one to indicate his or her religion. Thomas further argues that it does not make sense to, on one hand accord ATR a place in the syllabus of Religious and Moral Education but on the other hand regard it as non-existent by public action. He, however, states that the teachers have embraced ATR positively and “appear to teach diligently on ATR” (2009, p. 97).

### 2.6.1 Principles of multi-faith Religious Education

Where the official name of the subject in most countries is 'Religious Education' the two words, 'religion' and 'education' should be understood in tandem with each other. And so the subject is generally understood to be 'learning about religion'. Trying to avoid the temptation of the subject tipping into religious nurturing, South Africa has even opted to call the subject as 'Religion Education' to stress the educational aspect of the subject, which is learning about religions and not learning to be religious (Amin, M.S, et al, 1998).

Chidester provides a definition of Religious Education which in South Africa is called Religion Education:

...the subject of Religion Education is defined as a generic study of religion, in all its diversity, as an important dimension of human life. If based on clear educational aims, rather than a religious agenda, multi-tradition programs can promote a range of secondary benefits, such as a greater understanding of self and others, the clarification of values, cultural literacy and civil toleration of differences. The primary aim of multi-traditional approach, however, is to provide students with an opportunity to learn about religion by studying actual religion (D. Chidester, D. et al, 1994, p. 45).

This definition is befitting for societies which are plural, multi-cultural and multi-faith such as Zambia. Although this has not been embraced by all such communities, this has become an aspiration for those that offer Religious Education on their education curriculum. The opposite of this kind of RE may promote sectarianism which could be detrimental to multi-cultural communities.

While the preferred aim of RE in Zambia is outlined and quite clear, there are some doubts in the implementation or execution of RE lessons according to this motif. More often than not, the subject has been abused by some teachers who take it as a platform for indoctrination. For instance, Simuchimba (2007) cites the practice by some teachers of starting an RE lesson with a Christian prayer as a form of indoctrination. Other teachers do the indoctrination unwittingly. Simuchimba claims that the influence of teachers on the pupils is so strong that their mere disclosure of their religious inclinations or beliefs gives way to indoctrination. Pupils take their teachers as role models, and anything that the teachers do or believe in is taken to be the ideal

thing. This is more so when the teacher is dealing with the younger learners in the lower grades. Literature on Curriculum below, especially on the hidden curriculum amplifies this point.

Avoiding indoctrination, particularly in a predominantly Christian African set up, is easier said than done. Simuchimba raises a moral issue which makes it very difficult for a teacher to draw a line between indoctrination and counseling or caring. He cites a situation where a teacher in a boarding school attends to pupils for nine months in a year and the pupils tend to regard him/her as a surrogate parent who should take care of their faith or spiritual needs as well. He wonders whether this teacher should withhold his religious commitment and leave these children to parent themselves and shape their own lives. He claims this question is critical for Zambia where the learners go for boarding schools in their formative years of their lives when guidance is needed. The same would be the case in Day schools when teachers know a particular child comes from a broken home and the teacher happens to be the only adult showing concern and care (2007, p. 15). Simuchimba, therefore, suggests what he calls a ‘middle path approach’ where the teacher combines liberalism, commitment and professionalism in balanced doses. Simuchimba’s views here are important for this study because they set the basis for the teachers’ disclosure of their faith. The views imply that as teachers of RE express their views about ATR, they should think of the greater good for the Zambian child than just their personal preferences in matters of religion and spirituality.

In a similar manner, Manilla Amin, a pedagogical researcher in South Africa, outlines the role of a teacher in multi-faith RE (1998, pp. 2–3). She points out that the teacher should keep in mind that pupils come from diverse backgrounds, cultures and religions. She claims that treating the pupils accordingly removes prejudices and gives them the respect they deserve. In addition, she recommends dialogue in class; the teacher should not act as somebody who knows everything. In relation to ATR, Amin points out that the religion is included in the syllabus as a way of removing cultural imperialism, and so the perspective should be approached without any bias. She emphasizes that the teacher should constantly keep in mind that multi-faith RE is educational and not confessional and that the course“ encourages independent and critical thought, the capacity to question, enquire, reason, weigh evidence, and make informed judgements; it is not designed to convert” (1998, p. 3).

Making a contribution to the teaching of religions in multifaith set up, Mbiti (1990) gives examples of universities like Makerere, Nairobi and Swaziland where the study of Religion and Philosophy have been incorporated into the body of courses. He explains that in the faculties where Christianity, ATR, Islam and other religions are studied, no single religion is presented to be better than the other. He states that each religion is studied on its own academic merits, strengths and weaknesses. Mbiti posits that putting the religions on equal footing is advantageous academically because “ in this way, students of religion are learning something from each system; and each religious tradition, in its own way, is shedding new light on the understanding of one or more of the other traditions” (1990, p. 261). It is worth noting that Mbiti makes this observation as early as 1969 when the first edition of this book was published.

### **2.6.2 Indigenous knowledge in Religious Education**

As stated earlier, the inclusion of ATR in Religious Education is a contested issue, more so that unlike other world religions, ATR has no scriptures which can be referred to. It should, however, be pointed out that as far back as 1964 some scholars saw the value of ATR in education and its compatibility with Religious Education. Writing about Religion and character training, Scanlon states that there is a challenge in finding ways of improving what is sound in indigenous tradition. Scanlon’s claim is made under the backdrop of total condemnation of anything indigenous by some quarters of the European community in Africa. He, however, suggests that since the belief system of the Africans is very strong, changing it completely should not be the way to go but only to discourage what is defective and encourage or strengthen the good parts. He further goes on to explain that:

The greatest importance must therefore be attached to religious teaching and moral instruction....Such teaching must be related to the conditions of life and daily experiences of the pupils. It should find expression in habits of self-discipline and loyalty to the community. With such safeguards, contacts with civilization need not be injurious, or the introduction of new religious ideas have disruptive influence antagonistic to constituted secular authority (Scanlon, 1964, p. 95).



Scanlon's views seem to recognize RE as a vehicle through which the moral, spiritual and general social aspects of indigenous knowledge can be passed on to the next generations. He recommends that education should meet the learners at their levels and move with them without undue disruption of the status quo in many ways. This statement shows that there is value in the life and beliefs of the indigenous people which should be nurtured. In addition, Scanlon's statement seems to suggest that teachers and other stakeholders in the Religious Education fraternity have a mammoth responsibility of ensuring that indigenous knowledge which is enshrined in ATR is not lost in the guise of civilization or modernity.

This view of respecting indigenous knowledge of the people is shared by Kunnie. Making reference to Chabal's Philosophy of African liberation, Kunnie suggests that:

All educational transformative theories need to have people's culture as the epistemological point of departure. It is by starting with people's culture, and affirming their rootedness in their culture, that the broader world is encountered and understood, not vice versa (Kunnie, 2000, p. 168).

Kunnie's statement demonstrates a principle in theory and practice of education that when teaching you move from the known to the unknown (Castle, E.B, 1970). It is assumed here that the culture of the learners is the 'known' which should form the basis for other new knowledges.

## **2.7 School Curriculum**

Since my study deals with issues to do with syllabuses, I have found it necessary that I examine some relevant literature which deals with school curriculum and its role in the educational system of any country.

There are several definitions of the word curriculum. Variations in the definitions according to Skilbeck (1984) are partly because educators define the word according to the different perceptions of what curriculum should be (1984, p. 21). Goodlad (1994), basing his definition on the meaning of the Latin word *currere*, which is the original derivation of the word and which means to run or to run the course, defines curriculum as "a course of studies, laid out more or less as a track to be run" (1994, p. 135). In an elaborate way, Mulenga (2008) defines curriculum

as “all the selected, organized, integrative, innovative and evaluative educational experiences provided to learners consciously or unconsciously under the school authority in order to achieve the designated learning outcomes” (2008, p. 5).

## **2.8 Forms of curriculum**

Goodlad (1994) states that there are many forms of curriculum but summarizes them into basically three forms; namely that which is experienced by students; that which is in the minds of teachers, and thirdly that which is in the minds of parents (1994, p. 134). This means that the course to run, or what is to be taught is experienced or perceived differently by these three players in the educational system. Other scholars, however state that there are more forms of the curriculum. Using the works of Tyler (1949) and Skilbeck (1984), Mulenga (2008, p. 6) broadens the scope and lists the following forms of curriculum:

- Ideal or Recommended curriculum which is what is proposed by scholars and researchers as a solution to meet the need of a society.
- The Entitlement curriculum as a course that society believes learners should learn to become useful members of the society.
- The Intended curriculum which refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors which curriculum developers expect learners would get from school.
- Available or supported curriculum which is taught in schools through the provision of appropriate human and material resources
- Implemented or Instructional curriculum which is what is actively taught by teachers in their classrooms. It is seen in teachers’ schemes and records of work and their lesson plans.
- The achieved or experiential curriculum which is what is actually learned as the learners interact with their teachers and other available learning resources.
- The hidden curriculum. This is the learning which takes place in schools but not explicitly pointed out in the curriculum documents. This could be, for example, the learning which a pupil gets from the unintended behavior or disclosure of certain beliefs or preferences of teachers

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have outlined the literature which I found relevant to my study. I started by looking at modernity and tradition before outlining literature which highlights ATR and its relationship with indigenous knowledge. In addition, I have included literature which points out how multifaith RE syllabuses have been implemented in two other counties, apart from Zambia, which have ATR as one of the religious traditions studied. The theoretical framework presented here will offer some explanation to some of the reactions my informants made in relation to African traditional religion and its place in the teaching and learning of Religious Education in Zambia. In addition, I will use the theoretical framework as I analyze and discuss other findings in Chapter Five. My next chapter outlines the methodologies used in data collection.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodologies which were utilized to come up with the data obtained from the two schools, which I have already introduced in Chapter 1, and the data from the subject specialist at the Curriculum Development Centre, CDC, in Lusaka. All the data is dealt with in connection with the main objective of the study, which is to find out if, how and to what extent African Traditional Religion is recognized and put to use in the teaching of Religious Education in high schools. In this chapter, I explain the steps I took in data collection and why I did so.

I started with document analysis of the pupils' Religious Education text books and teachers' handbooks. This was followed up with non-participant classroom observation in one Grade 12 class in an urban school and one Grade 10 class in a rural school. The third data collection strategy I used was semi-structured interviews which were administered to pupils, teachers and the subject specialist at CDC. In addition, I used a questionnaire to explore the representativity of the answers obtained through interviews, as well as to explore the variety of the views among the pupils concerning this issue. Initially, I had not planned to undertake this research method, but the necessity of applying this method emerged from the data I obtained from the first school I visited. I see this idea of using additional data collection strategy after the initial ones as being in tandem with Grounded theory according to Glaser and Strauss (Bryman, 2008, p. 541).

The chapter further covers information on the two research sites and the sampling procedures I followed to come up with a study sample. I later deal with reflexivity, ethical consideration and end with matters of reliability and validity.

### **3.2 Research design**

A research design, according to Bryman is “a framework for the collection and analysis of data” which one employs in a research project or study (2008, p. 698).

A research project is normally designed according to the epistemological and ontological assumptions one has. Arising from this, there are basically two research methodologies that one can apply in social research; namely, quantitative and qualitative, which are sometimes referred to as positivism and interpretivism, respectively (Bryman, 2008).

Positivism, according to Bryman, is “an epistemological position that advocates the application of natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond” (2008, p. 13). On the ontological level, positivists believe that social systems have structures which are independent of individuals. These structures affect individuals who have to fit in. Positivists are ontologically objective and study causes of behaviour which are the social structures rather than their effects or human behaviour. A researcher carrying out a quantitative research uses data to prove hypotheses or theories that may be existing concerning a particular concept or area. In other words, theories that have been developed over time or gleaned from literature are tested through research.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, employs interpretivism which Bryman defines as “an epistemological position that requires the social scientists to grasp the subjective meaning of a social action” (2008, p. 694). Ontologically, interpretivists believe the social world is constructed by the people in it and thus different from the natural world. A social researcher employing qualitative methodology uses data collection instruments that help in understanding the meaning of actions of people under study, so that he can see the world with their eyes or from their point of view. In qualitative research, theory is generated from the study carried out. Whereas the quantitative researcher employs research instruments that may not bring him closer to the respondents or informants, the qualitative researcher seeks to get very close to the people under study to understand their behaviour.

Over the years, a third research paradigm called the Mixed methods is becoming popularised (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) define Mixed method as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (2004, p. 17). In a similar way, Greene et al (1989) define Mixed method designs as “those that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one

qualitative method (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm” (1989, p. 256).

A mixed methodology paradigm has the advantage of what Bryman calls “completeness” which is that data that is not captured through quantitative instruments has the likelihood of being secured through the qualitative research instruments (Bryman, 2008, p. 612). Seale, too, argues that the use of mixed methodologies in data collection, analysis and presentation improves the quality of the research (Seale, 2000). In addition, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie claim that the eclecticism that the mixed method brings to the project gives the researcher creativity and rejects dogmatism (2004, p. 17).

Arising from the above theories, I opted to use the Mixed-methods research design. The nature of my research topic called for in-depth information from the respondents which could only be obtained by listening to them and observing them in their natural classroom or school environment. To have better understanding of the syllabuses and to ascertain if and how ATR is represented, and also to enhance the interpretability of my findings, I did some content analysis of pupils’ text books and teachers’ handbooks of the two syllabuses. After content analysis, I started the planned process of semi structured interviews with the 24 pupils from the two schools. However, after interviewing pupils from the first school, I decided to cast the net wider by formulating a questionnaire to explore whether some of the responses given by the first 12 pupils in the interviews were wide spread among other pupils. In this regard, responses from 36 pupils were obtained from the two sites. It can, therefore, be concluded that apart from semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observation, two predominantly qualitative strategies, I have also used document analysis and questionnaire which some research authorities like Berelson (1952) and Silverman (1993) in (Berg, 2001, p. 241) consign to the quantitative research design.

In document analysis, I have counted some variables and used numbers to state my findings. Document analysis of teachers’ handbooks and pupils’ text books has been used as background information to understand some intricacies of the two syllabuses as highlighted earlier in Chapter One. Additionally, numbers have been used to give a clearer picture of how ATR fares in the School leaving examinations in terms of how many times the religion has been examined in

comparison with the other religious traditions in the syllabuses. Quantification of some variables in the syllabuses has been used as a way of enhancing the qualitative research. Seales gives further justification of using numbers in qualitative study:

Such counting is an important way of showing data to the reader as fully as possible, enabling readers to judge whether the writer has relied excessively on rare events, to the exclusion of more common ones that might contradict the general line of argument. This can help readers gain a sense of how representative and widespread particular instances are (2000, p. 128).

My questionnaire has been used in a peculiar or special manner in that the questions are exactly the same as the ones I used in the semi-structured interviews, except that here I did not have the benefit of making follow-ups on some responses from my respondents. My use of the two last strategies, document analysis and the questionnaire, which I have laboured to justify, qualify the research design to be called a mixed one. But as will be noticed throughout the presentation of my findings, the weight has been put on what the respondents said in the interviews and what I saw them do through my observations in classes. This is in congruent with Morgan (1998) and Morse (1991) in (Johnson, R.B & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 19) who state that a researcher is at liberty to consider the dimension of paradigm emphasis according to research aim and questions.

### **3.3 Research sites**

In choosing my research sites I relied on the principle that, “the decision to use a particular research site is tied closely to obtaining access to an appropriate population of potential subjects” (Berg, 2001, p. 29). As I have earlier mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the reasons of undertaking this study was the interest in finding out if what Haambokoma stated in his study (2007) about the attitude of pupils to ATR was primarily an urban phenomenon. So I elected to carry out my research in both urban and rural set up. Two schools and one policy office at the Ministry of Education Headquarters, therefore, formed my research sites. Details of my research sites are in Chapter One but also described briefly below.

Gaining access to the sites was not a big challenge since I was dealing with schools and I work for the Ministry of Education. The timing of the actual research was, however, problematic. I

got to the research sites when the Grade 12s, who were my target respondents, were just about to begin their mock examinations after which they would break off for a month. I used this time to do content analysis of the text books.

### **3.3.1 Research site A:**

This was a big boarding secondary school for 1,200 boys and girls with a teaching staff of 52, in a rural district of Southern province of Zambia. The school is in a rural town 454 km from Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, and 351 km from Livingstone, the nearest city. In addition, the town is 169 km from the line of rail.

The rural nature and the geographical position of the school makes it attract mostly pupils within the district, unlike other boarding high schools along the line of rail where even pupils from urban areas like Lusaka and the Copperbelt who fail to find school places within their towns go to look for places. It could then be assumed that while urbanization has affected many parts of Zambia, this part of the province remains relatively traditional, and so the pupils in this school are more aware of the traditions than do their counterparts in schools along the line of rail. Although it is a boarding school, pupils with parents or relatives within the town or near the school are allowed to be day scholars. It was observed that in fact there were very few pupils who were day scholars. This means that most of the pupils were from villages away from the main centre of the district.

### **3.3.2 Research site B:**

My second research site was a very big co-education secondary school of 2,100 pupils. A co-education school in Zambia is one which has boys and girls learning together. There are some schools which are exclusively for boys or girls. This school in my study is situated in the city of Livingstone in one of the high density townships of the city. Like many metropolitan areas, the pupils are a combination of all tribes of Zambia, and although the city is in the Tonga speaking region, the language and culture cannot command outright dominance among the pupils and



teachers as well. Schools in Zambia have pupil catchment areas which are determined by their geographical positions. It follows, therefore, that a school in a rural area will draw pupils from homes around it which may just have the homogeneous 'indigenous' people. This may not be the case with a school in an urban area where the surrounding homes may have people from all tribes and walks of life. The pupils in this urban day school have the advantage of going back to their homes every day, and so depending on what kind of home they come from, they are in touch with the culture or tradition of their family. But these pupils are at the same time exposed to all the influences of the tourist capital of Zambia. This means that while they could have the benefits of home environment in terms of moral and cultural socialization, the influences of the city may at the same time play a role in their mindset formation.

### **3.3.3 Curriculum Development Centre**

This is a directorate at the Ministry of Education Headquarters which is responsible for the formulation, implementation and revision of educational curricula. Each subject has a specialist who oversees and coordinates the affairs of that particular subject.

## **3.4 Target population**

The aim of the study was to investigate the extent to which ATR as a form of Indigenous knowledge is taught in the two senior secondary school RE syllabuses in Zambia. And as I have stated earlier in Chapter one, I set for myself three objectives of the study. In order to achieve these objectives it was necessary to get views from three categories of informants, namely; teachers, pupils and the subject specialist. These informants formed my target population which as Bryman defines is "the universe of units from which a sample is to be selected" (2008, p. 697). Information from these three categories is important for different reasons: It was important to get the views of teachers because they are the real movers of the syllabuses under discussion. Since pupils are the targets of any syllabus or curriculum, it is important to get their views on how they are being affected by the syllabuses. The third category of informants was the subject specialist. Syllabuses in Zambia are centrally designed by one wing of the Ministry of Education, called the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). It was important to get the views of the specialist on

the extent to which African traditional religion is inculcated in the two Religious Education syllabuses.

### **3.5 Study sample**

Sampling is considered as a very important component of any study because it affects the outcome of the research. Since the research design I used is that of a descriptive nature where the findings of the study are supposed to represent or relate the real feelings of the respondents about an issue, the study could only handle a limited number of respondents that was convenient to be dealt with adequately within the limited time of data collection.

I opted to interview all the teachers of Religious Education in the two schools sampled. This was with the knowledge that there would be no more than six teachers of Religious Education in any school. At the rural school I found four teachers, one female and three males. All the four participated in the study. The urban school, on the other hand, had 8 teachers but I was informed two of these were out of school on vacation leave, so two females and four males were available and took part in the study. Total population sampling was used as far as the teachers were concerned here.

I purposively involved pupils from both schools in equal proportions. For the in-depth semi structured interviews, 6 boys and 6 girls from each school were interviewed, that is, for each syllabus; three boys and three girls took part. In addition to these 24 pupils, I involved 36 pupils to answer a questionnaire. I will give more details on this later. From the Curriculum Development Centre, I had an interview with a female subject specialist.

*Table 3.1: Distribution of respondents by gender*

<u>Type of respondent</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pupils-interviews	12	12	24
Pupils- questionnaire	16	20	36
Teachers	07	03	10
Subject specialist	-	01	01
TOTAL	35	36	71

### **3.6 Sampling Procedures**

The study was partly based on purposive sampling, which is picking respondents who have characteristics which would enable the researcher to answer the research questions (Patton, 2001). Going by the main aim of the study, the sampling of teachers could only be done among those who teach Religious Education, and pupils who take the subject. It, therefore, follows that those pupils and teachers could only be sampled from schools which offer the subject.

#### **3.6.1 Sampling of schools**

Apart from the criterion of offering the subject the schools in the study were randomly picked, though with the intention of involving both an urban and a rural school. The names of urban schools in the Southern province of Zambia were written on a piece of paper and put in a box. An independent person was asked to pick one piece of paper from that box. The name of the school on the paper picked was to be in the study. The same was done for the rural schools in the province.

#### **3.6.2 Sampling of pupils**

Random sampling was also used in picking the informants from the pupil population in the two schools in order to safeguard the researcher from influencing the outcome of the study through

the sampling. This sampling procedure leads to a situation which Bryman calls a selection where “each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected (2008, p. 168). The study, as mentioned earlier, needed 12 pupils from each school; three boys and three girls for each syllabus. In the class of pupils doing Syllabus 2044, boys formed one group while the girls formed the other. To the group of girls taking syllabus 2044 a box was given where three ‘YES’ pieces of paper had been put among the ‘NO’ pieces of paper as per number of girls present. Each girl was asked to pick one piece of paper. Those who picked the ‘YES’ were taken to be in the study. The same was done for the boys taking syllabus 2044. This process was repeated for the classes doing Syllabus 2046. Before concluding the picking process, those who had picked the ‘YES’ were asked if they were ready to participate in the study so that if they were not, another draw could be taken. This actually happened once at the urban school where one girl who had picked a ‘YES’ declined to take part in the study. In this way I ended up with 12 pupils from the urban school and 12 pupils from the rural school. Since I was dealing with schools with both boys and girls, I found it important to include both sexes in the study.

### **3.6.3 Sampling of teachers and the subject specialist**

As mentioned earlier, I engaged total population sampling to involve the teachers in the study. Expert sampling was the basis for picking the subject specialist at the Curriculum Development Centre.

## **3.7 Research instruments**

I employed four research instruments, or methods, in this study, namely; document analysis, non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews and questionnaire. I could as well state that I, as the investigator, was also an instrument in the research, for I used my experiences as a teacher of Religious Education to go beyond what was said and interpreted the actions and data I got from my respondents (McCracken, 1988, p. 18).

### 3.7.1 Document analysis

I examined the two Religious Education syllabuses which are used in Zambian senior secondary schools to determine the relevancies of the teaching objectives of the lessons set in the units in relation to ATR. The content of the pupils' text books and the teachers' handbooks were then scrutinized to explore whether and how African traditional religion was presented. In addition, I looked at the Grade 12 school certificate examination papers to assess how and to which extent the African tradition has been examined in comparison with the other religions in the syllabuses. I concentrated on the five year period of 2007- 2011. The focus here was to establish the number of times questions on African tradition were asked so as to deduce where, among the four religious traditions, in the Zambian Religious Education syllabuses the emphasis in the examinations is laid. This type of content analysis is what Altheide (1996) in Bryman (2008) calls, 'Ethnographic content analysis' (Bryman, 2008, p. 276). Bryman explains that this data collection and analysis tool "emphasises the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts" (2008, p. 276). This strategy, in other words, gives the researcher leeway to determine the meaning beneath the surface of the content of the books. The researcher establishes the trend in the data analysed.

### 3.7.2 Non-participant classroom observation

Observation is a data collection strategy, mostly used in Qualitative research, to record the actions of the respondents. This strategy can either be participant or non-participant observation. Non-participant observation can be structured or unstructured. Bryman describes non-participant observation research instrument as a situation where "the observer observes but does not participate in what is going on in the social setting" (2008, p. 257). In structured non-participant observation, the researcher observes with well-defined and strict rules whereas in the unstructured, there is no strict observation schedule to follow (Bryman, 2008, p. 257).

I opted for unstructured non-participant observation data collection strategy so that I would have the opportunity to observe how the teachers were teaching and how the pupils were learning or responding to the materials they were being taught. I did not want to wholly depend on what

these two categories of respondents would tell me about the teaching and learning, respectively. I employed triangulation of methods here. Bryman defines triangulation as “the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked” (2008, p. 700). Seales, too, advocates for this methodology because it enables the investigator to let the biases of one method be cancelled by those of the other methods used (2000, p. 53). In my case I had the opportunity of weighing what I was told in the interviews with what I actually saw in the classroom observation.

I observed how lessons in the two syllabuses were executed. I observed Syllabus 2046 in the rural school while Syllabus 2044 was observed in the urban school. Focus was on content delivery by the teacher and the pupils’ participation. I paid attention to the voice, gestures, choice of words and examples given. I did this to detect the teacher’s attitude to the content being taught. In addition, I was interested in the body language of the pupils and their participation in the lesson through asking questions or responding to the teacher’s questions. Furthermore, besides the content, this strategy took into consideration the methods used in teaching African traditional religion in comparison with teaching of other religions. I wanted to find out how the teacher involved the pupils in the lesson; whether group work was employed, class projects given, or if any outside people were invited as guest speakers.

### **3.7.3 Semi-structured interviews**

The third research instrument used in this study was semi-structured interviews. Kvale and Brinkmann define research interview as a professional conversation of daily life “where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee” (2008, p. 2). Similarly, McCracken identifies the interview strategy as:

... One of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armoury. For certain descriptive and analytic purposes, no instrument of inquiry is more revealing. The method can take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he sees the world. It can also take us into the life world of the individual to see the content and pattern of daily experience. The long interview gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves (1988, p. 9).

The interview in the social sciences usually takes the semi-structured pattern where it is conducted according to an interview schedule outlined according to themes and questions. These interviews are transcribed and later analysed to constitute their meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

With this background information on semi-structured interviews, the teachers of Religious Education in the two schools were individually invited to a one-on-one interview following a prepared interview guide. Similarly, the pupils who were picked for this study were interviewed following a separate interview guide for them. All the interviews were carried out in the schools and lasted between 20 and 30 minutes for pupils and up to 45 minutes for teachers. I requested for a quiet room where the interviews were done. Information from the subject specialist was also obtained using semi-structured interview. The office of the subject specialist was the most convenient for the two of us to have the interview which lasted for about an hour. The semi-structured interviews strategy was used on 35 informants. I limited the number of respondents in cognisance of McCracken's views that:

The purpose of the qualitative interview is not to discover how many, and what kinds of people share a certain characteristic. It is to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world. How many and what kinds of people hold these categories and assumptions is not, in fact, the compelling issue...in other words qualitative research does not survey the terrain, it mines it (McCracken, 1988, p. 17).

This data collection strategy was advantageous in that I had the opportunity to make follow-up questions on some responses given by the respondents for clarity and more information in the line offered by the interviewee. Furthermore, the instrument enabled me to even use the body language of the respondents as part of the data to be analysed in my quest for better understanding of what was being discussed. With interviews, the rate of response is, in most cases, better than for questionnaires. With questionnaires, some informants choose to leave some questions unanswered, and in most cases it is very unlikely that the researcher would go back to such informants to ask them to complete all the questions. The situation is different with face to face interviews where informants usually and naturally answer all the questions they are asked.

I tape recorded all the interviews with my respondents. Before I did that, I asked for permission to do so. The interviews were later transcribed.

#### **3.7.4 Questionnaire**

Prompted by the responses that were emerging from the semi-structured interviews with the pupils, and realising that the responses were leading to some phenomenon different from the earlier studies done which stated that ATR was despised by many pupils (Haambokoma, N. M, 2007), I decided to involve more pupils to explore how widespread the data given could be. This action is supported by Bryman's statement that, "...increasing the size of a sample increases the likely precision of a sample" (2008, p. 179). A questionnaire bearing the same questions as those in the interview guide was designed and randomly given to 20 new pupils doing Religious Education in each school with equal gender representation. All the questionnaires were returned from the rural school but four were not returned from the urban school. The questionnaire, therefore, involved 36 pupils.

### **3.8 Data collection procedure**

I did document analysis in July and August, 2012 when the teachers and pupils were too busy with mock examinations to be disturbed with interviews and classroom observations. Between 10<sup>th</sup> September and 15<sup>th</sup> October I carried out interviews with teachers, pupils and subject specialist. In addition, I did classroom observation and administered the questionnaire during the same time. To ensure that the pupils filling in their answers were free in their responses, I asked them not to write their names on the questionnaire.

I noticed that there was a difference in the responses between the questionnaires which were conducted in anonymity, and the interviews which were conducted with identified pupils. In the discussion chapter I will look at the differences in the answers and discuss whether this can be attributed to the anonymity or non-anonymity of the pupils.



### **3.9 Data analysis**

Data analysis is a systematic way of evaluating data using analytical and logical reasons to examine the components of data that has been collected through the various data collection strategies. Kvale and Brinkmann define analysis as a way of “separating something into parts or elements” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 193).

I did the data analysis shortly after the data collection. After interviewing three respondents, I would pause and go through the information received so that I could scrutinize or analyse the themes and patterns that were emerging. This is why after carrying out semi-structured interviews with the pupils at the first school I decided I should, besides the semi-structured interview, use a questionnaire which would enable me to get the views of a little bit more pupils than the 12 targeted at each school. If I had left the analysis to the time I had finished all the interviews, it would have been cumbersome and costly on my part to go back to the same schools for this item.

The findings were analysed and clustered together in certain themes according to the objectives of the study and the research questions. These findings, organized in themes, will be presented in the Findings chapter and discussed in the Discussion chapter.

### **3.10 Reflexivity**

Berg describes reflexivity as a characteristic which “implies that the researcher understands that he or she is part of the social world(s) that he or she investigates” (Berg, 2001, p. 139). Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (1981) call it awareness on the part of the researcher that she is a human instrument in the research being carried out. Shulamit Reinharz (1997) takes the human elements of the researcher further by stating that there are three parts of the self that a researcher brings to the project. These parts are; the research-based self, the brought self which comprises all that which helps one create a stand point , and lastly the situationally created self. She recommends that it is by listening to the voices from these three selves and being aware of their influences that a researcher comes up with a balanced research (p.5). This means that the

researcher goes in the field with his baggage of knowledge and experiences which he sometimes has to utilize or bracket in order to fully understand the world which the respondent is describing. Furthermore, it is acknowledging that as a researcher one has his or her own biases or presuppositions. McCracken suggests a positive utilization of the researcher's potential by stating that, "it is by drawing on the understanding of how they themselves see and experience the world that they can supplement and interpret data they generate from the long interview" (1988, p. 12).

I kept this principle in mind as I was getting responses from my respondents. Pupils sometimes contradicted themselves as they discussed Christianity and African traditional religion. I chose not to correct them or remind them of what they had mentioned earlier but let them continue with their sharing. Other times I asked them follow-up questions to make them reflect on what they had said. For example, I went into the field with a conviction that African tradition still has values that could be of benefit to the society and the individual. So when this girl from the urban school strongly rejected African tradition, that it was outdated and not needed in the modern Religious Education syllabuses, I bracketed my personal feelings and did not challenge her by giving her a litany of what I thought were the values of African tradition. I only asked her if everything traditional was bad. It is at this point that she saw the other side of her world and acknowledged that there was something good or positive about ATR.

So reflexivity helps the researcher be aware of his world, knowledge and biases but choose to bracket them "in order to allow voices that are otherwise suppressed or contradictory to emerge"(Seale, 2000, p. 169). In this research, the voice which mattered was that of my informants, not mine as a researcher.

### **3.11 Validity and reliability**

In the social sciences *reliability* deals with whether a study can be repeated and yield the same results (Bryman, 2008; Kvale, 2009). In this way reliability is a measure of how stable or true a concept is. Sanders portrays reliability as "being concerned with error of measurement or whether

the instrument or method is giving you a stable reading” (Sanders, J.R, 1992, p. 33). It refers to whether the observations can be taken as being genuine or not. I took care of the reliability principle by ensuring that I used more than one method of data collection or triangulation.

Validity is defined by the Bryman as “concern with the integrity of conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman, 2008, p. 32). Kvale and Brinkmann suggest that *validation* of the research be carried out in what they call the “seven stages” (2008, pp. 248–249). They explain that from the stage of thematizing theoretical presuppositions right to the final stage of reporting, the researcher should ensure that there is “quality control throughout the stages of knowledge production” (2008, p. 249). Seale argues that while validity and reliability may be consigned to the Quantitative or positivist research, “Criteria for judging good quality studies seems irrepressible, partly due to the requirement that qualitative and quantitative social researchers impress the worth of their efforts on sceptical audiences...” (Seale, 2000, p. 43).

Seale’s proposition of the importance of both quantitative and qualitative researches meeting the confidence of readers and particularly financiers of research is shared by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who state that the trustworthiness of any research lies at the heart of validity and reliability, and so these two concepts should not only be limited to quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba, therefore, propose that internal validity, or truth value, which is applied in Quantitative research, be replaced by credibility in Qualitative research. They propose long periods of observation of respondents and triangulation methods of data collection as one way of enhancing credibility. It is for this reason that I chose to use more than one method of data collection so that information I missed in one strategy could be captured by the other strategy. In addition, Lincoln and Guba argue that the surest way of upholding credibility is by what they call “member checks” which is going back to the people researched on and showing them the data adduced from them so that they judge for themselves if they have been properly represented (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:314 in Seale, 2000, p. 45). Bearing this in mind, I ensured that I double checked with my informants if what I had captured and recorded was really what they had said and meant.

Lincoln and Guba further suggest that ‘transferability’ replaces ‘applicability’ which deals with external validity in Quantitative research. They propose that this be done by the researcher who

should provide a detailed and rich description of the setting studied to enable readers have enough information about it so that the readers can compare with other settings they know and judge if what obtained in the studied scenario, described by the researcher, can apply in those places. Going by this, I have endeavoured, in Chapter One, to be very detailed in providing the background information to the study.

According to Lincoln and Guba, reliability in Quantitative research is taken care of by what they call ‘dependability’ which is realised by proper documentation of the process of data collection and its product as well as all the discussions made in the process. Bearing this in mind, I ensured that I did not take anything for granted during my data collection, analysing and reporting. During the interviews, for example, I made sure that I understood exactly what a respondent meant in his or her responses by clarifying what was not clear. I did this by asking follow-up questions or rephrasing their responses and asking them if that is what they meant.

The trustworthiness of my data was further strengthened by ensuring that I recorded my interviews and later transcribed them so as not to distort the data.

### **3.12 Ethical issues**

Bryman gives a summary of ethical principles as per Diener and Crandall (1987) as those practices that ensure that no harm is made to the respondent, that respondents participate in the study out of their own volition, that the privacy of respondents is respected and that there is no deception involved in bringing the respondents into the study (Bryman, 2008, p. 118).

Similarly, Sanders explains that ethical considerations deal with protection of respondents from embarrassment or harassment. He continues that if personal information is used it should only be done with permission of the owner. He reiterates that “ respondents should be treated with diplomacy and respect; they should not be subjected to any form of physical or psychological harm or even potential harm” (Sanders, J.R, 1992, p. 57).

Still on ethical issues, Berg, in his own way, gives justification for attention to be paid to ethical issues because:

Social scientists delve into the social lives of other human beings. From such excursions into private social lives, various policies, practices and even laws may result. Thus, researchers must ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of people and communities that form the focus of their studies (2001, p. 39).

With these views of the three scholars in mind, I made sure that before I started interviews with any of my respondents, I explained what my research was all about and that the information I was asking for was going to be used purely for academic purposes. I told them that they had the right not to answer any of the questions if they felt uncomfortable about them. In addition, I told them that they could stop the interview at whatever stage they felt like. Further, I informed those who answered the questionnaire that they were under no obligation to answer all the questions, although it was desirable to me as a researcher. To protect their identity, I told them not to write their names on the questionnaires. Added to this, I assured all my pupil-respondents that whatever they shared with me would not be divulged to the teachers and that the interviews would be anonymized when the data collection was finished.

Furthermore, it was because of the ethical issues that I sought for permission to include some personal stories in the study. For example, when I started recording the interview with the teacher from the rural school who gave me the story of good and bad spirits in African tradition, I first ignored the hint he made of going into a personal testimony until after I had gone through my question schedule. After turning off the recorder, I then went back to the cue he had given of offering a personal experience and asked if he could narrate it. When he finished his story, I asked him if I could use it in my study, to which he said he would not mind, especially that he had shared the story with his pupils and some colleagues many times. This teacher was, nevertheless, anonymized.

In the same way, I respected the privacy and personalities of the teachers who tactfully did not want me to observe their lessons. When some teachers failed to turn up for their lessons at the arranged time and offered no proper excuses, I reminded them once, but when they did not show up again, I took it that they did not just want me in their classes but had no courage to mention it to me. I respected their space and left them alone.

### **3.13 Limitations and difficulties of the study**

During the data collection process, I faced some challenges some of which are:

- i. While there was a need which emerged during the data collection process that I get to Examinations Council of Zambia, ECZ, to obtain some latest data on the number of candidates who write the two syllabuses, access to the institution was full of restrictions, and time ran out before getting the information. I had wanted to get this information so that I could judge if the information I had got from some RE teachers that Syllabus 2044 was getting lesser candidates each year compared to 2046 was true.
- ii. The timing of data collection coincided with the mock examinations for Grade 12. This delayed my commencement of interviewing pupils and teachers and observing their lessons.
- iii. While my being a member of the teaching fraternity in Zambia was advantageous for me to gain access to the schools, my position as District Education Board Secretary worked to my disadvantage. Some teachers found ways of avoiding me observe them teaching for fear that I would critique their lessons and put it on official record. This was after I had even assured them that I was merely carrying out the research in my personal capacity and for academic purposes only.

I now move on to the next chapter to present the findings of my research.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the study guided by the following research questions:

- i. How ATR is represented in the two Zambian syllabuses and how is the content of ATR represented in the pupils' text books and the teachers' handbooks?
- ii. How is ATR examined in the Grade 12 school certificate examinations?
- iii. How do the teachers view the content of African tradition in the RE syllabuses?
- iv. How do the pupils view the content of African tradition in the RE syllabuses?
- v. How does the subject specialist at the Curriculum Development Centre, CDC, view the syllabuses in relation to ATR?
- vi. What are the views of teachers and pupils on the methods used to teach ATR in RE?

To address the first research question I used the document analysis strategy. I examined the pupils' text books and teachers' handbooks to establish how the content of ATR is presented in these books. For the second research question, I scrutinized Grade 12 Examinations past papers for five years, 2007-2011, to see the frequency of ATR being examined. In addition, I looked at the Chief Examiners' reports for 2010 and 2011 to get their perception of how candidates who answer the ATR components of the question fare. In Zambia, at the end of each year's marking sessions, chief examiners in every subject compile comments on how each question was answered and provide recommendations which are sent to the schools to improve the performance of future candidates.

To answer the third to fifth research questions, I carried out semi-structured interviews on the three categories of respondents. I interviewed all the teachers of RE that I found in the two schools. In the rural school four teachers, one female and three male teachers were interviewed. In the urban school, two females and four males were in the interviewed. I interviewed twelve pupils in each school, three boys and three girls for each syllabus since both schools were using both syllabuses. After analysing the pupils' responses from the first school I visited, I decided to employ a questionnaire to test how representative the responses I had got were. This is a strategy

I had not initially intended to engage when I went to the research sites. I distributed 20 questionnaires in each school. I got all the 20 back from the rural school but four were not returned at the urban school. So from the questionnaire 36 pupils were involved in the study. The questionnaires were given exclusively to pupils who had not been interviewed. I interviewed also a female subject specialist at the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC).

The sixth research question was addressed by one of the questions in the semi-structured interviews of the 10 teachers and twenty four pupils as well as questionnaires from the 36 pupils. In addition, in order to get a fuller answer to this research question, I used non-participant classroom observations in two classes, one urban and the other rural. Some of my interviewees were in the Grade 12 class which I observed at the urban school.

In this chapter I will present the findings systematically according to the way the research questions are positioned above. I have opted to use the respondents' actual words wherever I can. I have done so to make the respondents' voices be part of my study (Blodgett, A et al, 2011).

## **4.2 How is ATR represented in the two Zambian syllabuses and how is the content of ATR represented in the pupils' text books and the teachers' handbooks?**

According to CDC the two syllabuses in Zambia have the same aim of enabling the pupils appreciate the moral, spiritual and religious values and behaviour drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia. The four religious traditions are Christianity, Zambian indigenous beliefs, Hinduism and Islam (Curriculum Development Centre, 1984, p. 4). The two syllabuses, however, are different in content and approach.

### **4.2.1 Syllabus 2044**

As outlined in the Background chapter, Syllabus 2044 is structured around five major themes which have three sub themes each. Scrutinizing the document called '*Syllabi for Religious Education for School Certificate*' and *Religious Education Syllabus 2044 pupils' text book for*



*Grades 10-12* has exposed a discrepancy. While the Syllabus for 2044 states that the sub themes are covered under four perspectives, namely; Present Situation, African tradition, Church history and the Bible, the pupils' text book mentions six perspectives, which are the four mentioned above and an addition of Hinduism and Islam. While in the syllabus Hinduism and Islam are put under the teaching objectives of Present Situation and are supposed to be taught before the African tradition perspective, the presentation of the content in the pupils' text book puts Hinduism and Islam after African tradition as distinct perspectives or sections. This will be something worth discussing in the following chapter. In my study, I will take it that the Syllabus has six perspectives. I have done so because I have chosen to follow the textbooks in this perspective and also because of the focus of my study. The current text book was published in 2009, so I presume that it supersedes the Syllabus which was published in 1984. These perspectives are studied under every sub theme so as to give the pupils a good chance of understanding the whole theme before they can be challenged to make their own conclusions which are relevant to their lives. For this study, the spotlight was on how the content of ATR is presented in the pupils' books and how the teaching objectives are framed in the teachers' handbooks.

Each of the four religious traditions has a section in each sub theme. A closer scrutiny of the content, however, revealed that the content of ATR is presented in the past tense in some sub themes. An example of presenting the content in the past tense is found in the sub theme of "Work in a changing society" where traditional practices concerning work are presented as (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009, p. 5):

- Work was divided according to sex, age and rank.
- Work was done in common.
- Work was related to the basic needs of life.
- A person decided when to work and when not to work.
- Everybody was a worker.
- Generally, women worked harder than men.

My findings per sub theme are as follows:

<u>Man in a Changing Society</u>	<u>Tense in which ATR content is presented</u>
Living in a changing society	Present
Working in a changing society	Past
Leisure in a changing society	Past
<u>Order and Freedom in society</u>	
Justice in society	Past
Service in society	Present
Loyalty in society	Past
<u>Life</u>	
Happiness	Past
Unending life	Present
Success	Past
<u>Man and Woman</u>	
Family life	Present/ Past
Sex differences and the person	Past
Courtship and marriage	Past
<u>Man's response to God through faith and love</u>	
Man's search for God	Past
Man's turning away from God	Present
Involvement in the world	Past

Some teaching objectives in the Teachers' handbooks are also expressed in the past tense, but the situation is not as pronounced as the content in the pupils' books. I counted 48 ATR teaching objectives in the whole syllabus out of which 34 are in the present tense and 14 in the past. An example of teaching objectives in the past tense is found in the sub theme "Happiness" where the first two objectives are structured as follows:

- Pupils should be able to list what made people happy in traditional Zambian societies.
- Pupils should be able to explain how harmony and status brought happiness to traditional society (Curriculum Development Centre, 1984, p. 14).

While the past tense was noted as being prevalent in ATR, Islam and Hinduism has been presented in the present tense in the pupils' text books as well as the teachers' handbooks.

After examining Syllabus 2044, I turned to Syllabus 2046 for exploration.

#### 4.2.2 Syllabus 2046

As stated earlier, Syllabus 2046 is mostly Christian Bible knowledge. Since the other three religious traditions are covered in the syllabus in comparison with Christianity, the focus of the study here was how many times ATR was compared and what tense was used in the content of comparison. I also took note of how many times Islam and Hinduism were compared to Christianity. My findings from the pupils' text books are as shown in Table 2.

As can be observed from the table, African traditional religion has been left out in the comparison process with Christianity in four units while Islam and Hinduism have been left out only once, each. It should also be noted that the content of ATR in four units is presented entirely in the past tense while in the last three units the past and the present tenses have been used. However, for Hinduism and Islam, as in Syllabus 2044, the content is in the present tense for all the units

*Table 4.1: Comparison of Christianity with other religions/ Tense in which ATR content is expressed*

Unit	Topic	Hinduism	Islam	ATR	Tense of ATR content
1.	How God directs human lives	✓	✓	✓	Present
2.	Message of John the Baptist	✓	✓	✓	Present
3.	Baptism	✓	✓	✓	Past
4.	Temptation	✓	✓	x	
5.	Jesus' power over disease	✓	✓	✓	Present
6.	Jesus power over evil spirits	✓	✓	✓	Present
7.	Kingdom of God	✓	✓	✓	Present
8.	Ideas about personal judgement	✓	✓	x	
9.	Prayer	✓	✓	✓	Present
10.	Teaching on love and forgiveness	✓	✓	✓	Past
11.	Suffering	✓	✓	✓	Present
12.	Reaction to persecution and opposition	✓	✓	x	
13.	Funerals burials and teachings about death	✓	✓	✓	Present
14.	Beliefs about life after death	✓	✓	✓	Present
15.	Early church	✓	✓	✓	Present
16.	Reaction to persecution	✓	✓	x	
17.	Ways of solving problems	x	x	✓	Present
18.	Attitudes towards work	✓	✓	✓	Past
19.	Leisure	✓	✓	✓	Past

20.	Attitudes to use of wealth	✓	✓	✓	Present
21.	Attitudes to rulers	✓	✓	✓	Present
22.	Choosing marriage partners	✓	✓	✓	Present
23.	Attitudes to unmarried adults	✓	✓	✓	Present
24.	Husband and wife relationships	✓	✓	✓	Present
25.	Adultery and fornication	✓	✓	✓	Present/Past
26.	Polygamy and divorce	✓	✓	✓	Present/Past
27.	Attitude to family life	✓	✓	✓	Present/Past

✓ *Means the religion is compared with Christianity, X means not compared with Christianity.*

### 4.3 How ATR is examined in the Grade 12 School Certificate Examinations

Since there are two different examination papers for the two syllabuses, I analysed the past papers for the two syllabuses separately and noted the following:

#### 4.3.1 Syllabus 2044

The study scrutinized Grade 12 School certificate examinations past papers for five years, 2007-2011, to establish the number of times Zambian tradition was examined. The pattern of examining in the 2044 syllabus is that there is a question on every sub-theme in the syllabus. The (a) part of each sub-theme question tests Present situation, Zambian traditions which sometimes is referred to as Zambian indigenous beliefs and is equivalent to ATR, Christian church history, Islam and Hinduism while the (b) part deals with the Bible and its application. To ensure a wider coverage of the content taught and to give the candidates some choice, pupils are given two options to choose from in the (a) part. The (a) part is framed as either/or. For example, in 2007 the question on “Justice in Society was:

***Either***

Mention the four injustices that were sometimes found in traditional society.

***Or***

List and explain four injustices that exist within the Zambian social system today.

Since in each year 15 questions are asked, five years translates into 75 questions. And since the (a) part where ATR is supposed to be examined has Either/Or, it means that there are 150 question slots from which ATR, Islam, Hinduism, Christian Church History and Present situation could be tested. The five areas featured as follows:

- Christian church history      46 times
- Present situation                41times
- African tradition                26 times
- Hinduism                          19 times
- Islam                                18 times

The Chief Examiner’s comments showed that the candidates who attempted ATR components of the questions did not answer them as well as those who attempted questions testing the other four perspectives. One of the comments needs to be quoted because I will refer to it in my discussion in the next Chapter. The ‘OR’ part of question 13 of 2011 was, “List four traditional names of God and briefly give the meaning of each name you have listed.” The Chief Examiner commented as follows:

This was another popular question. However, the ‘OR’ part was poorly done as compared to the ‘EITHER’ part. This is because candidates gave their own answers which are not in the syllabus. Teachers are once more reminded to ensure that answers come from the books (ECZ, 2012, p. 13).

### 4.3.2 Syllabus 2046

A similar analysis was done for the same period for the 2046 syllabus. In this syllabus, Zambian tradition, Hinduism and Islam are compared with Christianity. The 75 questions in the five years, 2007-2011, were distributed as follows:

- Zambian tradition            27 times
- Islam                            25 times
- Hinduism                        23 times

To have an idea of how those grade 12 candidates who answered questions on African tradition featured, the study sampled two chief examiner's reports and noted the comments.

*The 2010 Chief Examiner's report (Syllabus2046)* indicates that out of four questions where African tradition was compared with Christianity, two were well answered while the other two were poorly done. However, in 2011 out of six questions where African tradition was compared with Christianity, four questions were badly done.

### **4.4 How teachers view the content of African Tradition Religion in the RE syllabuses**

At the rural secondary school, four teachers, 1 female and 3 male, were interviewed. At the urban secondary school, six teachers were interviewed, 2 females and 4 males. The teachers were in agreement in many areas concerning the two syllabuses in relation to African tradition. I should mention here that teachers of RE are trained to teach both syllabuses and both syllabuses were used at both schools.

All the teachers agreed that ATR was neglected at the expense of Christianity. Three of them, two from the rural school and one from the urban school, even testified that it was clear that some pupils saw adherence to ATR as being a sin, judging by the way those pupils reacted in class when ATR values and practices were mentioned.

In response to why ATR is given such a low status, all the teachers blamed the curriculum designers for neglecting this part of study which they all claimed was very important in the academic as well as personal growth of the pupil. I had posed this question as a follow up to the

main one which was, “To what extent is ATR covered in the present RE syllabuses?” They, in addition, blamed this state of affairs on the Western influence in education. One rural teacher said:

I have never been to Europe, but do they teach Zambian tradition or African tradition in general? If they do not, why should we learn what they do? Curriculum designers should favour our tradition so that we do not get lost...at the moment we are lost.

I was privileged to meet one teacher at the rural school under study who had very personal experiences to share about his belief in African tradition and the spiritual world. I will call this teacher Mr Mudenda. He offered his story when I just asked him what his thoughts were about African Traditional Religion in the teaching of Religious Education. I have decided to include this story, in its entirety, in this section of my study because it provides some insights into the teaching of ATR in Religious Education which I would like to discuss in the next Chapter.

Mr Mudenda:

It is unfortunate that there is very little that we are doing as teachers to teach ATR to our pupils. Christianity has given us the impression that ATR is about evil spirits...I have personally experienced the manifestations of evil as well as good spirits in my life.

Researcher:

Can you tell me more, if you do not mind?

Mr Mudenda:

Before I came to this school, I was teaching at a Basic school somewhere in one of the villages. Apart from teaching, I had a hardware shop which was doing very well. One night I had a dream in which I saw two old men who were running some businesses in the same village come to me and ask me where I was getting all the merchandize I was selling in my shop from. This was such a strange dream that I decided to share it with my best friend in the morning. After teaching that day, I decided to go to the shop with my friend, and lo and behold, the same old fellows in my dream came to the shop and asked me the same questions! My friend and I were shocked. After two nights, the same old people appeared in my dream and this time they told me that if I did not scale down my business, I would live to regret. I shared this with my friend again...Many strange things started happening to me. One of them was that I started seeing things before they happened. One day I had a vision that I would die and be buried but that I would live again after eleven days. The same day I went for wedding rehearsal for my friend. While practising, I stripped and fell. I do not know what I stripped over, because there was virtually nothing in my way. I



could not rise. I was taken to hospital where nothing wrong was diagnosed. I became paralyzed. Since the hospital could not do anything for me, I was taken to my parents' village. My parent took me to all kinds of Pastors for prayers but it did not work. I told my parents that they should not waste money because the pastors would not solve the problem. I still had that feeling that I would be fine one day. I remained in the wheelchair for eleven months.

Researcher:

What made you have this strong faith that you would live and walk again?

Mr Mudenda:

Remember I had this strange gift of seeing things before they happened. To cut the long story short, one night I dreamed that I was playing football. I told my mother in the morning about it and she was afraid I may actually die that very day because I was quite weak. But later in the day, my toes started moving. I later started moving my legs. I got a walking stick and stood up for the first time in eleven months. By the end of the week, I could walk.

Researcher:

What explanation can you give for such an experience?

Mr Mudenda:

This can just be a manifestation that in African tradition there are evil as well as good spirits, unlike the emphasis on evil spirits that Christianity portrays African tradition to be about. The evil spirits were fighting me, but I also had the good ones on my side. My experience also shows that African spiritual affliction can only be solved in the African way. Evil spirits are also found in Christianity, and there is a Christian way of casting them out. This is why I do not understand why charms, tattoos and lotions as a way solving African spiritual problems are condemned by Christianity.

I asked Mr Mudenda if he had ever shared this personal experience with his class. His answer was in the affirmative:

Yes I have shared several times. There are some pupils who are Jehovah's witnesses who reject everything African. I have had conflicts with them, but I just tell them that I am not there to give them a religion. I ask them to choose what they want. But I tell them never to do away with their tradition because that would mean they do not appreciate who they are. I tell them that even the Bible was written according to Jewish tradition. The Jews did not throw away their tradition.

When he was asked if African Traditional Religion was worth teaching, Mr Mudenda responded:

We cannot do away with our tradition. I was disappointed when one Friday I announced to my class that I would go to attend the 'malende' ceremony that weekend; they laughed at me that I worship spirits. I explained to the class that Africans knew God even before the White missionaries came but they related to him in a different way. We talk of Saint Peter and John interceding for us, why should we not pray to our ancestors, Mazuba, Milimo to intercede for us? I know that my grandfather was a good man, I can, therefore, ask for his intercession to the Higher Being.

He continued to say:

I fail to understand the difference between praying to the Christian saints and our ancestral worship. Why are we condemned for honouring and worshipping our ancestors? It is hard to explain this in class. We blame the people who prepare the syllabus for this low position ATR has attained in RE. As teachers, we only teach what we are given in the syllabus. And if we were given the leeway to broaden it, we would do it, but the syllabus restricts us.

One striking feature about this teacher is that while he had such strong reverence for African tradition, he also came across as a very strong Christian. He knew his Bible well and said he goes to church regularly.

The teachers in the two schools claimed that Syllabus 2044 covered Zambian tradition in a more detailed way than Syllabus 2046. The rural school offered Syllabus 2044 to two classes and Syllabus 2046 to the other two. The Head of the department explained that this was done to give equal weight to the two syllabuses. The situation was different in the urban school where a clear bias towards 2046 was detected. Out of six classes only one did 2044. The reason for favouring 2046, according to the teachers at the urban school, was that it was easier for both teachers and pupils. The teachers claimed that 2044 had too many issues on ATR which were difficult for even teachers to explain at times. The teachers from the urban school further explained that pupils perform better in examinations in the 2046 syllabus and so given chance, they would all rather do this syllabus which they called a "passing subject." One respondent from the rural school, not Mr Mudenda, called for ATR to be given prominence by the CDC. He proposed that at least a third of the content should be on ATR. He advocated for the immediate revision of the syllabi and that CDC should consult and engage the teachers who are the ones on the ground. This teacher concluded that:

Teachers of RE are not consulted. CDC should involve the ones in class who are in constant contact with pupils. Many officers at CDC do not know the classroom situation, or have forgotten. We have a lot of good stuff in our tradition which should be imparted on the youth. CDC should be sending questionnaires to teachers to find out what should be included in syllabus. They can even extend the invitation to old people in villages who may have more information than what is recorded.

Five of the respondents from both schools called for one syllabus which would harmonize or combine the values of Christianity and Zambian tradition, instead of the two syllabuses which are currently in operation. This was in response to the question where I had asked them what they would like to be done in the teaching of RE in general.

On the question of how the teachers saw the pupils responding to ATR dimension in the syllabus, teachers answered that they had observed that many pupils were not eager to learn ATR. They all added that the Western influence has contributed to this attitude. One teacher from the urban school lamented that, *“we are dealing with a generation which does not know their culture. This generation is more comfortable with Western culture than its own.”* This teacher further narrated his experience:

The other time I was teaching about spirits and exorcism. I told my class that you can exorcize in two ways. You can pray the Christian way or you can do it the traditional way. I asked for role plays depicting the two. Those who did the Christian way did it so well and had no problems because they were just imitating their pastors, but those who had to do it the traditional way were lost! I had to help them because they had no experience for they had never seen how it is done. Zambian tradition is dying out slowly. Something should be done.

Another teacher from the same school extended the blame to the pupils' homes:

It could also be a weakness in our homes. Charity begins at home. Parents have thrown out culture. If they did their part on the cultural aspect, it would be easier for us to teach it here.

One teacher at the rural school, however, pointed out that some pupils were now appreciating some African values and practices. He elaborated that the advent of HIV and AIDS and the issue of male circumcision has made some pupils value or appreciate the Luvale tradition. The Luvale are a Zambian tribe which practises male circumcision.

When they learn about the scientific part of male circumcision and realize that the Luvale have been doing it from time immemorial, they then appreciate the wisdom of tradition. This gives them the idea that not all that is African is wrong or bad

There was a campaign on male circumcision at the time I visited this school. The Ministry of Health had dispatched its personnel to talk to pupils about the advantages of male circumcision. Many boys responded positively and were circumcised. This could be the reason this teacher gave this example.

It must be pointed out that there seem to be not much difference in in the perception of ATR between the teachers in the urban school and their counterparts in the rural school. It is, however, odd that the urban school offers more of Syllabus 2046 which has less ATR content than Syllabus 2044. This is a matter I will discuss in the next Chapter.

#### **4.5 How pupils view the content of African Tradition Religion in RE syllabuses**

The question I asked the pupils was, “Of all the religious traditions covered in Religious Education, which one do you appreciate or like most? Give reasons for your answer.” Nine out of twelve pupils doing Syllabus 2046 who were interviewed said they preferred Christianity. Five of these were from the rural school while four came from the urban school. For those interviewed taking Syllabus 2044, eight preferred Christianity. Of these eight, five were from the urban school while three were from the rural school. From the questionnaire group thirteen out of twenty pupils from the rural school chose Christianity while fourteen out of sixteen at the urban school opted for the same. I then asked them if they would like ATR to be taught in RE or not. It turned out that 49 preferred ATR to be taught, while 11 claimed they did not see any need for this dimension to be included in the RE syllabuses. I will discuss this in the next Chapter.

Table 4.2: Summary of pupils' preferences of religious traditions in RE

<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>ATR</b>	<b>Islam</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	<b>Yes ATR</b>	<b>No ATR</b>
Rural 2044	5	3	0	0	7	0
Rural 2046	8	4	0	0	12	1
Urban 2044	2	1	0	0	3	0
Urban2046	12	0	1	0	11	2
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Interviews</b>						
Rural 2044	3	2	1	0	5	1
Rural 2046	4	2	0	0	4	2
Urban 2044	5	1	0	0	4	2
Urban 2046	5	0	1	0	3	3
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>11</b>

The last two columns indicate the numbers of pupils that wanted ATR to be taught and those who did not want, respectively.

#### 4.5.1 Pupils following Syllabus 2046 at the rural school

One boy from the rural school, in connection with the first question, explained: *Christianity is very easy because these are the things we do.* Asked if there were no African traditional things that he does at home, the boy answered: *Some practise the things that are mentioned in ATR... I can go for it but it is not as good as Christianity.*

With reference to Christianity, another boy stated: *This is the religion I have been brought up in, and the morals taught are good.*

A girl from the same group said: *In Christianity someone's salvation depends on faith in Jesus Christ.*

#### **4.5.2 Pupils following Syllabus 2044 at the rural school**

Referring to the first question, one boy indicated that he preferred Christianity and said: *It is the religion I follow.*

Another boy was elaborate and had this to say:

I prefer Christianity because it has changed my life and those of other people. But I most appreciate the Seventh Day Adventist Church because these are the people who have spread the word of God most. Even the one who has changed my life is from the SDA church.

A girl doing the same syllabus indicated:

I like this dimension because I know that my life is driven with Jesus Christ; and Christianity teaches me how to live well with other people.

#### **4.5.3 Pupils following Syllabus 2046 at the urban school**

One urban girl preferred Christianity and said:

It is the religion which is easy to learn and common, especially in Zambia. In addition, most of its customs are easy to follow and practise.

A boy doing the same syllabus said:

Christians follow what the Bible teaches, like they do not worship idols, spirits or practice polygamy. They do the will of God.

The two pupils here who preferred Islam just indicated that they were Muslims and were brought up in that religion.

#### **4.5.4 Pupils following Syllabus 2044 at the urban school**

One boy from the urban school indicated that he preferred Christianity because Zambia is a Christian nation. In response to the question about why ATR is included in the syllabus and whether he wanted it to remain there, he mentioned that ATR was good in teaching culture and how to live and protect the environment. But the boy further mentioned that he hated the topic on Marriage in African tradition because it gave the man the right to batter his wife. He amplified that:

the wife does most of the home chores and is responsible for disciplining children...men know that in the initiation ceremony women are taught to be submissive and take care of children. So the men relax.

From those interviewed five pupils preferred African tradition while two respondents preferred Islam.

#### **4.5.5 Pupils' attitude to ATR**

One boy from the rural school who preferred African tradition and was doing syllabus 2044 claimed that this dimension was good at producing a responsible person. The pupil lamented that African tradition was currently not respected in the school system. He was of the view that Western culture had spoiled the African culture, economy and welfare. He shared what he called a 'cultural shock.' According to him, when he went to do holiday tuition at one of the schools near the city, he witnessed a situation where his holiday classmate from the city greeted his father who had gone to visit him by just hitting his shoulder against his father's and shouting, "Hi dad! What's up? How is mum?" The boy said he could not believe what he was seeing, especially

that the father of that classmate seemed to be at ease with that kind of greeting. *“We have lost respect for elders. We no longer bend when talking to parents!”* the boy lamented. When he was asked what he would do if he had powers to change the syllabus, the boy responded,

I would be happy to include more topics that teach against western culture, unlike now where we learn more about foreign things. I would love Zambian tradition to be emphasised because Africans must abide by African tradition.

The urban pupil, who preferred African tradition, and taking syllabus 2044, explained that he enjoys this dimension because it offers him an opportunity to *“learn how my ancestors used to worship and live and how people in rural areas worship compared to Christianity.”*

Of the eleven pupils who saw no need of ATR to be in the syllabuses, there were two pupils who had very strong views against African tradition; a boy from the rural school and a girl from the urban school. Both were taking syllabus 2046. The girl stated:

African tradition is outdated. We do not need it in this modern world. We view most of the practices in African tradition as being against Christian principles, so most of us do not like it. I personally do not like it.

When she was asked if the whole of African tradition was bad, this same girl responded:

Not everything. But they worship ancestors and they also have a lot of practices which are against the Bible; like consulting traditional doctors. Well, it has some advantages like when a person reaches puberty. African tradition is the best in teaching how to become an adult.

Even though the majority of the pupils interviewed claimed they preferred Christianity to African tradition, they, nevertheless, stated that it was necessary that African tradition was included in the syllabus. They gave various reasons some of which are:

In African traditional religion we learn many things like how people in the past trained young girls to live with their husbands and how young men were taught to hunt and how to live with their wives. We also learn a lot of things that are done during leisure time like storytelling, dancing and singing (Girl from a rural school doing syllabus 2044).

African traditional religion teaches us some things which Christianity does not cater for when teaching. It also teaches youths on how to behave and respect



elders and to have self-discipline (Girl from rural school doing syllabus 2046).

It helps us to know who we are or to know where we originated from. It can also help us tell people from other continents about our traditions (Boy from urban school doing syllabus 2046).

From the 24 pupils who were interviewed, 16 wanted African tradition to be taught in senior secondary school RE while 8 said they saw no need for this dimension to be included. Out of the 36 responses obtained from the questionnaire group, 33 wanted African tradition to continue being taught while 3 did not want it.

When the pupils were asked what difficulties, if any, they faced in learning about the African tradition they gave various responses some of which are:

We do not practise what we learn (Girl from urban school doing syllabus 2046).

We do not have enough information about African tradition and we lack books in RE (Boy from rural school doing syllabus 2044).

I have no difficulties. It is clear and straight forward because the things we learn in African tradition are the things that happen nowadays. So it is easy for me to understand (Girl from rural school doing syllabus 2044).

The difficulties are that for you to understand the topic you need explanation from the teacher. Syllabus 2044 needs more explanation, not studying on your own; you cannot understand (Girl from rural school doing syllabus 2044).

It is hard to compare Christianity and African tradition (Boy from urban school doing syllabus 2046).

African tradition disagrees with Christianity (Boy from urban school doing syllabus 2046).

The ones teaching African tradition are not much specialized because they tend to be Christians, hence they do not know the beliefs of African tradition (Boy from rural school doing syllabus 2046)

Many people do not know what African tradition is all about (Girl from rural school doing Syllabus 2046).

I do not face any difficulties. It is only that some activities which were done by our fore fathers have been abolished in some tribes, for example, initiation ceremonies, and going for 'gobelo' where men were taught how to handle their families. These days they say technology has taken over these things which they used to do (Boy from rural school doing Syllabus 2044).

African tradition is contrary to the Bible so one can find it hard to decide what to do (Girl from urban school doing Syllabus 2046).

#### **4.6 Views of the RE specialist at CDC on the content of African Tradition Religion in the RE Syllabuses**

When the RE specialist at the CDC was asked to describe the two RE syllabuses in relation to African Traditional Religion, she stated that Syllabus 2044 is quite diverse and does not just narrow on the Bible because its designers have left much of the teaching of the Bible to churches. She claimed that learners who complete the 2044 syllabus are better at appreciating the religious values from other religions like Islam, Hinduism and even African traditional religion than their Syllabus 2046 counterparts. She further explained that the designers of Syllabus 2044 did not want people to forget about the past because there is a lot of good about the past which is in danger of being abandoned because of technology. She reiterated that:

The African tradition dimension in the 2044 syllabus helps learners to reflect about the past and see how the good things of the past can be embodied into the present... the past has an impact on the future. A society that forgets about its past does so at its own peril.

On the other hand, she described the 2046 syllabus as being very strong on the Bible, and that the aim of this syllabus is to make a learner appreciate the values of the Bible. She acknowledged that while religions are compared in both syllabuses the comparative nature comes stronger in Syllabus 2046 where it is very clear that the other religions and traditions are mentioned merely for comparative sake with Christianity which is what the syllabus teaches.

To the question of whether she was aware that African Traditional Religion was not appreciated by some teachers and pupils, she responded that she was aware.

I am aware. This is because we seem to have put ATR in a box. No one wants to talk about it... there are no avenues where we can really spend time talking

about it. Not even the media spend time talking or writing about it. Everybody is living in the present; so we are forgetting the past.

The RE specialist reiterated that it was only when social activities like initiation ceremonies, kitchen parties and marriage preparations came up that people show preference for the traditional values. She, however, pointed out that the attitude of some teachers and pupils towards African traditional religion was not just a school problem but a national one which called for national concerted effort to bring back the good old traditions in the lives of Zambians today.

When she was asked why a lot of the content on African tradition in the pupils' text books and teachers' handbooks is presented in the past tense, especially in Syllabus 2044, she regretted this and admitted that the content of the text books has contributed to the learners attaching African tradition only to the past and failing or refusing to align it to the present as well. She pointed out that it was good that such issues were coming up at that time when the Ministry of Education was in the process of revising the current curriculum for all subjects.

My next question at this stage was, "As a representative for CDC, you are aware that some teachers and pupils are indifferent to African traditional religion in the syllabus, what do you plan to do? And why have you allowed a situation where one of the syllabuses seems to have little regard for African traditional religion?" The specialist responded that the situation was very complex because it deals with peoples' religious and traditional values. She explained that the complexity of the situation has even made it difficult to merge the two syllabuses. She shed more light on the two syllabuses and explained that Syllabus 2044 was pro- Catholic and was offered by all Catholic grant-aided schools while 2046 was favoured by other church schools and nearly all government schools. She went on to say that schools where Pentecostal and Evangelical voices were the strongest among RE teachers and school administrators usually offer syllabus 2046. She said:

Our observation is that in government schools if the school administration favours syllabus 2046, for example, they would dictate that it be the only one taught. They would also ensure that pupils' text books for that syllabus are available. Similarly, teachers seem to impose their preferences of one or the other syllabus onto the pupils.

She mentioned that while there have been calls, particularly from the University of Zambia, Department of Religious Studies, to have only one syllabus in the high schools, the merging of

the two has not succeeded because of different perceptions of RE by the designers of the two courses. She pointed out that even among the personnel at the Curriculum Development Centre there are some who insist that the two syllabuses should remain distinct. She did not hide her personal opinion and stated that while in her teaching career she taught, liked and appreciated syllabus 2044, as a Pentecostal Christian herself she respects the rationale behind syllabus 2046. She, therefore, indicated that even as the curriculum was undergoing some revision so that life skills could be stressed, the two RE syllabuses would basically remain distinct.

#### **4.7 Methods which are employed to teach ATR in RE**

One of the objectives of the study was to find out the views of teachers and pupils on the methods used to teaching African Traditional Religion in Religious Education. In order to achieve this, I carried out non-participant classroom observation on the teaching of African tradition dimension. Information was also obtained from the semi structured interviews of the teachers and pupils in the sample. This part of the research was important because I wanted to find out if the apparent indifference of pupils to ATR was a result of the ATR content in the syllabus or the methods the teachers used in imparting this knowledge.

##### **4.7.1 Non-participant classroom observation**

Two classes were observed; one doing Syllabus 2044 was observed in the urban school and the other doing Syllabus 2046 in the rural school. I chose to observe classes when the African tradition dimension was being covered in class. Securing classes or lessons to observe was a challenge which I will discuss in the coming chapter.

##### **4.7.1.1 Syllabus 2044 at the urban school**

The Syllabus 2044 lesson was observed in a Grade 12 class doing the topic on “The search for God.” It turned out that the teacher had asked the pupils to research on the traditional names of God apart from the ones that were in the text book. Only one boy out of 45 pupils in class came up with two names of God in Tonga, the local language. The rest of the class claimed they could

not find any books with such information. The pupils were then asked to read the two stories on traditional religious rituals in the pupils' text book (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009, pp. 139–140). The two stories were both in the past tense. The teacher gave her exposition, which was merely explaining the language used so that the pupils could understand better. After the class, I asked the teacher why she did not ask if any of the pupils had attended any of the two ceremonies in the book, or just any similar rituals. Her answer was, "*I know these pupils are not keen on tradition. It would have been a waste of time asking them.*" On why she did not tell the pupils that the two ceremonies actually still take place instead of presenting them in the past, the teacher was surprised that they existed. She said she was just following what is in the book. There was very little pupil participation in this class.

#### **4.7.1.2 Syllabus 2046 at the rural school**

For the 2046 syllabus, I observed a Grade 10 lesson on "Baptism." The teacher started the class without the boys in class because, coincidentally, they had all gone to attend a talk on male circumcision in the school hall.

The teacher introduced the lesson by asking about traditional initiation ceremony for Tonga girls called *nkolola*. He asked the class what kind of girls attends such a ceremony. A question and answer session followed. The girls were quite shy since this was a male teacher asking them. They were also aware of my presence at the back of the class. There was a lot of giggling and looking down, but the girls still answered the questions.

The boys came back after 15 minutes of class. The teacher told the boys that they would only sit down when they recounted what the talk they attended was about. A discussion on circumcision ensued with a few boys explaining while the girls shyly laughed away.

The teacher dwelt on *gobelo*, a Tonga traditional school for adolescent boys where they are taught to be responsible fathers and husbands. He also elucidated on *mkanda*, a Lunda traditional school where boys are initiated into adulthood and circumcised. The teacher explained that apart from *Mkanda* being time for circumcision it is also the time that values of endurance and manliness are imparted. He went on to explain that circumcising a boy without anaesthesia

forewarns him of the pains of growing up and being a provider for the family. The teacher mentioned that the initiated is not supposed to cry when the operation is performed. On *nkolola*, which is a Tonga ceremony for girls who have reached puberty, the teacher explained that the ceremony signifies that the young lady was ready to bear a child, and should be treated so.

The teacher then brought in baptism as a form of Christian initiation. He concluded that just as the three traditional initiation ceremonies are rites of passage to another stage of life and a sign that the initiated is now of age, Christian baptism symbolises leaving the old life and entering a new life of a Christian

I observed that when the boys came in class, they dominated the discussions even on *nkolola* which is for girls. In addition, it was observed that the girls became a bit more reserved when the boys joined the class than when they were on their own. I noticed that the teacher involved the pupils in the lesson through question and answer. Only few pupils seemed to be active and offered the answers while the majority of them just laughed at the answers or information offered and murmured in disapproval or surprise. The teacher seemed to know what he was teaching and showed a lot of interest in the topic.

#### **4.7.2 Teachers' views on methods used to teach ATR in Religious Education**

In the interviews all the ten teachers in the study stated that they wanted their lessons in general to be pupil-centred and so they involve the pupils in the lessons as much as possible. The methods mostly used, according to them, are question and answer, role plays, group work and teacher's exposition. They also mentioned that they sometimes give pupils some topics to research on and then present in class.

The teachers, in different ways, explained that while they would like the pupils to be as active as possible in class, the pupils' lack of knowledge of African/Zambian tradition kills the spirit of participation. One teacher from the rural school who teaches syllabus 2044 had this to say:

The main challenge is pupils' perception of African tradition. They believe that it is insignificant. They have noticed that we spend very little time on it in the

syllabus. The indoctrination, from especially Pentecostal churches, makes the pupils believe that it is a sin to practise African tradition. But if a teacher tries to open up their minds with serious and genuine critique of Western culture, then they open up and start appreciating their culture. The passion should start with the teacher.

A teacher from the urban school who was interviewed after I had observed her class explained that pupil participation was poor when dealing with African tradition.

Pupils seem to be ignorant. There is very good response when you are dealing with Christianity and the Bible. You saw how the girl recited the Bible passage. When you give assignments on African tradition, you do not get much information. It is only boys from villages who respond, but they too start feeling shy after some time- they do not want to show that they are backward.

#### **4.7.3 Pupils' views on the methods used in teaching African Traditional Religion in RE**

Only 7 out of 24 pupils interviewed indicated that they were happy with the approaches teachers use in teaching African tradition. The question I asked them was, "Are you happy with the way you are taught ATR in RE? If not, how would you like to be taught?" From the questionnaires 8 respondents out of 36 were contented with the methods used. The rest mentioned that more could be done to make the lessons more meaningful and appropriate. Some of their responses were:

*I am not happy because those who teach us also learn from books and sometimes speak to us from their own thoughts (Boy from a rural school doing Syllabus 2044).*

*I think after finishing a topic about African tradition, we should be visiting rural areas to learn directly from the people who live and practise African tradition (Boy from the urban school doing Syllabus 2044).*

*There is only one difficulty that I as an individual have discovered. African tradition in RE is taught plainly. It is not practical (Girl from the urban school doing Syllabus 2046 doing Syllabus).*

*It is not practical. The teachers give us examples but they do not expose us. It would be better to visit some traditional ceremonies or sites sometimes. (Girl from the urban school doing Syllabus 2046).*

*It would be better to invite some elderly people to talk to us about African tradition. (Girl from the rural school doing Syllabus 2044).*

## **4.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have endeavoured to recount my findings on the status of African Traditional Religion in the teaching of Religious Education in my two sampled schools in the Southern province of Zambia. I started by stating how ATR is represented in the content of the two syllabuses including textbooks and teachers' handbooks, and how it features in the Grade 12 School certificate examinations. I next recounted how the teachers, pupils and the subject specialist I sampled view the content of ATR in the syllabuses. I have ended this chapter by stating my findings in the classes that I observed in action and have also recounted what the teachers and pupils said about the teaching procedures employed in teaching ATR in Religious Education.

One of my main findings is that the pupils' current perception of the religion or perspective in the syllabuses has something to do with the representation of ATR in the pupils' textbooks. I will discuss this in the next chapter. In addition, as I analysed the pupils' text books, and teachers' handbooks, I noticed that the positions of Islam and Hinduism in the RE syllabuses and textbooks have changed over the years. I will touch on this in the coming chapter.

The interviews and questionnaires have demonstrated that Christianity is preferred by pupils over the other religious traditions covered in the RE syllabuses. At the same time, however, the pupils seem to see some value in learning ATR. In the next Chapter I will discuss possible reasons why the situation is this way. Related to this, I noticed that some teachers seem to have made up their minds that pupils are not interested in ATR. I think this attitude plays a part in the current status of ATR in the RE syllabuses. I intend to delve into this area. Similarly, the teachers' role in the choice of which syllabus to offer to the pupils is something I choose to explore and discuss further in the next chapter.



Furthermore, my study has revealed that there is a general dissatisfaction among the pupils over the methods that are used to teach ATR in the two syllabuses. This is another area I choose to examine further in the coming chapter.

Another important discovery worth discussing further is the examination system and pattern. I noticed that the examination system has a big role to play in the positioning of ATR in the two RE syllabuses.

Lastly, it is very clear from the pupils responses both from the semi structured interviews and the questionnaires that the Christian church plays a role in the formation of pupils' attitudes to other religious traditions in the syllabuses, particularly ATR. The role of the church in the positioning of ATR in the RE discourse will be examined in the coming chapter.

Having stated my research findings in this chapter, my next task is to discuss some key areas from here.

## **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The objective of the study was to investigate how African traditional religion as a form of indigenous knowledge is taught in the two senior secondary school Religious Education syllabuses in Zambia. In order to achieve this aim, I formulated the following research questions:

- i. How is ATR represented in the two Zambian Religious Education syllabuses and how is the content of ATR represented in the pupils' text books and the teachers' handbooks?
- ii. How is ATR examined in the Grade 12 school certificate examinations?
- iii. How do the teachers view the syllabuses in relation to ATR?
- iv. How do pupils view the syllabuses in relation to ATR?
- v. How does the subject specialist at CDC view the syllabuses in relation to ATR?
- vi. What are the views of teachers and pupils on the methods used to teach ATR in RE?

Through document analysis, classroom observation, interviews with teachers, pupils and the subject specialist, and questionnaires administered to some additional pupils, I have explored the issues raised by these research questions, and presented my findings in Chapter 4. In this chapter I will discuss my findings with reference to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and the background information presented in Chapter 1. I will specifically ground my discussion around the conceptual framework of Indigenous knowledge, African Traditional Religion and modernity. In addition, I will make reference to religion and its role in identity and character formation as well as ATR as part of a multi-faith Religious Education in a multi-faith society. I make this discussion around these themes in my pursuit for answers to the objectives of the study.

### **5.2 How African Traditional Religion is represented and approached in textbooks, teaching and examination in senior secondary schools RE in Zambia**

In this section of the Chapter, I trace the extent to which ATR is represented in the Zambian senior secondary schools syllabuses by discussing how much of it is in the two syllabuses. In

addition, I discuss the importance that is laid on ATR by looking at how it is examined in the Grade 12 School Leaving Examinations.

### 5.2.1 Syllabus 2044

In discussing this syllabus I want to focus on the tense which is used to present the content of ATR in the pupils' text books and the effect it is likely to have on the pupils.

The content analysis exposed the fact that the content of ATR in this syllabus is presented in the past tense in most of the themes. Consequently, Zambian tradition or ATR is taught like history, which may not have any direct relevance or impact on the lives of the present. To begin with, one may argue that having the two dimensions; "Present situation" and "African tradition" in this syllabus, as distinct ones may have an underlying effect. While it could be argued that these two dimensions are treated as separate entities for the sake of focus or emphasis, which is a laudable intention, at the same time it may not be a far-fetched argument to state that treating Present Situation on its own precludes African tradition as being still alive and present. If teachers do not explain to the pupils right at the beginning of the syllabus in Grade 10 that most of what is covered under African traditions is still valid, they will, erroneously, believe they are just learning history. One can then understand why the girl at the rural school in my research who had very strong feelings against Zambian tradition stated that it is outdated and was not required now.

In addition, when presenting my findings from the classroom observations in the urban school, I made reference to the texts that were read by the pupils in the syllabus 2044 class. I observed that the content on the Kutomola Ceremony (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009, p. 140), Appendix 1, is in the past tense. It must be pointed out, however, that the ceremony is, still performed. If the pupils are not told this by their teachers they remain with what they read in their text books which imply that such traditions or rituals no longer take place. It is worth noting that what is written carries a lot of weight in the modern dispensation of education as Holmes and McLean (1989) state that, "in the major cultures of the world a book, or books, contains what is regarded as worthwhile knowledge" (1989, p. 5). Pupils might have a different concept of ATR if the content made it clear that even in Zambia today, there are traditional societies that still

uphold the old way of living. It could be mentioned that this is mostly in the rural parts of Zambia but also applicable in some urban societies and families.

Related to the issue of using the past tense in some content of the syllabus, I noticed that there seems to be some confusion in the textbooks between what happens now and what happened in the past. For example, the Present situation under the sub-theme “Family Life” starts with the sentence, “In the village, families were often large but since people grew their own food, the practice of hospitality was easy (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009, p. 108). One would ask how a pupil from a rural school coming from the village where this scenario described is the reality but finds that in school it is presented as an exclusively old practice would react to this.

Under African Tradition in the same sub-theme, sub heading ‘Authority in the home’ starts like, “In the past, the husband was regarded as the head of the family... children felt freer with their grandparents than with their parents” (Curriculum Development Centre, 2009, p. 112). Again one would tend to believe many pupils come from homes where it is clear that their fathers are still the heads of the families. This scenario applies even in modern educated homes. So when this statement is presented in the past, I believe it sends wrong signals to the pupils and confuses them and leaves them asking which information they should regard as true.

Similarly, the children’s being freer with their grandparents is a phenomenon which should not only be confined to the past in a lot of Zambian families, be they urban or rural. Therefore, the presentation of this statement in the past seems to be misplaced. One may even state that the relationships that exist between children and their grandparents in Zambia is close to what may be termed as ‘inborn’. It is a value that modernity seems to have failed to remove from the mentality of many Zambians because it permeates their very values as Zambians. This apparent contradiction between what the pupils know as real from their homes and what they are taught or find in class is in fact similar to what Breidlid calls a “crossing of cultural and epistemological borders on the same day” (Breidlid, 2004, p. 45). This kind of content presentation could lead to pupils having the notion that home knowledge is different or inferior from what they learn at school. When a contradiction between home knowledge and school knowledge arises, the pupils are likely to opt for what is taught at school because this usually represents modernity which

most of them aspire for (Colson, 2006, p. 259). But, as Berger and Luckmann state, the primary socialization that the child gets from the immediate society or family would not be completely wiped out by secondary socialization later in life through, for example, academic education (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Similarly, Gee in his discussion on primary and secondary discourses asserts that in order for the pupils to learn something in school and be literate, they have to meet some other discourses which are unfamiliar to them (Gee, 2008) These discourses, according to Gee, should transcend ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ in the case of this study, so that the traditional values which the pupils are familiar with are related to and structured within the literacy they learn in school. This should be done to avoid contradictions and allow the pupils to include both traditional values and modern ones in their life orientations.

### 5.2.2 Syllabus 2046

Since ATR, Hinduism and Islam in this syllabus are only dealt with in comparison with Christianity, the focus of the discussion will be the number of times ATR is compared and omitted in the comparative process and the implications of the omissions.

Apart from the African tradition content being presented in the past tense in some topics in this syllabus as well, what is worth noting is that African tradition, which is here mostly referred to as “Zambian tradition” has been totally left out of some comparisons in some topics of the syllabus (Ref to 4.2.2). The Unit on Temptation, for example, leaves out the ATR comparison. This omission may be misunderstood by the pupils to imply that there are no issues of temptation in a Zambian traditional society where ATR is practised. Just as examples of dealing with temptations in other religions have been highlighted, I would argue that it would have been beneficial for the pupils to learn how this common, human aspect is dealt with in a Zambian traditional society. The same would apply for the other three units of the syllabus which are “Ideas about personal judgement”, “Reaction to persecution and opposition” and “Reaction to persecution” where the ATR comparative component has been completely left out.

It should further be pointed out that while the ATR comparative aspect with Christianity has been omitted in four units, the comparative aspect of Hinduism and Islam with Christianity has only

been omitted in one unit, which is ‘Ways of solving problems.’ Whether the many omissions of ATR were by default or design, it gives the impression that this dimension is generally given less regard than the two other religious traditions which have been better covered. The omission of ATR would further be taken as serious when one considers that for Africans the whole of the indigenous knowledge also encompasses their spirituality. While it can be argued that the present RE syllabuses are meant to be purely educational, it cannot be denied that every curriculum is designed with the intention of touching the lives of those that go through it so that they can be better and useful people in society. Here I agree with Goodlad’s claim that “successful education is that which promotes successful problem solving, sensitive human relations, self-understanding, and the integration of one’s total experience” (1994, p. 106). This is where the spiritual part of the syllabus comes in. And this is the spiritual part of ATR in RE syllabuses which the learners miss out when this component is not properly represented in the text books and taught effectively. The importance of spirituality in the indigenous people is well articulated by Breidlid when he posits that:

For indigenous and oppressed people, reclaiming spirituality can be a way of evoking agency to fight further oppression and exclusion and to establish an identity based on authenticity. The deprivation of spirituality is therefore a blow against themselves and their autonomy as human beings (2013, p. 36).

It has been pointed out earlier, in Chapter Two, that the learning of ATR, apart from being educational, partly serves the purpose of the Zambian pupils understanding their roots and forms their identity. It is then incumbent on the curriculum designers that what is portrayed as African tradition is presented and treated in a meaningful manner, including the spiritual part of it, to enable proper learning to take place.

### **5.2.3 Examination of ATR in the two syllabuses**

The focus of my discussion here is the attention that ATR gets in the Grade 12 final examinations. I look at the number of questions in the examination papers that are about ATR and compare to the frequency of questions relating to the other religions in the syllabuses.

The study findings show that concerning examinations the Christian religion is given extensively more prominence in both syllabuses than ATR.

I found that for Syllabus 2044, over a period of five years ATR was tested 26 times out of 150 possible times. At a glance, one may claim that ATR is receiving the due attention especially since Hinduism which occupied the second position featured 19 times while questions related to Islam on the third slot appeared 18 times. Christianity, of course, is tested in every question; and so over the period under review it featured 150 times. What is intriguing is that when you combine the times Hinduism and Islam were examined, they together feature better than ATR. However, the reality in Zambia is that there are more people inclined to ATR than those of Islam and Hinduism combined, and it should according to my opinion be proportionate. *New Africa*, a Comboni Missionary Magazine (Special Issue, Jan 2000) puts adherents of ATR in Zambia to be around 50% onwards. So the fact that the two religions together have been examined 37 times and ATR 26 times, in the period under review, in my view, is a misplacement of the emphasis, even if we are here talking about two distinct religions. It is not an exaggeration to mention that some pupils in some rural areas may never have even seen a Hindu or a Muslim in their lives but they are always in touch with Zambian traditionalists. African tradition for many young Zambians is more real than the values of Islam and Hinduism. If the aim of Zambian Religious Education is to teach appreciation of the values of other religious traditions in Zambia in order to relate to the adherents better, it would be more advantageous if the values of the majority of the people these learners are likely to meet are emphasised. These people happen to be the Zambian traditionalists than the Hindus and Muslims. Furthermore, the Zambian learners are more likely to be traditionalists than Muslims or Hindus.

Having discussed the disproportional nominal position which ATR occupies in the Zambian senior secondary schools RE syllabuses in relation to Islam and Hinduism combined, I do not, in any way, suggest that Islam and Hinduism should not be taught in the current curriculum. It is a fact that within the Zambian pupil- population there are some Muslims and Hindus whose beliefs, according to multicultural and multi-faith educational positions, should be covered in the curriculum, though to a lesser degree than the majority (Castles, 2009; UNESCO, 2006). It is in this spirit of proportionate representation of content in the RE syllabuses that after apartheid, South Africa saw the need to include in their Religion Education a lot more content of ATR in the syllabus than before (Chidester, 1994).

Also for Syllabus 2046, I found that the situation remains similar to the situation for Syllabus 2044 in that Hinduism and Islam combined have a more prominent position over ATR when it comes to the number of test questions. While ATR was compared 27 times to Christianity, in the period under review, Islam and Hinduism, combined, were compared 48 times. This state of affairs can be blamed on the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) which is responsible for the preparation of final Examination papers. The Western hegemonic education applies here in the manner Christianity is treated in RE. Mageša confirms this when he states that, “Christian notion of morality and ethics in academic studies have so overshadowed ethical notions of African religion that the latter have always come to be seen exclusively in the light of the former” (1997, p. 5).

Mageša’s assertion above points to what is prevailing in Syllabus 2046 where ATR is only mentioned in comparison with Christianity. What the syllabus teaches in reality is only Christianity and ATR, as well as the other religions, are only used for comparison.

In addition, the study shone a spotlight on the Grade 12 Chief Examiners’ report showing how poorly the Zambian tradition answers are done. To begin with, since the pupils have a choice between answering questions on Islam, Hinduism or ATR, they rarely opt for the Zambian tradition, or ATR, questions. The few who attempt them, consequently, do badly because, as is clear from the findings, this dimension is not adequately covered in class. This was also confirmed by the teachers, especially in the case of one teacher from the rural school who stated that the pupils see ATR as insignificant because of the little time they spend on it in class (see chapter 4).

If we move to the 2044 syllabus and the Chief Examiner’s report in 2011 on Question 13, it exposes the kind of education that is given to the pupils. This may not only apply to RE, and ATR dimension specifically, but to all subjects. My experience of the Zambian education system is that it encourages mere reproduction of what has been learnt or taught. When the Chief Examiner states that the question was poorly done because the candidates gave their own answers which were not in the books, and reminded teachers to ensure that answers came from the books, it confirms Freire’s concern about non-liberating education.



Freire condemns the kind of education where knowledge is 'banked' in the pupils' heads so that it can be 'withdrawn' at the time of the examinations (Freire, 2000, pp. 52–67). The 'sticking to the answers in the book' that the chief examiner recommends is tantamount to making education "an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire, 2000, p. 53). Freire continues that "in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing"(2000, p. 53).

With this kind of education where pupils are only expected to reproduce what has been given to them in class, it is no wonder that the ATR dimension in the syllabus is not well taught and later 'reproduced' in examinations. Many teachers barely know a bit more ATR than the pupils that they teach. It was a common perception by the pupils that "the teachers just read from the books".

In addition, the study has shown that the banking is not only applicable to pupils, but to teachers as well. The CDC prescribes what to teach, and the teacher has to strictly stick to that. Knowledge is therefore a preserve of the experts at CDC. The teachers only have to reproduce what has been handed down to them by the experts. This is probably why the status of ATR is blamed on CDC as one teacher from a rural school said, "If we were given the leeway to broaden it we would do it, but the syllabus restricts us." According to Skilbeck (1984), the situation described here takes away the teacher's freedom as a professional. Skilbeck claims that, "the role of the teacher as a free and responsible professional person, cannot be fulfilled unless there is scope for direct participation in significant aspects of the curriculum including its planning, designing and evaluating (1984, p. 15). This situation of CDC disregarding teachers' input in syllabus content, may, similarly, be responsible for the response given by the teacher who could not point out that the ceremonies which were presented in the past tense (Refer to Appendix 1) were still being performed in Zambia today. When this teacher was asked why the class discussed the Zambian traditional ceremonies in the past tense she responded, "I was just following what is in the book." With such responses from a teacher, I would further state that there seems to be a problem with teacher education in Zambia. It appears like Colleges of

Education and Universities are simply teaching students how to teach the text book, and nothing beyond that.

The Chief examiner's comment referred to above also seems to be a contradiction to what is set in the syllabus as the aim for RE. Syllabus 2044 states that, "care is taken to allow free response and in searching for synthesis to avoid imposing a conclusion on pupils and so the syllabus is true to the principle of genuine education" ( Curriculum Development Centre, 2001, p. 4).

One would question how free response would be realised when the candidates are penalised for writing their own answers outside the text books. As these comments by Chief Examiners are supposed to reach the teachers who, in turn relay the same to their pupils, it then becomes 'law' that in the answering of questions the pupils stick to the texts the way they appear in books. This, of course, according to Freire (2000) kills the initiative of pupils and thwarts their ability to be original in their thinking.

The study further illuminated the crucial role examinations play in the quantity and quality of content covered in class and how this contributes to the whole learning process. I tend to agree with Henze who argues that RE in Zambia is very book centred. He claims that:

One of the reasons for this has been the examination system in schools which has focused on memory work rather than on skills...It must be admitted that the format of national examinations determines the level of learning in classrooms (Henze,J, 2007, p. 25).

I noticed that the number of sub-themes in the revised pupils' text book in Syllabus 2044 has been reduced from 15 to 10. While this situation is not only particular to ATR, the general reduction of sub-themes in the syllabus indirectly affects what content of ATR remains in the syllabus for the pupils to learn, and this in turn contributes to the low status of ATR in the RE syllabuses. When the syllabus was first introduced, there were three pupils' text books, corresponding to the three years of senior secondary school, and a total of fifteen sub-themes. Currently, there is only one pupils' text book with these ten sub-themes. One wonders why this has been done. One possible answer is that since learning is generally geared towards examinations, it must have been noticed that 15 sub-themes were too many for the teachers to

cover in three years and drill their pupils for the examinations especially that they are only required to answer five questions at the end of the whole course. I noticed that the following sub-themes are left out of the current pupils' text book:

- Living in a changing society
- Loyalty in society
- Success
- Sex differences and the person
- Involvement in the world.

(For the ten sub-themes that have been maintained in the present pupils' text book refer to 4.2.1)

One question which can be asked is why the Grade 12 final examination paper still has 15 questions when it is very clear that only 10 sub-themes, at the most, are covered for the three years planned for the syllabus. It must be born in mind that the examination pattern is that there is only one question per sub-theme. The sub- themes which have been left out could be very important for the lives of the learners. If learning is just about examinations, one would even recommend that the whole course just covers five sub-themes so that the pupils would pass well.

### **5.3 How teachers, pupils and the subject specialist view the two Religious Education syllabuses in relation to African Traditional Religion**

In this section, I discuss the views of my informants concerning African tradition in the two RE syllabuses offered in Zambia in order to ascertain the value they place on ATR. The discussion is done in the light of the theoretical perspectives of Indigenous knowledge, ATR and modernity. I start with the views of teachers and follow this up with those of the pupils and end with those of the subject specialist. Since all the teachers in the study are familiar with the two syllabuses, although they choose to teach only one, their views are applicable to both syllabuses.

### 5.3.1 Views of teachers on ATR in Religious Education

The teachers' responses supported my analysis above that African Traditional Religion was given a lower status in the syllabus compared to Christianity, and even Islam and Hinduism combined. The dominance of Christianity in the syllabus confirms the hegemonic nature of Western education which is the vehicle for Christianity. This situation further confirms Goduka's fear of Indigenous knowledge being undermined within the academy (2000, p. 63).

My findings show that the teachers of RE are at different levels of perception and valuing of the African traditional content in the syllabuses. It is also evident that the teachers' perception of ATR manifests itself in the way they teach this part of the RE syllabus. There were teachers like the one at the urban school who did not even care to point out to the pupils that the traditional ceremonies the textbook presented in the past tense were actually still alive and active. I expected a trained teacher of RE to have been aware of this fact and pointed out the true position to the pupils although the textbook indicated otherwise. However, I found the case of Mr Mudenda, the teacher from a rural school whose story of the manifestation of evil and good spirits I narrated in Chapter 4, to be a special one. The story itself may not be particularly special but I got interested in the manner the teacher claims to use his knowledge and experience of ATR to present his lessons to the pupils and at the same time use himself as a teaching aid.

Mr Mudenda's sharing about his personal experiences of the spiritual side of ATR exemplified the existence of witchcraft and spirits as part of the corpus of ATR. Cheyeka (2005) confirms this when he states that "beliefs in ATR include beliefs in witchcraft, nature spirits, lineage spirits, territorial spirits, the unique spirit (God)..." (2007, p. 51). It was surprising that Mr Mudenda, a University graduate himself, did not mind sharing his experiences which many modern educated Africans would be ashamed or uncomfortable to share publicly. The situation concerning many modern African intellectuals, as Kunnie (2000) testifies, is that the more educated they are the more publicly distant they are to anything that is indigenous or traditional African. She elaborates that the situation is different when the same people are in the privacy of their hearts. Mr Mudenda's openness seems to be an answer to Kunnie's appeal that "indigenous educators and those who subscribe to the principles of indigenous philosophies, ought not be intimidated and fearful of incorporating their sense of indigenous spirituality into the academic world..." (2000, p. 165).

Similarly, Magesa posits that there is an element of dual thought system in the lives of many educated Africans and claims that this is not only an assertion but a fact (1997, p. 8). He exemplifies that:

many African professors, ministers in government and members of parliament have been known to 'revert' in secret to the diviner or medium in order to know what lies ahead, while at the same time vigorously protesting in public that diviners are relics of by-gone 'primitive times' and they possess no mystical powers (1997, p. 9).

And so, Mr Mudenda's openness to share his 'primitivity', a term he confessed some pupils used to describe his experience, may be a call to many educated Africans to be true to themselves and handle their 'dual citizenship' or adherence to both the traditional and the modern in a better and open way.

Magesa's assertion above appears to be an appeal to educated Africans to admit that while they have embraced Western lifestyle, there are some African values and beliefs that they still fervently cling to and that they should be proud of this. Similarly, Chabal and Daloz (1999) are in agreement with Magesa's views on the practice of overlapping of the spiritual and profane among the African elite (1999, p. 65). At this stage, it is worth noting that while some teachers in the Haambokoma (2007) study of the Lusaka schools that I referred to in Chapter One, indicated that ATR should not be included in the RE syllabuses, no single teacher in my study shared such views. This is both in the urban and rural schools that I studied. This then may rule out the possibility that their negative responses concerning ATR, on the part of teachers, were particularly an urban phenomenon. My claim here is further supported by the fact that while these teachers are found in the city smaller than Lusaka (urban school) or in the rural area (rural school), most of these teachers are educated in urban areas and the University of Zambia where most of them went to is in Lusaka. It may have something to do with their family background, an issue I cannot further discuss here.

### 5.3.1.1 Teachers' role in choice of syllabus

It must be borne in mind that the choice of which syllabus to teach to a class is mostly based on the preference of the teachers. I discuss this section with the understanding that the teachers' preference of the syllabus to teach indicates their views and attitudes to ATR.

While all the teachers in both sites stated that Syllabus 2044 had more ATR content than the 2046 one, the urban school chose to offer Syllabus 2046 to five classes while only one class did Syllabus 2044. The rural school had two classes taking Syllabus 2044 while two others did the 2046 syllabus. The teachers in the rural school explained that the idea of offering the two syllabuses in equal proportions was to respect the preferences of the teachers and also give the pupils a choice of which syllabus they would like to learn. The question that begs an answer, particularly for the urban school, is whether there is any value for ATR in the school. Was the popular choice of Syllabus 2046 a way of avoiding dealing with ATR which is quite prominent in 2044? The reasons given in the interviews with the teachers were that the syllabus was easier to execute and the pupils passed it better than the 2044 which, according to them, had too many issues on ATR which were difficult to explain at times. This answer confirms one of the results of a study by Cheyeka and Mulando (2012). The two state that RE is shunned by some RE teachers because it requires them to discuss with their pupils traditional rituals and initiation ceremonies wholesomely which the Zambian tradition does not allow. Since there is more ATR content in Syllabus 2044 than in 2046, this fear may apply more here. Classrooms in Zambia are usually a mixed grill, sometimes boys and girls together and of different ages. If one looks at initiation ceremonies in Zambia, it is a traditional practice that lessons are given to those who qualify chronologically and biologically. Some teachers feel uncomfortable to give their exposition on some ATR content because they believe certain issues, like *nkolola*, which they are compelled to discuss in class, like the situation in the class I observed at the rural school, should be discussed exclusively with girls of a certain age group on their own.

On the same issue of preferences of one syllabus over the other, Muller gives several reasons why Syllabus 2046 is becoming more popular than its counterpart (2004, p. 33). Muller agrees with the views of the urban teachers offering Syllabus 2046. She states that Syllabus 2044 is more complex, requiring some knowledge of philosophy, sociology and psychology on the part of the

learners for them to understand the content well. She claims that this is unlike Syllabus 2046 which is straight forward. In addition, it was evident from the study that many teachers, as confessed by themselves, and pointed out by some pupils, are not very conversant with Zambian tradition, which is more prominent in Syllabus 2044. Since there is an alternative to teaching it, they opt for Syllabus 2046 which does not go in detail as far as ATR is concerned.

In addition, Muller points out that it is easier and cheaper to buy text books for pupils in syllabus 2046. She explains that the printing and distribution of the text books have been highly sponsored by a Mrs Masterton. Mrs Masterton is an Australian who was a lecturer of Bible Knowledge at the University of Zambia for five years. She assisted in the formulation of the syllabus and has continued promoting it. This, in part, explains why many school managers opt for syllabus 2046 because they want to save money. Here, we see how the teaching of ATR is indirectly affected by the economy of the country.

The situation I have described here concerning the choice of syllabus which should be offered to a particular class shows how teachers impose their preferences on the pupils. This scenario takes away the freedom that the pupils have of learning what they would like to especially in a situation where a choice is provided. On this ground, I tend to agree with Skilbeck (1984) who states that teachers are not the only stakeholders to the school with curriculum rights. He further questions whether the school teacher has total authority to decide what the pupils should be taught without the input of the pupils themselves and their parents (1984, p. 9). This point of teachers making unilateral choices of syllabuses to teach is cited by Cheyeka and Mulando (2012) as one of the structural problems of Religious Education in Zambia today. The two condemn the random allocation of which classes to take which subject or RE syllabus. Cheyeka and Mulando consequently suggest that the solution to the problem of teachers' preferences of one specific RE syllabus over the other may lie in the merging of the two syllabuses and making the new syllabus "more of religions literacy rather than Christian indoctrination" (2012, p. 106).

### 5.3.2 Views of pupils on the current RE syllabuses

The responses of the pupils in the study exposed how much Christianity has influenced their value formation in their lives. The findings additionally indicate their attitude to ATR. I, therefore, focus my discussion here on these two issues. The differences in the responses between the pupils from the urban school and those from the rural school compel me to discuss the rural/ urban divide to see if this plays a role in the value formation of the pupils.

#### *5.3.2.1 Influence of Christianity on the pupils and their attitude to ATR*

Data collected show that the majority of the pupils in the study enjoy the Bible or Christian dimension of the Religious Education syllabuses. Out of the 60 pupils in the study, 44 (73.3%) indicated that they appreciate or enjoy mostly learning the Bible part or Christian dimension. On the other hand, 13 (21.7) claimed the ATR aspect gives them most pleasure in the RE lessons. Only 3 (5%) indicated that they like the lessons when Islam is being covered. There was no pupil who preferred Hinduism although, I am sure, some urban pupils must have come in contact with some Hindus.

Going by this breakdown of pupils' religious preferences above, one can see how deeply rooted Christianity has become in the lives of some Zambians. Some of the reasons given for preferring Christianity were that the Bible or Christian dimension in the RE lessons deals with things that they do in their everyday lives. Others explicitly indicated that Christianity is the religion they have been brought up in. It is even more interesting that one of the pupils indicated that Christianity's "customs are easy to follow and practice" (response from a girl at an urban school). Here the girl seems to imply that the Christian practices are as old and part of life as one would talk of the customs of any tribe in Zambia. This, of course, is with the knowledge that Christianity is now over one hundred years old as I have indicated in the background chapter.

In addition, the pupils' responses confirm the claims made by Mbiti (1990) and Colson (2006) who call Christianity a traditional religion. Christianity has been in Zambia for over a century now (Colson, 2006, p. 10). It is, therefore, comprehensible that Colson calls it part of the



Zambian mentality and that it plays a vital role in the construction and interpretation of events in many Zambians (Colson, 2006, p. 244). This deep rootedness of Christianity and its being geographically wide spread made Frederick Chiluba, the second Republican President, declare the country a Christian nation (Cheyeka, A, 2002, p. 88). Consequently, it is a common practice in Zambia that any meeting, civic or political, is preceded by singing of the National Anthem and saying a Christian opening prayer.

However, this notion of Christianity being a traditional religion in Africa is not shared by some scholars like Goduka who prefers to use ‘traditional’ in relation to religion to apply to those religions which are not imported and are not preached to the indigenes (Goduka, 2000). She, thus, opts to use ‘traditional’ on ATR because according to her it involves a spiritual value whose origins lie in the local peoples’ environment and has its base in their soil. I, however, sense controversy when she continues to give more qualification about the word ‘traditional’ that it applies to a situation where “each person is born into it, lives by it, practises it either in public or private life” (2000, p. 75). When one examines the way Christianity has imbedded itself in the life of present day Zambians, there is not much evidence to disqualify it from being regarded as traditional. Many Zambians have been born into the religion, live by it and practise it in their private as well as public life. Consequently, some may even claim to be closer to Christianity than to traditional religions or beliefs. Having discussed how the pupils’ views indicate the influence of Christianity in their lives, I now turn to their attitude towards ATR.

#### *5.3.2.2 Pupils’ attitude to ATR and its effect on their responses to religious preferences*

One intriguing finding from the data collected is that while ATR was not the most preferred religious tradition in the RE syllabuses, some of its practices or manifestations were cited by the pupils as being very beneficial in the lives of Zambians. For example, the girl in the urban school who termed African tradition as being outdated later confessed that “African tradition is the best for teaching how to become an adult.” As reported by *Lusaka Times* this statement is highlighted by traditional Chief Singani of the Tonga people in the Southern province of Zambia who “attributed the rampant increase in gender based violence in his kingdom to lack of traditional schools for youths known as *gobelo*.” He claimed that the traditional school and its values

helped to build people's positive mental attitudes towards life in contrast to the modern schools which he claimed mostly dwell on theory (Lusaka Times, 2012).

Similarly, other pupils mentioned advantages of ATR as leading to community harmony. This phenomenon could be seen to be in conformity with Hofer's (1977) study where he argues that the rebellion against tradition which he noticed among the Gwembe adolescents of Southern province of Zambia who had become urbanised was "primarily directed against the religious rituals and customs of the ethnic group they consider obsolete." But Holfer contends that the indifference of these youths to the rituals did not make them question the social structures and values that regulate the behaviour of individuals and promote harmony in society (Holfer 2000:5.4 in Colson, 2006:245). Here one can sense the inner spiritual struggle that some Zambian youths encounter. On one hand, Christianity, particularly the fundamentalist type, preaches to them that following some traditional practices is heathen. It is worth noting that the Catholic Church is exempted from this kind of teaching and this is why their schools prefer Syllabus 2044 which has more content of ATR than Syllabus 2046. On the other hand many Zambian youths acknowledge and experience that some of the traditional beliefs and practices that Christianity condemns are quite beneficial to their lives as Africans.

As discussed in the Theory Chapter one of the characteristics of ATR is that it has no dichotomy between the spiritual and the profane. One then wonders how a belief which is deemed holistic can be segmented into bad and outdated on one hand but essential in the formation of a responsible member of the society, on the other hand. Is it possible to attribute this confusion in the pupils' responses to lack of proper handling of ATR in schools? Colson (2006) offers a solution to this apparent confusion and implies that it is a temporary passing phase. Commenting on Holfer's study in relation to some young urbanized Tonga giving up the practice of traditional rituals and calling them primitive, Colson argues, "but earlier generations of Gwembe youths have said the same thing and then, as they matured and acquired responsibilities, turned to participating in appeals to the *mizimo* and themselves became *mizimo* inheritors..." (2006, p. 244). There is a traditional belief in Zambia that spirits of the dead continue existing in the people that are alive. A person can then claim to inherit the name and spirit of a relative who has died. The quotation above from Colson implies that the traditional beliefs and practices which are

despised in youth are later valued and embraced in adulthood. This statement may help the teachers to have a different understanding of the pupils when they demonstrate apparent indifference to the African tradition component in the syllabus. It is evident from my findings that some teachers have written off some pupils in relation to the interest in African tradition. With reference to Colson it might be important that they recognise the pupils' apparent lack of interest in traditional beliefs as a passing phase and that they would come back to valuing some African beliefs later.

Another interesting element emerging from the pupils' responses is the discrepancies between data from interviews and those from questionnaires. A higher percentage, 91.6, of those who provided data through a questionnaire, compared to 67.7 of those interviewed directly preferred ATR to continue being taught in the RE syllabuses. Those who thought it was not necessary were 8.4% from the questionnaire group and 33.3% from the interview group. The question one can ask is whether those who responded through a questionnaire were being true to themselves because of the anonymity unlike those I encountered face to face who may have been afraid of my labelling them primitive or backward if they favoured ATR (Colson, 2006, p. 248).

### *5.3.2.3 The Rural/Urban divide in pupils' responses on religious preferences in RE*

The responses of pupils about their preferred religious tradition in the syllabuses which I obtained from both semi-structured interviews and from questionnaires reveal that from the rural school, 20 out of 32 (62.5%) preferred Christianity while 11 (34.4%) opted for ATR. On the other hand, in the urban school with 28 pupils in the study as much as 85.7% preferred Christianity while 7.2% preferred ATR. A correlation is noticed when one examines the numbers of those who would like ATR to be taught in RE. From the rural school 28 pupils (87.5%) affirmed the need for the continuation of ATR in the RE syllabuses, while 4 pupils (12.5%) saw no need of ATR being included in the RE syllabuses. On the other hand, the figures are lower, 21 pupils (75%), in the urban school concerning the continuation of ATR in the RE syllabuses. Consequently, a higher percentage, 25%, would not like ATR to be part of the knowledge imparted in the RE syllabuses.

These results point to a situation that there is generally a higher degree of appreciation of Zambian traditional beliefs among pupils in the rural school than in the urban school. This may be because of the rural pupils being properly exposed to traditional values and practices in the villages unlike their urban counterparts.

### **5.3.3 Views of the subject specialist on the two RE syllabuses in relation to ATR**

The one subject specialist at CDC I interviewed acknowledged that ATR was not getting the due attention in the two RE syllabuses, especially the 2046. Her quick pointing out that the issue of relegating African tradition to lower rungs was not only a school thing but a societal problem confirms the dominant influence of modernity in the lives of many Zambian people today. She reiterated that the situation was such that many Zambians seem to believe that African tradition was no longer necessary in the modern way of doing things. It appears that a good number of Zambians see that tradition and modernity cannot mix and thus see the two as polar opposites. This is in sharp contrast to Gyekye's assertion that "...modernity is not a rejection of the past..." (1997, p. 17). It is interesting to note that even the Subject specialist at CDC appears to be referring to ATR as something in the past (Ref 4.6). I can only conclude from the discussion that I had with her that here she was just being cynical and used the expression, "Everybody is living in the present; so we are forgetting the past" in a disapproving way.

#### ***5.3.3.1 The existence of two syllabuses: Are they really needed in Zambia today?***

When the subject specialist was asked whether one RE syllabus would eventually emerge to harmonize the shortcomings of the two syllabuses, her response which was that the issue was complex as it hinges on people's religious and traditional values confirms the critical role the Church plays in the school curriculum, particularly in the area of Religious Education. Her views further underpin Cheyeka and Chita's assertion that the Church has contributed to the perpetuation of the existence of the two syllabuses in RE (2012, p. 19). The duo further claim that "behind the façade of ecumenical syllabuses lay the camouflaged ideological, theological and philosophical differences in as far as the subject is concerned" (2012, p. 19). A claim could further be laid, therefore, that the church is, in a way, responsible for the low status ATR

occupies in the RE syllabuses especially when one critically examines Syllabus 2046 in particular, which has become the favourite of most Christian churches, apart from the Catholic church. In principle, the Christian churches pledged ecumenism at the beginning of the 1970s and came up with one RE syllabus, but their deep rooted philosophical, theological and spirituality differences have led into the existence of the two RE syllabuses, with Syllabus 2046 seemingly getting more attention because of the growth of fundamentalist Christianity in Zambia.

## **5.4 Views of teachers and pupils on the methods used to teach ATR in RE**

I will discuss this segment of the chapter in two folds. I will start with the views of the teachers and continue with those of the pupils. Data obtained through non-participant classroom observation will be apportioned in the two sections accordingly.

### **5.4.1 Teachers' views on methods of teaching ATR and how their knowledge or lack of knowledge of ATR influences their teaching**

The principle of pupil-centred lessons was exalted by all the teachers that were interviewed. It was, however, pointed out that the pupils' lack of proper knowledge of Zambian traditional culture hampers the teachers' intentions of actively engaging them in the lessons. My observations, on the other hand, lay bare the fact that teachers themselves could play a pivotal role in bringing out the little Zambian tradition that the pupils know. I noticed a very sharp contrast in approach between the two teachers that I observed teaching. The rural teacher who was teaching the 2046 syllabus was active and engaged the pupils very effectively in the lesson. For example, he took advantage of the male circumcision exercise which was going on in the school at the time of his lesson and exploited it to the full. In addition, his question and answer technique brought out the pupils' experiences very effectively. On the other hand, the urban teacher dealing with the 2044 syllabus appeared to have gone in class with a preconceived notion that the pupils were not knowledgeable and interested in discussing the Zambian tradition. Consequently, she neglected even the simple technique of question and answer which could have encouraged the pupils to be involved in the lesson by sharing their experiences. I, therefore, tend

to agree with the teacher from the rural school who observed that for the pupils to be interested in Zambian tradition, “the passion should begin with the teacher.”

In addition, I argue that some teachers fail to actively engage the pupils in the lessons when dealing with African Traditional Religion because they, themselves, according to my findings and as discussed above, are limited in their knowledge of the same. This is exemplified by the urban teacher who was not aware that the traditional ceremonies presented in the past tense in the pupils’ books are still a living reality in society. This state of affairs has very serious implications in the education system as I elucidate below.

Seeing how limited some teachers are in issues of tradition casts a dark cloud on proper imparting of knowledge to the pupils under their charge. Discussing curriculum theory in relation to the role of teachers, Holmes and McLean (1989) assert that teachers still enjoy their monopoly over what knowledge is to be taught and how it should be taught. It follows, therefore, that only that knowledge which the teachers are conversant with is what they will impart on the learners. I observed that the urban teacher avoided teaching or even mentioning what, I perceived, she was not interested in or could not understand in relation to Zambian tradition. I argue, therefore, that the teachers’ mediocre knowledge of ATR has, in part, contributed to the low status that ATR receives in the current RE syllabuses in Zambia. There is a common adage that you cannot give what you do not have. For ATR to be learnt and appreciated by the pupils, it must be taught well. It can only be taught well if those that are charged with the task of teaching it know what they are teaching.

#### **5.4.2 Pupils’ views on the methods used to teach ATR in RE**

The majority of the pupils in the study pointed out that they were not impressed with the way African tradition was taught in the RE syllabuses. Some of them claimed that it appeared some teachers did not know any more than they, the pupils, knew. They explained that this was evident in the way some teachers solely depended on the information in the text books and never gave any of their own expositions. Furthermore, and probably arising from the pupils’ noticing

that their teachers appeared not to know a lot about African tradition, some of the pupils suggested that some elders from the community be occasionally invited to talk to them about African tradition according to the theme being covered in their RE lessons. This view is in line with Vilakizi's appeal to the educated to go to the 'uncertificated' to receive indigenous knowledge from them (2000, p. 198). Similarly, Breidlid advocates for involvement of elders whom he calls the carriers of indigenous knowledge in the preservation of such knowledge and the ecology (2013, p. 39). Kunnie, too, supports the idea of elders being invited to speak to classes on traditional matters as these are the custodians of African wisdom (2000, p. 167).

In addition, some pupils in the study complained that they were not happy that African traditional aspect remained purely a theoretical lesson when there were all possibilities of making it practical. They suggested that it would be beneficial for them to visit some sites and even attend some traditional ceremonies so that they would have a real feel of it and learn practically. Their views are in line with Cheyeka's assertion that teaching African traditional religion should not only be theoretical but should provide an opportunity for the learners to see its practical aspect (2007, p. 62). While some teachers agreed with this idea, they claimed schools could not afford to send the pupils on such study tours, essential as they are. This brings in the economics of education in general in the global South, an issue which this paper shuns to delve into.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

I have analysed and discussed the research findings in the light of theoretical and conceptual framework of Indigenous knowledge, African traditional religion and modernity. The analysis of the findings have shown that while it is true that ATR has been marginalized in the RE discourse in the Zambian senior secondary school syllabuses, the learners generally have a desire to learn the dimension. It has also been established that the teachers have a big role to play in lifting the status of ATR in the two RE syllabuses. To begin with, they are the ones that choose which syllabus to teach and secondly, the attitude they have towards ATR and the subject in general, as exemplified by the two classroom observations cited above, plays a big role in the pupils' perception and appreciation of ATR.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This study has attempted to explore how African Traditional Religion as a form of indigenous knowledge is taught in the two senior secondary school Religious Education syllabuses in Zambia. The study aimed at establishing whether ATR is appreciated by the teachers of RE and pupils as part of their heritage and a living corpus of knowledge worth teaching and learning, respectively. The study measured ATR against the other religious traditions covered in the RE syllabuses, namely Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.

A mixed research methodology was employed in the study. I started by document analysis where the content of the pupils' text books were scrutinized to establish how ATR is presented in comparison with the three other religious traditions. In addition, past examination papers for School Certificate Leaving examinations, Grade 12, were analysed for the period of 2007- 2011 to ascertain how ATR has been examined in that period. The second data collection method employed in the study was the semi-structured interviews where teachers, pupils and the RE subject specialist were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews for pupils were followed up with a questionnaire administered to other randomly picked pupils as a way of broadening the sample size. The last data collection strategy employed was non-participant observation where two lessons, one from an urban school and the other from a rural school were observed.

### **6.1 Main results of my analysis and discussion**

The study revealed that ATR does not enjoy the prominence one would expect in an African educational system. To begin with, most of the content of ATR in the pupils' text books and some teaching objectives in the teachers' hand books, particularly in Syllabus 2044, are presented in the past tense. This gives the impression that ATR is no longer alive and valid in the present Zambian situation.

Furthermore, document analysis of the pupils' text books and teachers' handbooks revealed that the RE syllabuses give far more attention to Christianity than to ATR. In the case of syllabus 2046, it was clear that ATR, but also Hinduism and Islam in this case, are only covered in the



syllabus in a comparative way with Christianity. In addition, it was noticed that in several topics ATR was even omitted in the comparison process while Islam and Hinduism were only left out in one topic.

A similar situation prevailed when it came to the Examination past papers. The analysis of Grade 12 School certificate Leaving Examinations revealed that there were less questions on ATR than those on Islam and Hinduism combined. With more Zambians being inclined to traditional beliefs than Hinduism and Islam combined, ATR questions were expected to be more than of these two religions combined. A close analysis of the Chief Examiner's comments laid bare the fact that less pupils attempt the few questions on ATR than they do for Hinduism and Islam. What this means is that there are fewer questions on ATR than on Islam and Hinduism combined; and at the same time fewer pupils attempt the ATR questions than those who try Islam and Hinduism questions. This could only point to the inadequate way ATR is presented in the pupils' text books and taught in class.

Due to how ATR is represented in the pupils' text books, it may not be very surprising that when the pupils were asked which religious tradition they enjoy or appreciate most in the respective RE syllabuses, the majority went for Christianity. The pupils' responses could, of course, be partly because of their being Christians themselves as discussed earlier. This is the case both in the urban and in the rural school, albeit a higher percentage in the urban school. But one highly surprising revelation of the study is that while Christianity emerged as the most preferred religious tradition, the pupils, nevertheless, indicated that they would want ATR to continue being part of the RE discourse in the two syllabuses. This result is different from the Haambokoma (2007) study.

As far as the methods used to teach ATR are concerned, the study findings show that pupils are not happy with the methods teachers use. The pupils claimed that the methods were too theoretical and they would prefer that some of the traditional ceremonies, practices and rituals which the syllabuses expound were practically demonstrated to them. They intimated that lessons would be more meaningful and easier to understand if real demonstrations of cultural practices, rituals and beliefs were part of the ATR lessons. In the same vein, the pupils indicated that some

of the teachers seemed not to be conversant with ATR as demonstrated by their total dependence on the content from the pupils' books. They reiterated that some of the teachers could not even propound on the content in the text books effectively. The pupils, therefore, suggested that some elders in the community be invited as guest speakers in some lessons dealing with ATR.

On the other hand, all the teachers interviewed acknowledged that ATR did not receive the due attention in the two syllabuses. They mostly blamed Curriculum Development Centre which is responsible for the design of the two syllabuses. They admitted that they spend very little time on ATR compared to Christianity, and sometimes even compared to Islam and Hinduism because that is the way the syllabuses are designed. Some teachers blamed the low status of ATR in the syllabuses on the pupils who mostly, according to them, show a lot of indifference to it. Teachers elaborated that they feel frustrated when, for example, they give a class a project to research on an element of Zambian tradition but most of them come back to class without realising any tangible material to present.

My own observations in terms of teaching ATR revealed that teachers were in two categories. There are those who understand ATR, identify themselves with it and enjoy teaching the dimension and thereby arouse the interest of the pupils and inspire them to actively participate in the lessons. The other type of teachers is those who are as ignorant in ATR as the pupils, if not more, sometimes. These are the ones that just rush through the content of ATR or only ask the pupils to read on their own, but even fail to explain any concepts that may be difficult for the pupils to grasp. This is the type of teachers who justify the low status of ATR in the syllabuses and mostly blame it on the disinterestedness of the pupils in the ATR discourse. This category of teachers claims that they feel they just waste time when covering the ATR dimensions in the syllabuses because the pupils do not seem to appreciate it, and so they, in a way, agree with some pupils who advocate that ATR should be removed from the syllabuses.

The study further revealed that the existence of two RE syllabuses is an issue which may not be easy to resolve although it is desirable by many scholars of Religious studies and Religious Education that there be only one educational RE syllabus at the senior secondary school level. It is also evident from the findings of the study that the position of ATR in the RE syllabuses has

played a role in the perpetuation of the existence of the two syllabuses. One syllabus, the 2044 one, accommodates a lot of ATR which the advocates of syllabus 2046 abhor. This point leads to the role or position of Christianity in the Zambian society in connection with the topic under discussion.

The study has shown that Christianity has become so enshrined in the lives of many Zambians that it qualifies to be rated as a traditional religion. However, within the Christian fraternity, the study has shown that there are those who have come to regard traditional beliefs and practices as heathen and sometimes label them as sin. This is the segment of Christianity which has influenced some pupils in the study to have an inclination that ATR is sinful and is contradictory to Christianity and thereby not needed today, especially that Zambia was declared a Christian nation in 1991 by the then Republican President.

Another important finding of the study is that Christianity is regarded by many pupils to be synonymous with modernity which most of them aspire for. My observations and interactions with the pupil-informants showed that many of them actually pretend to be ignorant of Zambian tradition to show that they were modern people and were 'cool.' Those who demonstrated superior knowledge of tradition in the lessons were laughed at by their classmates as being rural and primitive. To be accepted by peers, many pupils feigned ignorance of the traditional beliefs and practices which they actually knew and practised at home away from peer pressure. I, therefore, argue that this yearning for social approval is responsible for the sharp discrepancy in answers concerning ATR between those informants I contacted through semi-structured interviews and those who responded through a questionnaire. There were less pupils from the questionnaire mode who indicated that ATR should not be part of the RE syllabus than those I interviewed face to face. This is, as a matter of fact, in spite of there being more pupils I reached through the questionnaire (36) than those in the interview (24). I can only presume that since the pupils I interviewed did not know my position about ATR, they continued with their pretending to be ignorant of or indifferent to ATR so that I would not regard them as being backward or primitive. I can further conclude that the anonymity in responding to the questionnaire, to a higher degree, brought out the true selves of the respondents, and thus a bigger number supporting the continuation of ATR in the syllabuses.

## 6.2 Conclusion

As a way of concluding the study, I would point out that ATR in the Zambian RE syllabuses faces a challenge of being promoted and be appreciated by both teachers and pupils. While I can confidently state that most of the pupils are ready to embrace ATR and internalize some of its good values, I notice a hindrance at the higher level. CDC and some teachers of RE seem not to take seriously their role of making indigenous knowledge, through ATR be promoted in schools.

It appears CDC does not pay much attention to the way the content of ATR is framed in the pupils' text books and the implications this might have on the pupils who rely on these books. The institution's inertia in coming up with one RE syllabus which would take care of one of the goals of education in Zambia of "producing a learner capable of appreciating Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions and upholding national pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 5) is worrisome.

In addition, the calibre of teachers of RE has a lot to play in the perception that pupils have of ATR in RE. Well educated teachers who are capable of appreciating Zambian traditional beliefs and practices would contribute in tapping the inert interest which the pupils have in learning ATR and making them appreciate the values therein. It is in this vein that Cheyeka and Mulando suggest that teachers of RE deepen their understanding of the subject matter by learning to think about the academic content of the lesson from the pupils' level or point of view so that they improvise methods which are appropriate to the pupils and would arouse their interest to be active participants in the lessons. In addition, Cheyeka and Mulando suggest that the subject association, Zambia Association of Religious Education Teachers ,ZARET, organise continuous professional development programmes for teachers (2012, p. 105). I would further throw the challenge at Colleges of Education and Universities to devise effective methods of teaching that would enable them produce teachers who know and love their subject to the extent that they would be ready to go beyond what the pupils' textbooks present.

The issue of indigenous knowledge being properly infused in modern Western hegemonic education is something that the Ministry of Education can promote by creating interventions

which arouse the interest of the pupils to learn more about their culture and heritage, and identify themselves as proud and free indigenous Zambians.

This study has dealt with the way ATR is perceived and consequently taught and learnt in the Zambian senior secondary school RE syllabuses. It would be beneficial if future research was done in the area of the Zambian youths' attraction to Pentecostal churches and whether this was out of the spirituality therein or there is something else which attracts them. This could be linked to their perception of Indigenous knowledge in subjects like Religious Education, any Zambian indigenous language or History.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Kutomola ceremony**

The *Kutomola* ritual was performed in Mbala District at the start of the harvest. When the headman announced the day, a little of each crop was collected and the women prepared pots to cook the food. The men built a temporary hut (*insaka*) at a chosen village. The day before the ceremony, the food was boiled and left in the hut for one night so that the ancestral spirits could taste of it. Opening the ceremony, the chief thanked God for the rains and the good food, and asked the spirits to be with them as they ate the fruits of their labour. The chief tasted a bit from each pot and rubbed soup on his chest to ward off sickness. The women and children followed tasting the food. Anything left over was thrown in the direction of the setting sun as a sign of driving away evil.

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire/Interview guide for pupils

Answer the following questions as honestly as you can. This document is purely for research. You do not have to write your name on the sheet. Write in the spaces provided.

Syllabus 2044/ 2046 (tick the one you do)

1. The RE syllabus covers Present situation, African tradition, Church history, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. Which dimension do you appreciate or like most? Why?
2. Is it necessary that African tradition is included in the syllabus? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What difficulties, if any, do you face learning African tradition in RE?
4. Are you happy with the way you are taught African tradition in RE? If not how would you like it to be taught?
5. Is there anything else you would like to mention about RE in general and African/Zambian tradition in particular?

Thanks for your cooperation



## **Appendix 3**

### **Interview guide for teachers**

1. To what extent is ATR covered in the present RE syllabuses?
2. How do the pupils take the ATR dimension? Do they appreciate it? What makes you say that?
3. Why do you think ATR is part of the present RE syllabus? Is it worth teaching?
4. How do you look at ATR in the life of a modern Zambian?
5. What difficulties, if any, do you face teaching the ATR dimension in RE?
6. Do you have any suggestions on how the ATR content can be improved, if at all?
7. In your experience, what methods are most effective in teaching the ATR dimension in RE?
8. Is there anything else you would like to say about RE in general and ATR in particular?

## **Appendix 4**

### **Interview guide for the subject specialist**

1. What are your views about the two RE syllabuses currently in operation at senior secondary school level?
2. How does ATR feature in the two syllabuses?
3. Are you aware that ATR is not appreciated by some teachers and pupils?
4. What is your reaction to this? Why is it so?
5. What should be done to remedy the situation?
6. What else would you like to say about RE in general and the ATR dimension in particular?