

Christine Phiri Mushibwe

What are the Effects of Cultural Traditions on the Education of women?



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Dedication

To my husband and my friend

I owe it all to you

To my lovely children

Mwelwa, Kangwa, Muyeko and Sankhuleni

This far my effort has come to inspire you to greater heights in your academic endeavours.

Soar higher my children and never allow anyone to bring you down. The power to achieve greater heights lies within you!

You can do it!

To my daddy

You have been my inspiration

To God Be The Glory!

Psalm 28:7..... The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song!

Abstract

Cultural traditions do adversely affect the education of many people in the world. Women are, unfortunately, the most affected victims of their culture.

This book demonstrates how cultural traditions can militate against the education of women in Zambia with a focus on the Tumbuka tribe. Ethnographic methods were employed over a period of three months in a village in the Eastern Province of the country. Data were collected through participant observation, focus group and in-depth interviews, narratives, and documents. A total of 47 participants comprised the sample. The research cuts through multidisciplinary fields such as social sciences, education and anthropology. Through thematic analysis data were analysed.

Evidence in this book demonstrates that patrilineal groupings are strongholds of the patriarchal predisposition and patriarchal attitudes and cultural traditions do not recognize women as equal partners with men. The Tumbuka women's experiences and beliefs reflect socio-cultural traditional norms that tend to limit gender equality, and compel women to accept and justify male domination at the expense of their own status and to regard consequent inequalities as normal. Evidence demonstrates that the initiation rites, an active institution for girls of pubescent age, interfere more with the school-based education of girls. The women are active social agents as well as passive learners who will not allow the girls they are coaching to question the purpose for some traditional practices that are oppressive and directly cause them to fail to complete their schooling successfully.

The strong hold that the cultural traditions has on the locals has further resulted in conflicts with modern schooling, which is viewed as disseminating 'white' man's culture and values. Established in this research is the fear and suspicion that the locals have on the outcome of their children learning these values that they see as alien to their own. The modern education provided in school is perceived as a force that undermines cultural values. It is viewed as presenting an inherent challenge to the cultural traditional control measures that are in place.

Arguably, while ethnic traditions should be respected and sustained because they define one's identity, aspects of culture which are discriminatory, restrictive and tend to devalue women's physical, emotional and psychological development should be eliminated because they are retrogressive. Therefore the argument that deep seated socio-cultural traditions play a significant role in encumbering female education is proven.

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
BPFA	Beijing Platform For Action
BPW	Business and Professional Women
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CAMFED	Campaign For Female Education
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DFID	Department For International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFA	Education For All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalist
FAWEZA	Forum for African Women Educationalist of Zambia
FGM	Female Genital Mutilations
FLMZ	Family Life Movement of Zambia
FNDP	Firth National Development Plan
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
HCT	Human Capital Theory
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation

NGOCC	Non Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee
PAGE	Program for the Advancement of Girls' Education
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
UND	United Nations Decade
UNESCO	United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
WAV	Women Against Violence
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Education Forum
WFC	Women for Change
WHO	World Health Organisation
WL	Women's League
WM	Women in the Media
ZARD	Zambia Association for Research and Development
ZAUW	Zambia Association of University Women
ZAW	Zambia Alliance of Women
ZDEGC	Zambia Declaration on the Education of the Girl Child
ZNWAD	Zambia National Women Artists Documentation Project
ZNWL	Zambia National Women's Lobby

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CHAPTER 1

“The neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore.” (Mary Wollstonecraft)

1.0 Introduction

The underlying purpose of this book is to investigate the effect of Zambian cultural traditions on the education of women. It focuses on the Tumbuka a patrilineal tribe in the Eastern Province of Zambia. The study will examine the processes through which cultural traditions are inculcated in the children especially the girls. This will be guided by different theoretical frameworks that will explain the underlying cause for the status of women among the Tumbuka.

This chapter is an introduction to the whole study therefore I will start by giving reason for undertaking this study and its particular interest on the choice of tribe. This will be followed by a brief historical account of the Tumbuka which will throw up a number of issues about the tribe and the different traditions practiced. A brief overview of the objectives of this study and the methodology employed in the investigation will be given. This chapter will also include a brief discussion of the definition of concepts that are used throughout the study to provide a clear understanding. The layout of the whole study is then set out.

1.1 Inspiration for this book

The Tumbuka tribe is found in the Eastern Province of Zambia which is home to several districts; the Lundazi district being one. The 2003 Eastern Province annual report identified the Lundazi district as one where early marriages were still rampant (Zulu et al., 2003). The reasons for this have been attributed to a wide range of causes amongst which distance from schools, lack of teaching and learning resources, cultural traditions and poverty are identified. While the aforementioned have already been identified, I chose to focus on cultural traditions and critically investigate their effect on female education.

The current research has targeted the rural areas because they are the locus of cultural traditions. Much more, women in rural areas are the most affected by the traditions because

the cultural requirements could be strictly demanded by society. The detailed reasons why the Tumbuka tribe has been given preference for study include the following:

1.1.1 Female Cultural Traditional Education

Chondoka and Bota (2007) argue that traditional education is of most importance among the Tumbuka because it was meant to be for life. Over seventy years earlier Young (1931) argued to the effect that the Tumbuka women are rigorously bound to traditions and were the most difficult to persuade into any modernisation within the women's sphere. The fear that Tumbuka culture might be eroded is another interesting aspect that could be a reason for the dereliction of the education of the girl (Tembo, 2003; Chondoka and Bota, 2007). Rasing (2001) further argues that the Easterners¹ have a tendency of teaching young girls of pubescent age explicit marital information. Kelly et al claim that while in some parts of the Eastern Province it is prohibited to withdraw a female student from school for the purpose of undergoing an initiation rite, in Lundazi, among the Tumbuka, girls are still withdrawn from school for the "purpose of seclusion and initiation rites" (Kelly et al., 1999, p.112). I therefore see the Tumbuka tribe as an extreme case where the cultural traditions are still strong.

1.1.2 Patrilineal Status

The low position accorded to women in patrilineal systems is another reason why the Tumbuka have been considered for study. The existence of patriarchy and the patrilineal system suggest that men have the most dominant social status (Tembo, 2003) and have ownership of the land (Munthali, 2008). Such a position may have negative implications on the women and their participation in education.

1.1.3 Polygamy

The Tumbuka tribe like many other patrilineal tribes in the country, such as the Namwanga and Mambwe of Northern Province practice polygamy (Himonga, 1989). Chondoka and Bota (2007) claim that the practice of polygamy among the Tumbuka is intended to deal with the problem of the barren wife. There seem to be more emphasis on the biological capacity of the women which may render women mere vessels of child production. Polygamous families could be too big and too many children may not be easy to educate and hence the girls may be discriminated against on basis of lack of resources or as care givers to other siblings.

¹It's a general term used to describe all the tribes found in the Eastern Province of Zambia: this includes the Tumbuka tribe.

1.1.4 The Lobola² System

Authors such as Chondoka have argued there is little accuracy or justification in calling the *lobola* custom ‘purchasing’ or ‘buying’ of a wife. He claims it is a payment for the marriage a claim that holds some form of truth as originally intended. However, by virtue of the payment the woman may have no rights over her children and herself. Such an arrangement could deprive the woman of any authority and of the right to make decisions, and may in turn affect the education of female children (Chondoka, 2001; Tembo, 2003; Chondoka and Bota, 2007; and Munthali, 2008).

1.1.5 Personal Interest

I am from the Chewa tribe, matrilineal by descent and my father lived and worked as a teacher in Lundazi district where I was born and lived for the first five years of my life. At 11 years old, when I reached puberty, I was traditionally taught during an initiation rite by the Tumbuka women. I was confined for two weeks in my own bedroom and was not able to go to school for that period. When I was ready to get married at the age of 22 years, I again went through a marital initiation rite for a week taught by the Tumbuka women. The topics taught at both initiation rites had a particular emphasis on male supremacy, appreciating and respecting men, and keeping my distance from men. Such teachings meant severing my relationship with my father; put a check on how I related to my brothers, especially my older brother, and all my male teachers. The process of teaching was aggressive, humiliating, demeaning and confusing, leaving me traumatised for a long time. Since then, I have attended initiation rites for young girls over the years and I have noted with sadness the same lessons I received in 1976 and 1986 respectively, are still taught with the same emphasis to date. Having had been taught by the Tumbuka women, I wanted to revisit the lessons and understand from the Tumbukas’ point of view the purposes for the topics taught and the rationale behind the whole process. This personal stand point will be clarified later in subsequent chapters.

² *Lobola* is the payment that a man makes to seal the marriage contract. It is the transfer of cattle or money as marriage payment that a man makes to a girl’s/woman’s family. In this study *lobola* will be used interchangeably with bride wealth to mean the same thing. OMCT states that the number of marriages requiring the payment of *lobola* has increased in Zambia to such an extent that even “tribes that never used to, have adopted the custom” (OMCT, 2002, p.13). This has equally pushed the cost up with more parents demanding more money or cows for their daughters.

In summary as noted above I see the Tumbuka tribe as an extreme case where the cultural traditions are still strong. By choosing an extreme example, with a strong standing for cultural traditions, the findings of the research could presumably be related to similar situations in the country. I believe the findings will have implications for the Zambian education system. The current global pursuit of Education For All (EFA) and the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is a case in point here.

1.2 The Tumbuka Tribe

There are six major tribal groups in the Eastern Province of which Tumbuka is one. While each tribal grouping has its own dialect, chiChewa³ is commonly spoken by all groups: the language of the Tumbuka is chiTumbuka. The groupings have a rich array of cultural beliefs, customs and practices with slight variations (Tew, 1950; Kelly et al., 1999). Handelman defines 'tribe' as a description of a sub national grouping which share a "collective identity and language" (Handelman, 2003, p.86). Such a grouping may hold a common lineage. In this research I have adopted this definition to define the Tumbuka tribe.

Literature on the history of the Tumbuka is relatively limited. This is acknowledged by Chondoka and Bota (2007) who point out that their book is the first to give a correct historical account of the Tumbuka speaking people. They argue that the book contains valid historical information, which was collected from reliable sources (with Tumbuka elders) through in-depth interviews in a number of relevant settings in Malawi and Zambia. Before then, parts of the Tumbuka history were recorded in part in a number of books written by missionaries who did not give an accurate historical account (Chondoka and Bota, 2007). Chondoka and Bota argue that a common practice by the early writers was that of collecting data from one source, "writing the history of a country with reference to the acts of only one of the groups of people making up the country" (Chondoka and Bota, 2007, p.1).

The Tumbuka are part of the many and earliest waves of the Bantu immigrants from Pro-Bantu centre in Kola region of the DRC. Like many other tribes in Zambia such as the Bemba, the Chewa, and the Nsenga, the Tumbuka left the Luba Kingdom, although for different reasons. The Tumbuka broke away in the early 1400s because they did not like the embarrassing menial work they were expected to perform by their leaders. They settled in Malawi but due to population growth, there was need for more land for the purposes of

³ The prefix 'chi' means the language of the Chewa or the Tumbuka

agriculture and settlement, therefore one group left for Zambia and later settled in present day Lundazi and Chama Districts of the country (Young, 1931; Tew, 1950; Brelsford, 1965; Chondoka and Bota, 2007). According to Chondoka and Bota, the Tumbuka co-existed with the Saan who slowly left the area, settling in Namib and Kalahari Desert of present day Namibia and Botswana. This book focuses on the group that settled in Lundazi.

As earlier indicated, the Tumbuka are a distinct ethnic group that are found in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia. They are a part of the collection of peoples that include the Kamanga, Henga, Tonga and other smaller units. They were once an important tribe and had occupied the whole of Luangwa valley but were raided and broken up by tribal wars (Tew, 1950; Brelsford, 1965). Brelsford further claims that through the raids and tribal wars, the Tumbuka assumed customs and traditions of other tribes. However, Chondoka and Bota (2007) deny the claim of tribal wars stating that oral history has not captured such history. They consider the Tumbuka as a peaceful tribe that put up no resistance to any tribe that subdued them except the Ngoni.

The Ngonis are described as fierce and inhuman warriors whose destruction of property and life was ruinous wherever they passed (Ogot, 1999). The Ngoni came raiding other tribes for food, men, women and cattle. The Tumbuka were conquered and their chiefs reduced to positions of headmen forcibly usurping their authority (Ogot, 1999; Chondoka and Bota, 2007). One sub-chief appointed to administer the conquered Tumbuka was Phikamalaza. Currently chief Phikamalaza is still under paramount chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni speaking people. Chief Phikamalaza is traditionally known as Nkosi⁴.

The effect of the Ngoni colonisation of the Tumbuka brought new aspects of culture that exist to date. This agrees with Freire's comment on cultural invasion:

Those invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own: for the more they mimic the invaders the more stable the position of the latter become, [...] those invaded become convinced of their inferiority (Freire, 1987, p.153).

The Tumbuka were previously matrilineal but as a result of the Ngoni they took up the Ngoni patrilineal system. Young (1930) and Munthali (2008) argue that the coming and interaction with the Ngoni tribe changed the social organisation of the Tumbuka. These included the

⁴ Nkosi is the respective title used to identify Ngoni chiefs. It means King.

centralised form of chieftainship, the system of descent and payment of the bride wealth. Although Chondoka and Bota (2007) insist the Tumbuka are still matrilineal, the men still retain the most dominant social status and power, unlike the matrilineal groupings where authority lie in the hands of women. However, Cutrufelli (1983) has argued to the effect that matrilineal groupings do not imply a real social power of the woman.

Rogers (1980) states that in anthropological terms, patrilineal systems represent families where the children belong to their fathers' line. Munthali (2008) has argued that patrilineal systems disadvantage women because they do not have access to land or other forms of property. Schneider and Gough, commenting on the position of women in these groupings, state that women are viewed as, "nothing more than a favourable medium for the development of the foetus" (Schneider and Gough, 1962, p.25). The position of women in patrilineal groupings seems to lay more emphasis on their reproductive system. There is more to a woman than just her reproductive system, emphasising the woman's reproductive functions may deprive her of the power to stand for herself or her children, especially in a situation where her demeanour is dictated upon by those in authority. This may reduce a woman to a mere object. Such a position may be reason for expecting a woman to put on an unresponsive deportment, speak quietly and clearly but with downcast eyes in any public sphere. This could result in a woman losing her confidence and self esteem and hence she can only be represented by her father, brother, or son in any public sphere (Cutrufelli, 1983; Kelly, 1998). Kwesiga (2002) and Munthali (2008) have indicated that in patrilineal groupings, boys are considered of more significance than girls; therefore, the education of boys could be more valued than that of the girl.

The Tumbuka assumed the Ngoni patrilineal marriages as a means of identifying themselves with the new rulers. Hence, from 1898, *lobola* (dowry) was intensified by the Tumbuka. With the coming of the missionaries the term dowry was used in the place of *lobola* for lack of a better word. While dowry passes from the kin of the bride to those of the groom, *lobola* passes from the kin of the groom to those of the bride. The difference lies in the recipient. The Tumbuka called *lobola* payment *Kuombola* (redemption payment). This was because the payment gave a man rights over the marriage and the children from the girl's family to the husband's family. Chondoka claims that, "the children were by tradition owned by the husband after paying *lobola*" (Chondoka, 2001, p.198). Such a payment was in form of cows because the Tumbuka are cattle keepers. The number of cows to be paid for the *lobola* is determined by the woman's family.

The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) (2002) has argued that women tend to be victims of *lobola*. *Lobola* does not benefit the woman. It benefits the men in her family; brothers, and father. *Lobola* seem to be paid for a woman's reproductive capacity and hence could condemn the woman to marital enslavement and deny her control over decision-making (OMCT, 2002; Munthali, 2008). For this study, the implication of *lobola* could have an adverse effect on the education of a girl especially if her reproductive capacity and her 'lobola worth' are considered of more value.

Chondoka rejects the notion that *lobola* represents ownership of a wife. Chondoka argues that *lobola* is a 'marriage payment' that "constitutes a seal of a marriage contract that the wife becomes the mother of the man's children" (Chondoka, 2001, p.15). As a seal of a marriage contract, it is similar to the modern day marriage certificate, so why has the marriage certificate not replaced the *lobola* practice? It is clear here that the practice gives the man ownership rights to his wife and the status of 'wife' has relevance to the domestic sphere. Additionally, Munthali (2008) argues that by virtue of paying the bride wealth, the wife and the children become a vital part of the husband's ancestry: if the bride wealth is not paid the marriage is not considered legitimate. *Lobola* has become so prevalent in Zambia that in urban areas some members of tribal groups where *lobola* was not traditionally paid have now taken up the custom making it of most importance.

Repaying the *lobola* would not be easy; making divorce an impossibility because the total amount of the *lobola* initially paid had to be repaid by the bride's family. Traditionally for the Tumbuka tribe, divorce was primarily an option for the husband. However, in the 1990s it was a right claimed by women and often accorded to them by local courts. However, in the rural areas, it may not be easy for a woman to divorce the husband because of the cultural implications (Rogers, 1980; Tembo, 2003).

Polygamy, which Tembo (2003) describes as legal marriage of one man to two or more women, is widely practiced by the Tumbuka, who may have taken up the culture from the Ngoni. Chondoka and Bota (2007) claim polygamy may have solved the problem of barrenness in the woman, because the man could still marry another woman to bear him children. Such a reason is assumed as why the Tumbuka men marry more than one wife. Polygamous marriages result in the production of many children because each wife may be under pressure to produce children for the husband to remain in the marriage (Cutrufelli, 1983; Chondoka, 2001).

Like all the tribes in Zambia, the Tumbuka maintain extended family links. Hofstede (2005) refers to such societies as ‘collectivist.’ In such societies the interest of the group prevails over that of the individual. Therefore:

One owes lifelong loyalty to one’s group, breaking this loyalty is one of the worst things a person can do. Between the person and the in-group dependence relationship develops which is both practical and psychological (Hofstede, 1991, p.50).

Unlike the individualistic society, the aim of education in the collectivist society is to enable the members of the group to benefit from the individual’s achievements. In the Tumbuka society the boy could be most preferred because of his place in the family.

Generally speaking, the Tumbuka traditions could have a negative bearing on the education of girls because of the deeply ingrained cultural attitudes and practices. The patrilineal system does not help much because of its interest vested in the male children. Young (1931) argued that Tumbuka women tend to be bound in traditions making it difficult to change their circumstances.

The Tumbuka traditions, like any other traditions in Zambia, centre on productivity, new life, harvest and the commemoration of heroic deeds. All such celebrations are held throughout the year irrespective of the school calendar (involvement includes school children). Of these various ceremonies, the initiation ceremonies are of interest to this research because they represent the peak of traditional teaching for the female child and could affect negatively on the education of the girl (Rasing, 2001; Chondoka, 2001).

1.3 Defining the Concepts

1.3.1 The Concept Of ‘Education’

The concept of education⁵ has been given a number of meanings by different scholars such as Bartlett et al who state that “education in its broadest sense means the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to use the knowledge and develop skills” (Bartlett et al., 2001, p.3). Skills and knowledge are important elements in this definition but without understanding and being able to develop such skills as innovation, an individual would be ineffective. Bartlett et

⁵ In this research, I will use school education to represent academic and modern and to differentiate it from traditional education. Therefore, school education, academic and modern education will be used interchangeably to mean one and the same thing.

al (2001) further argue that education should enable an individual to link concepts for the purpose of gaining understanding of the world. Thus, education should involve the mind, reasoning and the mental processes. Clifford described education as “the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and sensibilities” (Clifford 1985, p.6). The term ‘evoke’ is of particular interest here because it seems to indicate the process of arousing existing knowledge in the learner to cause them to reason critically and generate independent ideas. Therein lays the beauty of education.

The methodical process noted by Clifford brings in the function of the school system which deliberately informs and shapes learners through its designated curriculum. Cush (2004) insists that education should promote the development of the individual. Culture could influence individuals in a number of ways, restricting them to their own long held established customs, values and beliefs hence preventing them from meaningful changes.

1.3.2 The Concept Of ‘Culture’

Like education, culture is a contested word. Cush defines it as: “The learned aspects of a human that include languages, customs and beliefs and is passed on from generation to generation by means of socialisation and education” (Cush, 2004, p.8). This definition highlights the process of acquiring knowledge, and how it is handed down. It is the totality of everyday life that includes knowledge, norms, beliefs, values, customs, language, habits and skills that enable an individual to relate to others in the society. Put simply, culture could be defined as the personality and the heartbeat of a society, which gives an individual his/her cultural identity. Kwesiga quoting from Ermy’s essay on *The Child and His Environment in Black Africa: Traditional Education*, 1972, states that:

Custom proceeds man; it is a pre-established order from which it is impossible to break loose. To conform to it is to make oneself acceptable to the community at every level, and to benefit from its favours; to turn away from the established order is almost to exclude oneself, to excommunicate oneself (Kwesiga, 2002, p.57, citing Amy, 1972).

As cautioned by Kwesiga (2002), understanding this implication will help in assessing the factors that affect the education of women because it provides a basis for the explanations that are generally termed as ‘cultural,’ where customs demand adherence.

1.3.3 The Concept Of 'Initiation'

In this study the initiate will refer to a female who has had her first menarche and is undergoing an initiation rite.⁶ An initiation is a process, a ritual of transition, through which a new identity of a girl is constructed. It is a process through which the basis of adult life is laid down for an individual. According to Arnold Van Gennep (1909) in his classic book titled *Les rites de passage*, there are three stages, these are: first, separation; when an individual is separated from others and confined to a house of initiation. Secondly, the marginalisation stage, which demonstrates the insignificance of the initiate. It is during this stage that the initiate is taught and equipped with an extensive body of societal traits that a woman is expected to have understood and used in order to know how to live her newly attained phase of life. Thirdly, the aggregation stage; it is during this stage that an initiate is incorporated into the new state (adulthood). This stage signifies the end of the whole initiation process and the exit is a public spectacle where the initiate is introduced to the rest of the community as an adult (Richards, 1956; Turner, 1969; Rasing, 1995; and Rasing, 2001).

There are two types of initiation rites that will be mentioned in this study, that is the pre-menarche and the pre-marital rites. Of particular interest is the pre-menarche rite which will simply be referred to as an initiation rite or ceremony. Reason to focus on the pre-menarche rite is because it is conducted on young girls who are in formal school. The concern here is the information the young girls receive during the initiation process and the significance for and possible effect it could have on her educational aspirations.

1.3.4 The Concept Of 'Tradition'

Tradition is another controversial concept. In defining the concept, Rasing (2001) notes that 'tradition' is a construction of the interaction of individuals through language and experiences which in turn form its complex identity mark. While traditions are a construction of the members of a given society there could be an element of the corpus of inherited culture characteristics that continues despite changes taking place. It is this 'core' of inherited culture that the tribe under study calls *miambo* (traditions) and in this study I will refer to '*miambo*' traditions as cultural traditions.

⁶ Although a more modern practice is to allow the girls to go to school and return to the house after school to continue their period of confinement, this only takes place if the father insists.

1.3.5 The Concept Of 'Patrilineal' Lineage

Segall et al point out that in a given society there are rules of descent, which are “ways in which persons in a society trace their ancestry” (Segall et al., 1990, p.7). Two of these are patrilineal and matrilineal descent. Members in matrilineal descent groupings trace their origin to the mother’s side while those in patrilineal descent groupings trace their origin to the father’s side.

A number of studies such as Young, (1930), Brelsford, (1965), Ogot, (1999), Munthali (2008) identify the Tumbuka tribe as patrilineal, a position they assumed after the invasion of the Ngoni, itself patrilineal. In patrilineal groupings, authority is vested in men by birth and the recruitment of new members is through the males. The role of women is to give birth to the descent group’s heir. While in matrilineal descent, group placement is through the women, the positions of highest authority still lie vested in men. A woman in authority will have to consult with the men to make an important decision (Schneider and Gough, 1962). It is important to understand here that the standing of these groupings has strong attachments to the members of a particular society and the implications could affect the members in different ways: for example the importance placed on the education of a child.

1.4 The Structure of this Book

The structure of this book will be as follows. The current chapter has given a background to the Tumbuka tribe, where they are located in the country and reasons for the focus on this particular tribe. Inspiration for this book and my particular interest on the tribe has also been given. Chapter 2 will provide the statement of the problem to this study showing a number of statistics on the education of women in the country. The statistics provided are intended to show the number of girls in school in comparison to the boys. Although the statistics may not explain the reasons for the disparities among the number of girls and boys in school in the province, they are able to paint a picture of the low turn-out of girls participating in school education. Such information is valuable to this study and reason for the investigation. Background information to Zambia has been provided in the chapter in order to give the reader background for understanding the study. The discussion will include the location of Zambia in the region, its population and the education system. Information on education in the rural areas will be given, which is intended to show how disadvantaged Lundazi district is because it is predominantly rural. The chapter will end with an examination of Zambia’s global standpoint in relation to the education of women. This will be done in light of its commitment made towards the education of women in the country.

Chapter 3 outlines and discusses the different theories of gender inequalities and Human Capital Theory (HCT), which are expected to explain the problem being studied. A number of theories have been used to provide critical understanding and explanations to the factors that affect the education of women. Reference to the relationship between African feminisms and Western feminisms has been done with a focus on the criticisms of the Western feminists made by the African feminists.

Chapter 4 examines the nature of Zambian cultural traditions with a focus on the Tumbuka and gives background on some of the influential practices prevalent in the tribe that affect the education of women. Examples from the literatures will be used in discussion to establish the need to investigate the phenomenon. Chapter 5 will discuss, argue and justify the methodological case used to collect the data for this study. A number of issues such as the procedures used for collecting data, sampling strategy, reliability and validity of the investigation, research ethics and the method of analysis used to translate raw data into findings will be discussed. Chapters 6 and 7 cover the discussions on the findings and analysis of the study and Chapter 8 concludes with a summary of some of the broad themes of this study. The recommendations this study will raise will also be part of Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Introduction

The importance of the education of women has topped many agendas both locally and internationally for decades. However the factors that affect access and participation of women in education are many with social cultural implications being one. The reality of social cultural implications as cause for the low participation of women in education can no longer be ignored. Choosing to focus on other factors may explain the continued state of women in many developing countries. Chapter 1 has explained the purpose for this investigation and in this chapter, the statement of problem will throw up a number of issues such as education in the rural areas and the effect cultural traditions could have on female education and the current state of the education of girls in the country. The education system of Zambia and its implications on the education of girls will be given attention. The analysis of the problem will serve to argue and justify the purpose of the research; a number of statistics will be used as evidence of the number of girls that are not in school. The discussion will include background information to Zambia, its location in Africa, population, its economy. Information on Eastern Province and in particular Lundazi district, which is home to the Tumbuka tribe, will be provided. This will further give the reader a clear understanding of the place where the data were collected. A brief discussion of the objectives and the methodological case used to collect the data will be done. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

The landlocked position of Zambia does not have a direct effect on its education system. However, the number of refugees in the country has affected on its population, security and economy. The population and economic standing of the country has its own implications on the education system such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning resources and the like. The Zambian education system remains a copy of its former colonial masters (Britain) with slight changes made over the years that seem to fail to show evidence in its educated masses. The colonial impact on the local people continues to impact on their attitude towards the education of their children much more that of the female child. The pedagogy in use is predominantly teacher centred which cultivates rote learning, the memorisation of concepts rather than critical investigation skills in the learners.

A discussion on education in the rural area, of which Lundazi is, will be done as part of the statement of the problem because the rural areas have their own effect on the education of

girls. The lack of resources can easily exacerbate the factors that negatively impact on female education. For example the lack of learning resources such as books could reinforce absenteeism in both boys and girls however for the girl it could create opportunities to engage in house hold chores.

Zambia's participation in international and regional conferences on the education of women is discussed. This background is important because Zambia's commitment to the education agenda worldwide affects its approach to the education of all its citizens in both rural and urban areas. Further the pursuit to achieve the goals set out, such as the MDGs can guide and inform any research or advocacy on the education of women. The government has a moral responsibility to ensure that the commitments made are honoured in practice not only in principle. Zambia is not exempted from the many regional and international instruments towards the education of women, hence, the need to minimise or eliminate the factors that militate against the education of girls deserve attention. This brings up the discussion on the statement of the problem to this investigation which is the focus of the section that follows.

2.1 Stating the Problem

2.1.1 The Location Of Zambia

Located in the southern part of Africa, Zambia lies between the equator and the tropical of Capricorn. It has a total surface area of 753, 000sq km of which about 12,000sq km is water and 741,000sq km is land and covers 2.5 percent of Africa (Zambia, 2000; CSO, 2003; Zambia, 2005; and CSO, 2006). It is a landlocked country, which shares boundaries with 8 countries; Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, Tanzania, and Namibia. Despite being neighbour to some warring nations, such as DRC, Zambia remains one of the peaceful nations in the region and hence provides sanctuary to hundreds of thousands of refugees (CSO, 2003). While Zambia has been able to provide sanctuary to refugees, this has put strain on the struggling economy. Eastern Province remains home to a number of refugees from Mozambique who have not been able to return back.

Zambia is divided into administrative provinces and each one has each own districts. The Copperbelt and Lusaka Province are predominantly urban with the rest being rural: about four out of ten Zambians live in urban areas (CSO, 2003). The Eastern Province is fairly narrow and shares boundaries with Malawi and Mozambique. See the map of Zambia below:



Figure 1: Map of Zambia showing its Neighbours, Provinces and Districts

***The pointer shows Lundazi district, home to the Tumbuka tribe under study.
Source: Maps of the World (2009). Accessed on 08/01/09**

Eastern Province with a population of 1.7 million of which men are 836,000 and women is 871,566 is divided into districts one of which is Lundazi. Lundazi as shown on the map above is home to the Tumbuka tribe with a population of 16,017 thousand according to the year 2010 census results. This population is just for Lundazi district and excludes the thousands that do not live in the district but have moved on to other towns for purposes of work, marriage and other reasons. The province is home to the Luangwa National Park that is divided into two; Northern and Southern Parks. The Northern Park lies near Lundazi district and is about 4,600sq km of the valley of the Luangwa River. The park is not developed and is not open to the public except guided walking safaris (CSO, 2003; Zambia, 2003; Tembo, 2003; CSO, 2010). However, the district does not benefit much from any revenue. Mvula (2000) writing on fair trade in tourism in Southern Luangwa National Park, argued that despite the notable rewards of tourism development, the benefits are rarely distributed equitably with the local people. Mvula identifies the unequal discrimination in the employment practice as one area where the indigenous people have been discriminated against.

2.1.2 The Population and the People

The current population of Zambia is estimated at 13 million of which 51.5 percent are women and 48.5 percent are men (Zambia, 2009 CSO, 2010 and World Bank, 2011). Zambia has about 73 ethnic linguistic Bantu speaking groups or tribes dispersed in its provinces. The main languages are Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, Kaonde, Luvale, and Lunda with each having a cluster of dialects. English remains the nation's official language, a situation that is as a result of the British colonization (Zambia, 2000; Zambia, 2009). Wright (2003) has argued that colonizing states introduced their languages to the local people targeting the children. Consequently, English became the official language of instruction in schools the situation that currently threatens the indigenous languages.

Previously known as Northern Rhodesia, Zambia gained political independence from its colonial master (Britain), on the 24th of October 1964 and adopted the multiparty system of governance, which lasted until December 1972 when the one party system based on the socialist ideology was introduced. In 1991, Zambia peacefully re-introduced the multiparty system currently in place. This change saw an improvement in the country's economy attracting donor support and much of the rundown basic infrastructure such as schools and roads were rehabilitated. Liberalization of the country's economy also saw the growth of privately owned schools that provided competition to government owned schools hence improving the fallen standards of teaching and learning (Zambia, 2000; CSO, 2003; McPherson, 2004; and Zambia, 2005).

2.1.3 The Education System

Despite Zambia obtaining independence from Britain, the education system was one of the most poorly developed in the region, poor in quantity and quality, targeting a few Zambians (Achola, 1990; Silanda et al., 1999). Authors such as Achola, (1990), Kelly (1999), and Carmody (1999) have argued that the colonial system of education did not benefit the majority of Zambians. Wright, commenting on the development of education, states that the colonizers considered the colonized people as "inferior, degenerate, savage and in need of improvement" (Wright, 2003, p.219). He argues that if the colonizers held the colonized people with such a low view, as 'backward heathens', how could they have enabled them to appreciate the 'truth' except through education.

However, what is questionable is the nature of knowledge that was imposed upon the colonized people through the education system: It tended to benefit the colonizing states by