

# Possible links between United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal Number Two (UN-SDG2) and the Religio-Cultural aspects of the Chibwelamushi Harvest Ceremony of the Lala and Swaka people of Zambia’s Central Province

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**Abstract:** The study explored possible links between United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal Number two (UN-SDG2) and the religio-cultural aspects of the Chibwelamushi Harvest Ceremony (CHC). The study employed qualitative approaches involving a realist ethnography design under the social constructivism paradigm in order to effectively address the issues raised by the research question. The method of data collection included, observation, interviews and document analysis, using observation checklist, the semi structured interview guides activity and document analysis checklist. The sample of 12 interviewees included one national chairperson and secretary of CHC, 2 representatives from Insaka ye-Lala, 2 traditional affairs officers, 2 extension officers, 2 ordinary members and one senior chief from each tribe. The study revealed how rituals, songs composed during CHC, showcasing best samples of crops from each chiefdom, building of traditional granaries, inviting seed companies, teaching of economic skills and crafts and the concept of kumulima chipuba might help implement UN-SDG2. The results of the study revealed how rituals, songs composed during CHC, the samples of crops showcased from each chiefdom, inviting seed companies, building of granaries, teaching of economic and life skills and the concept of chiefdom inspection (kumulima chipuba) might help to implement UN-SDG2. Arising from the findings, the researcher proposes among others: the celebration of CHC to be held in zones of all chiefdoms in order to accord most of the CHC attendants a chance to have first hand information concerning religio-cultural teachings and agriculture, and the custodians of traditional heritage to work hand in hand with extension officers and seed companies to sensitize and teach the Lala and Swaka people how they could have a better yield as well as the importance of preserving what was produced. Based on the findings, the following recommendation among others was proposed for considerations: The custodians of traditional heritage and leading farmers to incorporate the extension officers and seed companies to conduct awareness campaigns on issues of religio-cultural teachings that focus on food security and agriculture, and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Religio-cultural; Chibwelamushi; Lala; Swaka; Sustainable Development

## I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

International aspirations such as those expressed through the UN-SDGs on one hand, and local aspirations like those expressed through traditional ceremonies, on the other, have historically remained worlds apart. With such a situation, it is argued in this article that it is not conducive to attain ideals of sustainable development. A corrective intervention is required and, hence, the thrust of this article. In this regard, this article investigated the implementation of the UN-SDG2 through the Religio-Cultural aspects of the Chibwelamushi Harvest Ceremony (CHC) of the Lala and Swaka people of Zambia’s Central Province. The CHC is a religio-cultural event that is performed to thank the ancestral spirits for the previous harvest, for being with the Lala and Swaka people during the planting and harvesting time, as well as to appease the ancestral spirits so as to have more blessings in the coming year (Guhr and Kapwepwe, 2010). Kaira (2016) argues that crop cultivation has been a long standing economic activity from pre-colonial era in Serenje district. This shows that from time immemorial, farming has been a major means of the livelihood for the Lala and Swaka people. The UN-SDG2 is one of the seventeen United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) that the United Nations (UN) member states have agreed to try and achieve by the year 2030 (WHO, 2017). Zambia has adopted and localised the UN-SDGs to reflect its own context by putting agriculture at the centre of development, and restoring the dignity which is often undermined by poverty and hunger (Zambia Data Portal Nations Statistics, 2017). A study done by Guhr (2010) establishes that traditional ceremonies are a time-honoured form of communication that provide a vibrant record of the people’s common heritage which includes dances, songs, crafts and artifacts that have been passed down through the generations. This shows that traditional ceremonies are practised to perform various functions such as a form of communication among the people. This also suggests that there are religio-cultural teachings taught during the celebration of the CHC. Guhr’s study however, did not clarify

how the common heritage can be of help in the implementation of the UN-SDG2. Failure to provide such clarity constitutes a problem because people cannot learn and understand how the religio-cultural aspects of the CHC can be of help in implementing the UN-SDG2.

Brennan (2009) argues that culture can be a factor that needs to be addressed to determine its impact on existing development programmes. It is therefore vital that problems and potential solutions be defined in a manner consistent with the local culture. Additionally, the UNESCO (2005) argues that placing culture at the heart of the nation's strategies is both the condition for provision of an enabling sustainable development, and a powerful driving factor for achievement of the sustainable development. It is from this background this study was undertaken. Its results were expected to suggest the possible ways of using the CHC as a vehicle in the dissemination and implementation of laid down projects by the Zambian government towards the implementation of the UN-SDG2. Through its elements, the CHC has the religio-cultural aspects which authors and researchers might not have unveiled which could be useful in the implementation of the SDG2. Researchers might not have explored how these religio-cultural aspects of the CHC that focus on food security could be used to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Though, this ceremony is celebrated every year, very little has been analysed about it. Some studies have been done on other traditional ceremonies in Zambia, it appears all these studies concentrated on the meaning and identity of particular ceremonies without unveiling how the religio-cultural aspects in these ceremonies and the CHC could be of help in implementing the UN-SDG2. This may lead to the decline of the value of the traditional religio-cultural teachings of this ceremony if there was no understanding of how these aspects and the CHC could be of help in the implementing of global and national pronouncements and goals such as the UN-SDG2 in addressing hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture. This article, therefore, attempts to fill the gap by exploring how the religio-cultural teachings of CHC may be of help to implement the UN-SDG2 are crucial to achieving meaningful developmental programmes.

## II. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The study was guided by one major question: How may religio-cultural aspects of the *Chibwelamushi* Harvest Ceremony on agriculture and food security help implement the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal Number 2?

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lubomba (2004) in Kanene (2011: 7) argues that "the most important defining characteristics of humans are their culture". It reflects the inner workings of an individual society. For instance, it helps to define social situations. UNESCO (2005) contends that the role of culture in reducing

poverty, providing safe access to water and food, and strengthening the resilience of communities in the face of disasters, is truly major and irreplaceable. This shows that no meaningful development can take place minus the involvement of culture, for it appears to be the anchor of human life. Aganda (2016: 36) contends that "the culture of a place and the cultural practices contribute directly or indirectly to the food security situation of a given society". This assertion is crucial to this article as it suggests the importance of cultural practices on the food security situation of a given community.

Ngabwa (2015) indicates that the giving of thanks to the ancestral spirits and the gods for guarding Lala and Swaka people when they were in the bush and for giving them bumper harvest was and still is a very important aspect of appreciating the work the ancestral spirits and gods do to the individual families and the Lala and Swaka community. In this regard, Guhr (2010) documents that rituals help people to ask for rains and give thanks for a good harvest or successful hunt as well as to communicate with divine beings, departed souls or natural forces that govern the cycles of nature. This shows that the religious aspects play a vital role in the Lala and Swaka peoples' lives as they help people to live in harmony with the spirits of their ancestors. Ngabwa (2015) further points out that the chief leaves a sample of every crop harvested that year, and every part of food brought to the shrine symbolising giving of part of the crop people harvested that year to the gods. In agreement with the above assertion, Guhr (2010) indicates that the Lala and Swaka people thanked, prayed, made offerings and sacrifices to their ancestors for keeping them safe whilst in the bush and for harvest. This entails that gifts to the gods are given in exchange for the care that they provide to people. In line with the same assertion, Chinwe (2012) stated that gifts to the gods were given in exchange for the care that they provide to people.

During the CHC, the Central Province Permanent Secretary at the time of conducting this research in 2018 was quoted in the *Zambia Daily Mail* Newspaper of 26 September 2018, saying that government valued traditional ceremonies such as the *Ichibwelamushi* as they were platforms of promoting agriculture, culture and unity. This suggested that ceremonies such as the CHC played an important role in the dissemination of important information such as agriculture to the people, to help in implementing the government pronouncements such as the UN-SDG2. It was important therefore, that researches such as this one were carried out so that citizens could read and learn about the significant roles of harvest ceremonies in helping to implement the government pronouncements.

Clarke (1997) argued that ceremonies provided an opportunity for diverse groups to acknowledge the blessings of the 'Supreme Creator' and the lesser deities and ancestral spirits manifested in good health, good harvest and abundance of children. This showed that traditional ceremonies had a role to play in agriculture as they talk about good harvest. This

suggests that ceremonies, especially traditional harvest ceremonies play a crucial role in addressing hunger and achieving food security. Bahrayni (2014) contended that the harvest ceremony was not only a celebration of the bounty each year, but it also foretold the future. This is a good attitude as it helps and teaches people to be prudent with their harvest so that they could have food throughout the year as well as to uphold their cultural and moral teachings about agriculture and food security.

Chambo (2016) argued that during the CHC, the Minister of Youth was quoted in the *Zambia Daily* Newspaper of 8 September 2016 saying that traditional ceremonies served as events at which agricultural production and food security were promoted. Therefore, considering the importance attached to traditional leaders in fostering social and economic development, the Zambian government pledges full support to such events. Comparably, Kanene (2011) observed that the *Lwiindi Gonde* ceremony always provided space for traditional leaders, government representatives and representatives of non-governmental organisations to meet for some hours to discuss and iron-out issues that affected the society and those that affected them as leaders. This entailed traditional ceremonies served as a platform for great thoughts and suggestions on matters of development among various sectors of society, and conflicts are given. It also suggests that suggestions on handling of issues of development and of disputes and conflict resolution among leaders and their subjects are given.

Agricultural experts have indicated that many local Lala people between 1972 and 1992 showed a tendency to move from one settlement to another because of preference for certain types of soils perceived to be good for crop cultivation however, this was not so much of the soils being bad for crops but lack of knowledge on how to maintain fertility (Kaira, 2016). This showed that to mitigate hunger, there was need for people to diversify their agricultural techniques and crops. It was important in the current study to therefore, learn about the methods of farming used by the Lala and Swaka people as they practiced the CHC if they were those that could be of help to mitigate hunger or not. This might suggest that there was need for stakeholders to make certain modifications to enhance the learning and practising of sustainable farming methods.

UNESCO (2015:6) expressed its view point that “a focus on rural development in agricultural-crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and agriculture were powerful tools to end hunger, and bring about sustainable development”. This echoes the findings of Kaira (2016), who established that at whatever period of time, crop cultivation was closely dependent on the people’s knowledge of the prevailing economic, social and physical environment. This suggested that there was need to prioritise rural development in the area of agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries if communities and countries at large had to achieve the UN-SDG2. In a related manner, Kaira (2016) asserted that from 1975 to 1990 communities in

Serenje, particularly those that had been exposed to out-grower schemes began to replace the traditional local maize variety with new hybrid maize seeds which were known to have higher yields and were early maturing in order to be harvesting early and eaten or sold in good time.

Burchi et al (2015: 17) argued that “in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, diversification of diet was key to fighting malnutrition and diversification of crops was fundamental to ensure stable access to food”. It was therefore useful to learn about the kind of crops grown by Lala and Swaka people if they were those that could be of help to end hunger and achieve food security. In support of this assertion, Harris et al. (2012) revealed that to avoid insecurity and malnutrition problems during droughts and floods, people needed to ensure that they diversified their staple food crops. This is in agreement with Kaira (2016) who argued that from 1992-1998, some communities in chief Chitambo’s area, Chalilo, Katonga and Gibson, Kanona and those around chief Chibale opted to start growing on a large scale local crops such as cassava, millet, sorghum and local maize. Relating this to the current study entails that diversification of farming of staple food crops can help improve nutrition even in times of droughts or floods.

Lubasi (2017) further revealed that the DAIC argued that the Ministry of Agriculture was encouraging the growing of the local varieties as they were good for nutrition and medicinal purposes. The hardly found local varieties and traditional crops were resilient and could help the local farmers cope with the extremities of climate change. In a related manner, Kaira (2016) argued that some communities in Serenje district opted to grow on large scale local crops because many people perceived local maize varieties as being more resistant to weevils and other forms of pests, and so would be stored for longer periods for food and for sale in critical situations.

Contrary to these assertions, Sitko (2011) argued that despite Zambia’s rich agricultural resources, Zambia had continued to experience chronic food and nutrition security problems. In addition Sitko, added that cropping characteristics for small scale farming systems in Zambia were over-whelmingly dominated by a single crop, maize. Mambwe (2018) argued that during the flagging off of the 2018- 2019 farming input distributing exercise, the Solwezi District Commissioner by then was quoted in the *Times of Zambia* of 8 October 2018 saying that through people’s embracement of the four pillars of conservation farming, the methods made improvements to the food basket in the district. Relating this assertion to the current study, this could mean that the Government had put measures that could make improvements to the food basket of small scale farmers in the country. It was useful therefore, to learn the kind of farming programmes that were encouraged during the CHC if they were those that could make improvements to the food baskets in the Lala and Swaka communities and the country at large.

Additionally, during the 2017 Shibuyunji Seed Diversification Fair, the Acting Shibuyunji District Agriculture Coordinator

(DACO) by then was quoted in the *Zambia Daily Mail* News paper of 6 October 2017 saying that the Government believed that diversification would lead to improved house-hold nutrition, in addition to food security as well as increased and sustainable household incomes. Application of this to the present study suggested that the government of Zambia under the Ministry of Agriculture encouraged its' citizens to diversify from a maize production to other crops and other forms of farming methods, and also to diversify in their crop cultivation and production in order for them to improve household nutrition and increased food security, and to achieve sustainable household incomes and the Lala and Swaka people were not an exceptional.

Stering (2014) argued that education could build lasting change, that was sustainable because it was owned by the learner and reached their hearts and minds, and sustainable development was not itself sustainable unless relevant learning among all stakeholders was central to the process. In addition, the UN (2005) showed that the European strategy for sustainable development recognised that education was a prerequisite for promoting the behavioural changes and providing all citizens with key competences needed to achieve sustainable development. The above literature suggested that education was the major factor in making the world more sustainable.

Tembo (2003) and Guhr (2010) revealed that on the morning of the CHC, on the display were the different food samples of crops from that year's harvest. This entailed that the elders of these two tribes taught their communities and the young the importance of farming, and diversification in staple food crops. Furthermore, Ngabwa (2015: 56) argued that "Lala and Swaka people composed songs to shower people who had done well in their harvest with praises and condemn those who did not do well as a way of encouraging them to mould the kind of lives they led, so as to avoid to be laughing stocks of the community and in turn try to always do their best, to work hard in terms of food production". In relation to the current study, this entailed that the Lala and Swaka people understood the importance of being hard-working, and that food was not given free, but that people needed to sweat in order to have something good, and above all, for one to have a good name and gain respect in society, food production was vital.

Additionally, Ngabwa (2015: 43) further expressed her view point that "her observation of the CHC also revealed that there was building of traditional granary called *ubutala*, where millet and other crops such as pumpkins and sorghum were stored after harvest". In relation to the current study, this suggested that the Lala and Swaka people were farmers who grew enough food for consumption as well as for sale. However, the study has not explained how this aspect of CHC may help to implement the UN-SDG2. Therefore, it was important from this background to undertake to write this article because it revealed how the religio-cultural teachings during the CHC might help implement the UN-SDG2. The

article also suggests other possible intervention measures regarding enhancing the religio-cultural teachings during the CHC helping to implement the UN-SDG2.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

The article highlights on the qualitative approaches employed under the social constructivism paradigm in which it evoked realist research design in order to effectively analyse how religio-cultural teachings of the *Chibwelamushi* Harvest Ceremony on agriculture and food security may help to implement the UN-SDG2. Data collection included, observations (observation checklist), interviews using semi structured interview guides and document analysis. The population in the study included all the Lala and Swaka tribes in Zambia. The targeted 16 participants which included one national chairperson and secretary of CHC, 2 representatives from Insaka ye-Lala, 2 Chiefs and officers traditional affairs officers, 2 extension officers, 2 health workers, 2 ordinary members and one senior chief from each tribe purposively selected. The selected were considered to be knowledgeable about the CHC since they were key custodians of traditional heritage, and experts in their fields of work.

The researcher also observed the whole procession of the CHC. Data was analyzed according to emerging themes which generally were answering the set research concerns indicated earlier. The study made use of the combination of methods to establish the accuracy of responses. The data from interviews were compared with data from relevant documentation studied, from traditional affairs officers, health workers, field extension officers, representatives of Insaka ye-Lala and the researcher's observations. Then, a summary was drawn. The study also used various sources of data as multiple methods of data collection and resources of data validate research. This is so because methods complement each other with no overlapping weaknesses (Brewer and Patton, 2002). A combination of methods ensures that inconsistencies are removed and thus valid and reliable data emerges (Patton, 2002 and Yin, 2003). In order to validate the findings, during field work, the researcher listened to the recordings at the end of each day so as to check for unclear material and then cross check with the respondents (Patton, 2002). While cross checking, the researcher also made use of the respondents for the verification of the findings. The researcher also ensured voluntary participation of respondents; no harm to participants either emotional or physical was inflicted on them. The integrity and privacy of participants including surety of anonymity and confidentiality of some information they gave was granted.

#### V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussions are anchored on how religio-cultural teachings of the CHC on agriculture and food security may help to implement the UN-SDG2. The concept of 'Religious' in this article is defined as having or showing belief in and reverence for God or deity while culture is defined as skills, beliefs and knowledge that are commonly

shared by a number of people and transmitted to their children. It was established that the religio-cultural aspects of the CHC might help to implement the UN-SDG2 through various activities, and the display of various items elders of the two tribes showcased during the CHC as well as those done during the first phase of the CHC. These are; rituals, songs composed, display of various samples of that year’s harvest, invitation of seed companies, building of food storages, the concept of *kumulima chipuba* (*It literally means that only fools and lazy go to work in that chieftom farm*).

In analysing how the religio-cultural teachings may help to implement the UN-SDG2, one of the custodians of traditional heritage elaborated as follows:

*We give thanks to the spirits of our ancestors for giving us bumper harvest. We give offerings to the spirits to seek blessings and life in abundance. We give sacrifices to the spirits of our ancestors during the CHC in order to keep our relation with the departed souls strong. The high priests perform this act on behalf of us, the Lala and Swaka people. He or she says a word to the spirits of the ancestors for giving us bumper harvest and good life, then he or she scatters food around the shrine, sprinkle and pour beer around the place and ask for more blessings (Interview with custodian of traditional heritage, September 2018)*

There was a general consensus that the religio-cultural teachings might help to implement the UN-SDG2 through the songs that the Lala and Swaka people composed and sung during the celebration of the CHC which emphasised hard work and condemned laziness. This was supported by about 12 of the 16 participants interviewed. They reported that the songs composed and sung during the CHC emphasised hard work and condemned laziness. In making the point clear, one of the interviewees, a custodian of traditional heritage indicated as follows:

*We compose fwandafwanda, Ichila and Kalindula songs to condemn those that did not do well in the previous farming year. We would say in such a village people are lazy, they like beer-drinking. This year, they have no proper harvest. They will suffer from hunger. The message is about hard working in terms of farming (interview with Custodian of Traditional Heritage, September 2020).*

The interviewees, 14 out of 16 revealed that on the day of the ceremony, the elders of the Lala and Swaka tribes display various samples of that year’s harvest as shown in figure 1 below indicating that if people had to fight hunger, they needed to diversify in their farming. Observations also revealed that meals were prepared and served to people. This was done to teach the local people how to combine different groups of food to make a balanced diet so that people did not suffer from malnutrition especially the young ones.



Figure 1: Food samples of 2019 -2020 harvest season.

Source: Field Data, 2020

The findings further showed that by the custodians of traditional heritage inviting seed companies such as Seed Co and MRI (Seed Companies) to come and teach the local people important information about farming, this might help to implement the UN-SDG2. They revealed that workers from Seed Co and MRI seed companies taught the local people about the new variety of crops that were to be grown in their areas depending on a particular type of soil and the rain pattern in particular areas that could give people improved profitable production that could not just be for consumption but also for sale. . In making this point clear, one of the interviewees, a representative of *Insaka ye-Lala* revealed that:

*The CHC committee members invite officers from Seed Co and MRI seed companies to come during the CHC and teach us about their different varieties of seeds, they teach us when to grow different varieties, how to prepare our fields and how to take care of different variety of crops in order to improve productivity. Officers from Seed Co give chiefs also certified seed Co. maize and other seeds to go and plant in their fields in order to have good yields that are equal to the input (representative of Insaka ye-Lala, September 2020).*

Further observations and interviews revealed that Seed Co and MRI seed companies invested in technology and chemicals,

and provided technical support to the local people in terms of training done by conducting field days. Further interviews and observations disclosed during the CHC about the building of traditional granaries called *amatala* where crops were stored after harvest. In making this point clear, two of the interviewees explained that:

*We build granaries during the CHC to show the local people that whatever crop we grow in our fields, should be grown in abundant to be used at the time of harvest as well as after harvest to take us to the following harvest. We build amatala to also teach our people to keep the harvested food safe (Custodian of Traditional Heritage, September 2020).*

*We are taught to grow better crops. We are taught and encouraged to grow enough food for us to be liberated from hunger. We learn to work even harder than the current year in the following year for us to be self-sufficient in food production. Once we have plenty of food, we will remain healthy and productive (Villager, September 2020).*

The senior chiefs, two extension officers, the national chairperson and secretary of the CHC and the villagers mentioned that the CHC's religio-cultural aspects that focus

on agriculture and food security might help implement the UN-SDG2 through the concept of *kumulima chipuba*. The interviewees revealed that during *umulondo* (village inspection), the Lala and Swaka chiefs discussed farming issues with their subjects. The senior chiefs, the extension officers, the national chairperson and secretary of the CHC and the villagers mentioned that individuals who failed to utilise their land to produce enough food to take them to the following harvest time were taken to *kumulima chipuba* field of particular chiefdoms to go and do the work that they failed to do in their fields. This helped their chiefs to have enough food to distribute to vulnerable people such as the old and orphans in particular chiefdoms.

Teaching of young people economic and survival skills emerged also as one of the ways in which religio-cultural teachings of the CHC might help to implement the UN-SDG2. In line with the same argument, the researcher observed that elders of the CHC taught the young people economic and survival skills such as making of axes, hoes, knives, baskets, reed mats, traditional stools, cooking sticks, pounding mortars and clay pots among others as shown in Figure 4 below. The items are sold to people who do not have the skill to make them and also those that can but do not have time, as well as other customers, especially those from urban areas.



Figure 4: Samples of items made during the Chibwelamushi Harvest Ceremony

Source: Field Data, 2020

Document analysis revealed that Traditional Ceremonies serve as events at which agricultural production and food security were promoted (Chambo, 2016, 2018), illustrate harvesting of crop (Oduyoye, 1983). Tembo (2003) and Guhr (2010) found that on the morning of the CHC, on display were the different food samples of crops from that year's harvest. The data from the findings above have revealed ways of how religio-cultural teachings of the CHC might help to implement the UN-SDG2.

During the ceremony, the community was encouraged to work hard in their agriculture fields in order that they earn themselves a good name by having a good harvest. The elders of the tribes display a variety of crops on the day of the CHC, build traditional granaries called *amatala*, where extra food is stored for future use, invite seed companies, the teach young ones economic and survival skills, talk about the use of the concept of *kumulima chipuba* and compose songs which are sung during the CHC all of which depict how religio-cultural teachings of the CHC might help to implement the UN-SDG2.

However, the data has also revealed that some villagers and the general participants seem not to have adequate information about how religio-cultural aspects of the CHC that focus on food security and agriculture might help to implement the UN-SDG2. Most of the general participants attend the CHC for merry-making and others to just watch the dances as well as to sell their merchandise since during the ceremony there is a bigger population and so they make good business. Therefore, this information about how religio-cultural aspects of the CHC that focus on food security and agriculture may help to implement the UN-SDG2., needs documentation if others beyond the Lala and Swaka people should benefit from information such as the current study.

The findings from the custodians of traditional heritage revealed that religio-cultural teachings of the CHC on food security and agriculture might help to implement the UN-SDG2. The study established that religio-cultural aspects of the CHC on food security and agriculture might help to implement the UN-SDG2 through; rituals, songs that people composed, showcasing best samples of crops from the 19 chiefdoms, building of traditional granaries, inviting seed companies, teaching of economic skills and crafts, and the concept of *kumulima chipuba*.

Interviewees' views on the religio-cultural teachings helping to implement the UN-SDG2 showed that the religio-cultural aspects helped the Lala and Swaka people to receive good service from the spirits of their ancestors and the gods through the people's thanking, appeasing, offering and sacrificing to the spirits of their ancestors and gods during the CHC. It is believed that once rituals mentioned above are respected, the spirits would not be angered hence there would be good service from them such as good harvest, good health and good rains. The Lala and Swaka people use rituals to ask for blessings give thanks and celebrate life. These findings are similar to Guhr (2010) who documented that rituals help people to ask for rains and give thanks for a good harvest or successful hunt as well as to communicate with divine beings, departed souls or natural forces that govern the cycles of nature. Ngabwa (2015) further indicated that the giving of thanks to the ancestral spirits and the gods for guarding Lala and Swaka people when they were in the bush and for giving them bumper harvest was and still is a very important aspect of appreciating the work the ancestral spirits and gods do to the individual families and the Lala and Swaka community. This could mean that rituals performed to the gods and spirits of the ancestors are performed in exchange for the services that they provide to the people. Therefore, as long as the Lala and Swaka people uphold the rituals in the CHC, there would be good harvest, health and rains in the Lala and Swaka communities thereby helping to implement the UN-SDG2.

The custodians of traditional heritage argued that religio-cultural aspects of the CHC might help to implement the UN-SDG2 through the songs that Lala and Swaka people composed and sung during the celebration of the CHC which emphasised hard work and condemned laziness. This article

established that the Lala and Swaka people were encouraged to work hard in terms of farming as that earned them a good name and respect by having a good harvest. These findings were in line with the study by Ngabwa (2015) which found that the Lala and Swaka people composed songs to shower praises on people who had done well in their harvest and condemn those who did not do well as a way of helping to mould their kind of lives they led as they avoided to be laughing stocks of the community and in turn tried always to do their best, that is to work hard in terms of food production. This could suggest that the Lala and Swaka people always tried to work hard in terms of food production to gain self-esteem, respect and identity in that way the religio-cultural teachings could contribute to food security and agriculture.

The study further showed that showcasing of best samples of variety of crops of that year's harvest from the 19 chiefdoms indicated that if people had to fight hunger, then they needed to diversify in their farming. The study also indicated that religio-cultural teachings of the CHC on food security and agriculture help the local people from the 19 chiefdoms to share their knowledge about various best and latest modern farming practices or methods that could improve their crop productivity. This also could suggest that there was diversification of farming in the CHC. This was evident in the variety of crop samples displayed on the day of CHC as shown in Figure 1 of this same chapter. These findings were in conformity with prior studies by Tembo (2003) and Guhr (2010) who revealed that on the morning of CHC, on the display were the different food samples of crops from that year's harvest. Another study which cemented support was by Harris et al. (2012), which stressed that to avoid insecurity and malnutrition problems during droughts and floods, it required ensuring of diversification of staple food crops. This entailed that diversification of farming of staple food crops could address hunger and food security. These findings were in harmony with what Burchi et al. (2015) had presented in their study that in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, diversification of crops was fundamental to ensure stable access to food.

Consenting to this, Chambo (2016) revealed that traditional ceremonies served as events at which agricultural production and food security were promoted. These findings corroborated with the UN (2015), which argued that to promote sustainable agriculture, there was need to promote agricultural development strategies and enable rural women, as well as men and the youth to increase sustainable agricultural productivity among many. This is in line with what Chambo (2018) reported during the CHC quoting the Central Province Permanent Secretary at the time of conducting this research in 2018 in the *Zambia Daily Mail* Newspaper of 26 September 2018 saying that government valued traditional ceremonies such as the *Ichibwelamushi* as they were platforms of promoting agriculture, culture and unity. This suggested that ceremonies such as the CHC played an important role in the dissemination of important information on such as agriculture

to the people, to help in implementing the government pronouncements such as the UN-SDG2.

Nevertheless, the sharing of information by the elders of the two tribes about good seeds and good farming practices in order for people to enhance their quality of their crop production during the ceremony was not clearly explained to the general attendants. This could have very little significance to the on-lookers who could not get the actual meaning of the elders' activity. This contradicts what Stering (2014) advanced with that education could build lasting change, that was sustainable because it was owned by the learner and reached their hearts and minds, and sustainable development was not itself sustainable unless relevant learning among all stakeholders was central to the process. Though on one hand, the study established that religio-cultural teachings could be of relevance to address hunger and food security, the study on the other hand established that the method of dissemination of information about the significance of religio-cultural teachings of the CHC in addressing hunger and food security was not adequate for it only catered for the elders of the two tribes and left out the general populous. This suggested that there was need for stake-holders to employ other means of information dissemination such as writing of well researched documents such as this one for people to read and understand the significance of religio-cultural aspects of the CHC in addressing government pronouncement such as the UN-SDG2.

The study further established that majority of interviewees indicated that religio-cultural teachings in the area of study could help to implement the UN-SDG2 through the building of traditional granaries. These findings were similar to what Ngabwa (2015) advanced with that there was building of a traditional granary called *ubutala* where millet and other crops such as pumpkins and sorghum were stored after harvest. This could suggest that the local people learnt to be prudent about the way they kept and used their harvest. This could also entail that the elders of the two tribes teach the Lala and Swaka people to grow enough food for both consumption and sale.

The study further established that religio-cultural teachings of CHC might help to address hunger and food security through invitation of companies that supported agricultural productivity such as Seed co and MRI. Interviewees' views showed that elders of the Lala and Swaka people invited officers from Seed Co and MRI companies during the CHC to come and teach the local people about Seed Co and MRI's different varieties of seeds. The interviewees stated that officers from Seed Co and MRI companies taught the CHC's participants about appropriate time to grow different varieties of crops, and the correct preparation of their fields and the care to be rendered to each different variety of crop in order to improve their crop productivity. A similar pattern has been reported by Zambia Tackles Core Development (2016), that among other strategies that Zambia was using to implement poverty reduction, was crop diversity according to the climate

of a particular region and the type of soil suitable for particular crops as farming was both a social and income-generating venture.

The study also established that officers from Seed Co and MRI companies gave the local chiefs certified Seed Co and MRI maize seed and other seeds to go and plant in their fields so that they could have good yields that were able to sustain their lives. This could entail that inviting companies that support farming by the elders of the Lala and Swaka people helped and encouraged the local people to plant and increase crop production and productivity. This was in agreement with what GRZ (2017) indicated that small-scale agriculture had the potential to enhance the living conditions of rural communities with the provision that some key actions were implemented to improve the income, rights and status of family farmers. This could entail that the living conditions and income and status of the family farmers of the Lala and Swaka communities were improved by planting a variety of good modern seeds which enhanced their crop productivity.

On the contrary, the researcher observed that this kind of gesture only benefitted the chiefs leaving their subjects to find their own sources of agricultural inputs. This could suggest that those who could not afford to buy the certified seeds and other farming inputs went back to the old way of using the local breed which did not give them a good harvest to have enough for both consumption and sale.

The study also showed that individuals who failed to utilise their land to produce enough food to take them to the following harvest time were taken to a special field called *kumulima chipuba*, which translated that, only fools went to work in that field, to go and do the work that they failed to do in their own fields. In doing so, particular chiefdoms were helped to have enough food to distribute to vulnerable people such as the old, widows and orphans in their respective chiefdoms. This is in line with UNESCO (2015), which mentioned that a focus on rural development in agriculture-crops, and agriculture are powerful tools to end hunger, and could bring about sustainable development. This assertion agrees with GRZ (2017), which stressed that family agriculture was the back-bone of the rural economy and thus held great potential for modernisation due to its predominance. This could entail that rural farming was the food basket and brought about individual, community and country emancipation as it was the one that fed the urban communities

The study further established that elders of the two tribes taught the Lala and Swaka people, especially the young one, economic skills to give them an income to supplement their diet so that they could have food on the table even when they had failed to produce enough food due climate change. They were taught how to make farming tools such as hoes, axes, traditional baskets and knives which people use in their fields, and also reed mats and clay pots. This revelation could mean mass production so that each and every member of a particular family could have a tool to use in the farming field.



This study established also that the religio-cultural aspects in this ceremony help to empower people economically as people could earn a living through the sale of the items they make. This is in agreement with the view of the UNESCO (2015) which argued that tackling hunger and malnutrition was not only about boosting of food production, but also to do with increasing incomes so that people could access safe and nutritious food even if a crisis prevented them from growing enough themselves. In support of this view, Burchi et al. (2015) pointed out that income-generating activities were fundamental to ensure stable access to food. Thus during the CHC people learnt what they were supposed to do, to mitigate hunger and food insecurity.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that religio-cultural teachings in this ceremony might help to implement the UN-SDG2 through the religio-cultural activities that focused on food security and agriculture displayed by elders of the two tribes during the CHC. The data indicated that rituals performed helped people to receive good service from the gods and the spirits of the ancestors, and songs that people composed and sung emphasised on hard work and condemned laziness. The other aspects of CHC were through showcasing best samples of crops from the 19 chiefdoms by the elders of the two tribes, building of traditional granaries, inviting seed companies personnel, teaching of economic skills and crafts to people, 'the concept and *kumulima chipuba*. This study also revealed that some villagers and most of the general participants did not know the religio-cultural aspects that focused on food security and agriculture, later alone how these aspects might help to implement the UN-SDG2. This could entail that there was still lack of vital information concerning possible links between the religio-cultural aspects of the CHC and the UN-SDG2 which needed to be documented as well as sensitised to the local people in order to bridge up the gap.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings, the article recommends that the custodians of CHC traditional heritage should increase on sensitisation and education of the religio-cultural teachings that focus on food security and agriculture, through local TV and radio stations. Publications should also be spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture and scholars for people to read and learn more about the CHC in order to uphold and transmit it to the coming generation.

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