

# Community Involvement in the Implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Rural Areas: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Chibombo District of Central Province, Zambia

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**Abstract:** This study was carried out to investigate community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in rural areas particularly in selected secondary schools of Chibombo district of Zambia. The objectives of the study included: to determine the major community stakeholders involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in selected secondary schools in Chibombo district; to examine how head teachers promote community participation in Comprehensive Sexuality Education in selected schools in Chibombo district; to establish the challenges that the rural secondary schools face in involving the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in selected secondary schools in Chibombo district and to determine measures which can be put in place to enhance community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools. The research design which was used was Case Study in which qualitative data was collected. Data was collected from 92 respondents distributed as follows: fifty (50) pupils; seven (7) head teachers; seven (7) heads of department; fifteen (15) teachers; three (3) headmen; six (6) parents and four (4) church leaders. Data was collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings of the study showed that teachers, health personnel, parents, chiefs, headmen, church leaders, law officers, and civic leaders were used in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The school managers created opportunities for community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education through the integration of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in other programmes in the school such as guidance and counselling, Annual General Meetings (AGMs), infrastructural development, awards day, re-entry policy, controlling of bad behaviour and motivational talks. Traditions, low educational levels and literacy levels, negative attitude to educational programmes, long distance to school, irregular communication between the school and community, the use of English in secondary schools, women willing to be involved but not fully committed, lack of funds from the government and poverty among the members of the community were the major challenges to community involvement in Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The measures to be put in place to enhance Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools included sensitisation meetings, workshops, opening programmes which were specifically for Comprehensive Sexuality Education

and include the community. Finally, based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made: The Ministry of General Education must make Comprehensive Sexuality Education a standalone subject and must be examinable. There is need to train all in-service teachers in Comprehensive Sexuality Education through workshops. Deliberate Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes and activities must be put in place to allow the community to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools. The community must be allowed to use familiar language and not just English when they are involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools.

**Key words:** *Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Culture, Stakeholders, Community*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (2017, 11) defined, Comprehensive Sexuality Education “as a right-based and gender-focused approach to sexuality education, whether in school or out of school.” This sex education instruction method aimed at giving students the knowledge, positive attitudes, skills and values to make appropriate and healthy choices in their sexual lives. It was also intended that with the provision of such information, students would be prevented from contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, reduction in the teenage pregnancies and help to lower the levels of Gender-Based Violence. Comprehensive Sexuality Education did emphasize sexual abstinence as the best and safest sexual choice for young people (Daka, Mbewe, Mulenga - Hagane, Kalimaposo, Masaiti and Mphande, 2021). However, the curriculum and teachers were still committed to teaching students about topics connected to future sexual activity, such as the age to consent, safe sex, contraception such as birth control pills, abortion and use of condoms (Rubenstein, 2017).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education was also aimed at empowering adolescents with life skills such as

communication, assertiveness and conflict resolution skills (Daka, Mwelwa, Tembo, and Mulenga-Hagane, 2019). Therefore, it focused on a holistic way of imparting positive knowledge and information about sexuality and sexual behaviour among the young people as this could enable them to make informed decisions and put into practice their rights and responsibilities as members of the school and community within which they lived. Comprehensive Sexuality Education was also considered as a right-based and also gender-focussed approach (Braeken and Castellanos, 2016).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education was introduced in the Zambian education system that was in primary, secondary and teacher training colleges as one way of adding more to the provision of Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education and also as part of the human rights. The International Conference on Population and Development which was held in Cairo in 1994 did affirm that Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are also human rights. Due to this affirmation, several international instruments contributed to the global consensus on how reproductive health was intrinsically linked to other fundamental human rights (UNFPA, 2017). The government of Zambia signed and committed to putting into practice the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the country.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SGGs) were another reason why Comprehensive Sexuality Education was introduced in Zambia. These goals were formulated at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The main objective of the Sustainable Development Goals was to produce a set of universal goals that met the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges which were being faced by the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2015). The Sustainable Development Goals were a replacement of the Millennium Development Goals which were a global effort in 2000 to handle extreme poverty and hunger, to prevent diseases which were deadly and also to make primary education accessible to all children regardless of their background were among the priority objectives.

The alarming levels of school dropouts due to pregnancy-related issues was another reason for the introduction of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Zambia. The Ministry of Education Statistical Bulletin stated that in 2007 to 2009, over 17 000 cases, in 2010, over 11 000 cases and in 2011 over 15 000 cases of dropouts were due to pregnancy-related issues (MoE, 2013). Sexually transmitted infections including Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome were very common among the age groups of 15 to 24 (Zambia Demographic Health Survey, 2010). The 2010 population bureau also reviewed that 12 per cent of the girls and 16 per cent of the boys experienced sex before the age of 15 (MoE, 2013). Further, investigations were made on the quality of Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education which were given to learners in schools. All these findings were an indication that there were sexually

related challenges in the school and that solutions had to be found for these challenges.

In 2011, the Government of the Republic of Zambia enacted an Education Act No.23 and in Section 108(1) (i), the Act empowered the Minister of Education to amend the curriculum to introduce Comprehensive Sexuality Education (UNFPA, 2017). In 2013, the Comprehensive Sexuality Education framework was developed and distributed to all schools. The curriculum's target was children between the ages of 10 to 24 who were in Grades 5 to 12. Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum was also introduced in the teacher training colleges to equip the student teachers with knowledge to implement Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools they were going to be teaching.

Cross-cutting issues were also included in the Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum and were focused on all aspects of human sexuality. These aspects were placed under themes such as human development, relationships, values, attitudes and skills, culture, society and human rights, sexual behaviour and sexual reproductive health. In Zambia, Comprehensive Sexuality Education was not a standalone subject but its content was integrated into subjects which were standalone. In Primary and Junior Secondary Schools, Comprehensive Sexuality Education was integrated into Integrated Science, Religious Education, and Social Studies. At Senior Secondary, Comprehensive Sexuality Education had been integrated into subjects such as Biology, Civic Education, Religious Education, and Home Economics.

The inclusion of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the curriculum was very vital especially in schools and communities where young people were at the stage of life when sexual issues affected them more and they did not know how to handle them. The issues included puberty, pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, abortion, self-esteem, how to handle relationships with the opposite sex, communication skills, Gender-Based Violence, and human rights. It was for this reason that Comprehensive Sexuality Education provided young people with the age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and scientifically accurate information (MoE, 2013).

The education system cannot function in isolation or without the involvement of the community in implementing its activities and some parts of the curriculum, which had cross-cutting issues, such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The communities provided the learners and resources that were needed for the effective functioning of the schools, therefore, there was need for the people in the community to be involved in activities that were being implemented in schools. According to Sanders (2003:162), "Community involvement in schools refers to the connections between schools and individuals, businesses and formal and informal organisations and institutions in a community." The provision of quality education had been placed on the school, however, there was more to education than just providing the academic

work for the learners within the confinement of the classroom in the school. This was because the process of providing education goes beyond teaching and learning in classrooms. The support, which was needed for teaching and learning, required the urgency to address students' social needs as well as their academic ones and this broad-based support was essential to closing achievement gaps (United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation, 2007). Community involvement in implementation implies that programmes and activities could be created and also added on to the education process within the schools' mission and goals. Hence, this involvement could lead to building very strong community support, strengthen the relationship between school and the community within the location, leading to high levels of student achievements.

Communities had values, ideas, norms and beliefs, which were to be perpetuated by the school being a social institution and the pupils in the school came from the community (Aminu, 2006 and Daka, Phiri, Chipindi and Nachimwenda, 2021). Schools and communities had to work closely with each other to meet their mutual goals of provision and management of education as well as teaching, learning, and enforcement of processes (Bibire, 2014). This could result in both the school and the community strengthening and developing each other and could provide for both educational renewal and community regeneration (Sa'ad and Sadiq, 2014).

The school as a social institution had a connection with the community within which it was located. Therefore, the school was also connected to the issues, which affected the community, and it was able to have an impact on the growth of the members of the community. Sharma (2016:8) says, "Strong, sustained community participation in the management of local schools can enhance transparency and accountability in the education system and promote a sense of ownership, agency and responsibility for positive change." People involved in policymaking must consider putting in place policies, which focus on the needs and expectations of the community.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Comprehensive Sexuality Education was being taught in secondary schools of Zambia (MoE, 2013). This meant that within the school environment, the youths were equipped with accurate and scientifically proven information concerning the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values about sex (UNFPA, 2015). However, despite the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools, issues such as increasing levels of teen pregnancies, child marriage and STI including Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome prevalence among the youths in schools has continued to affect the schools negatively especially in the rural areas (Matengo and Tembo, 2008). This was an indication to say the teachers could not manage to combat such issues, which continue to affect the school and the community negatively, on their own. There was need for members of the community to be involved in the

implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education particularly in rural secondary schools where most of the learners were at the adolescent and puberty stages of their lives.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of the study was to investigate community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural areas particularly in selected secondary schools of Chibombo district.

#### *Research Objectives*

- (i) To determine the major community stakeholders involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in selected secondary schools in Chibombo district.
- (ii) To examine how head teachers promote community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in selected secondary schools in Chibombo district.
- (iii) To establish the challenges that the rural secondary schools face in involving the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in selected secondary schools in Chibombo district.
- (iv) To determine measures which can be put in place to enhance community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools.

#### *Research Questions*

- (i) Who are the community's major stakeholders involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education at selected secondary schools in Chibombo district?
- (ii) What ways do head teachers use to promote community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in selected secondary schools in Chibombo district?
- (iii) What are the challenges that the rural secondary schools face in involving the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education?
- (iv) What measures can be used to enhance community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools?

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by the Social Capital Theory according to Robert Putnam's Approach. The relationship between the school and the community where it is located for both to work together in the implementation of educational activities and programmes is important. According to Agneessens (2006:5), "The need to construct bridges between the teachers and the communities in implementation is the Social Capital Theory

excitement.” In trying to involve the community in the implementation of programmes and activities with the schools, it was vital to look at the things that were important to both the school and the community.

Social Capital was used by Putnam to describe those substances that count most in the daily lives of people, which included goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse. Social Capital was the collective value of all social networks and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other. Putnam explains that social connections as individuals and as a community provided us with value and that we get value through four ways and these are: Information which we get through social networks, that is, talking to other people; Reciprocity that is, people that have relationships and connections help each other; Collective Action which means, working as a group, action has a lot more impact than an individual action that you might take. As people work together, a foundation of a relationship connection is built with trust, which can be put to use in the future; and Identity and Solidarity, which brings about a sense of empowerment when we are connected to a community and are members of that community.

There was need to understand the application of Social Capital Theory about community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Building social networks and trust with shared norms, values and understanding are key issues in the Social Capital Theory. Therefore, the school managers, as well as the teachers, needed to consider these issues in involving the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Schools had become more effective centres of learning when the parents and local communities were closely and actively involved (Tedin and Weiher, 2011).

There was need for schools to involve the community even when the curriculum had been amended so that both had knowledge and information on what was being taught in school. Regular involvement of the community in the implementation of the curriculum enabled the schools to get assistance from interest groups and stakeholders as support pillars of teacher effort (Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya, 2011). Social networks were being created through the community involvement in the implementation of programmes and activities in schools as supported by the Social Capital theory.

#### *Definition of Terms*

*Community:* This is a small or large group of people from the same geographically located area with different characteristics and backgrounds, which are connected by social ties where the school is located.

*Community Involvement:* These are efforts that are made to bring the various people in society together to find solutions to the problems and challenges that are being encountered. In

this case, the focus is on people participating in the implementation of policies and activities within the schools.

*Sexuality Education:* It the learning process that involves issues to do with sexual behaviour that is an age-appropriate, culturally relevant approach to teaching about sexuality relationships by providing scientifically accurate, realistic, non-judgmental information.

*Comprehensive Sexuality Education:* This is a curriculum-based and right-based approach, which uses participatory methods, integrates a focus on gender, includes linkage to relevant services, and aims at giving the learners knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values to make appropriate and healthy choices when it comes to sex-related issues in their lives.

*Culture:* These are ideas, customs, traditions, and social behaviour of specific people in society.

*Stakeholders:* These are individuals, groups of people, or organisations that can affect the decisions and actions directly or indirectly in an organisation. In this case, it includes; parents, community leaders, teachers, pupils and school administrators.

### III. REVIEWED LITERATURE

For the process of learning to take place effectively, there was need to involve people who were near the learning places in the implementation of education programmes and activities. The community and the schools were usually affected by the same problems and challenges, hence, the need for both to work together to create solutions to their problems. The Dakar Framework of Action did call for developing responsive, participatory, and accountable systems of educational governance and management (UNESCO, 2000). Community involvement which was also a synonym for community participation and community engagement enabled better ways of running the education system when it came to transparency, accountability and also efficiency. Through the involvement of the community, there could be flexibility so that the responses were more effective to the diverse and continuously changing needs of learners (Kumar, 2013 and Mulenga-Hagane, Daka, and Kanchebele-Sinyangwe, 2020). The processes of community involvement were strengthened by a management information system that benefited from both new technologies and community participation to produce timely and relevant accurate information (UNESCO, 2019).

Community involvement in the implementation of the school curriculum has been neglected. In Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, the literature reviewed showed that curriculum implementation does not pronounce community participation in contentious and sensitive areas of lesson planning and instruction, classroom management, the conducive learning environment, and lesson evaluation (Swift-Morgan, 2006, Nyoni and Mufanechiya, 2012). Schools in most rural areas of Zambia usually involve their traditional leaders when planning, making decisions and implementing programmes and activities in school. Most countries in the world have

come to accept and recognise the importance of traditional leaders as the custodians of their culture (Mbokozi, 2015). Traditional leaders have got influence on people especially in the rural areas and are also given a lot of respect (Phiri, Musonda and Daka, 2020). Thus, traditional leaders are regarded as the true representatives of the people (Logan, 2008). According to the study done by Mbokazi (2008: iv) in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, “the context of the interaction between the traditional leaders and school governance provided an important platform where issues of school development, safety, security, school partnership, and identity can be interrogated and facilitated.” It is for this reason that community involvement in schools especially in the rural areas must include stakeholders such as the traditional leaders (Kakupa, Tembo and Daka, 2015).

It is for this reason that this study’s focus is on community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural areas. Therefore, it is important to look at how the school involves the community in implementation. This study, therefore, aimed at investigating community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. For the management of any school to be effective, there is need for the school head teacher to make sure that educational policies are being implemented. A well-informed head teacher who has a vision will strive to find solutions to the many challenges or problems encountered at their school, should also be aware of the education system goals that are to be achieved based on teaching and learning (Daka, Namafe, and Katowa – Mukwato, 2019). In doing so, it is also very cardinal that the school managers create a conducive environment that will enable the involvement of the community in the implementation of policies in school. Hence, head teachers should not ignore the importance of stakeholders from the community (Daka and Changwe, 2010).

The Ministry of Education in Zambia does encourage community participation in the management of the education sector at all levels. Liberalisation and democratisation to enhance the involvement of civic society in development are a major objective and this can be achieved through community participation in education (MoE, 1996). The education policy of Zambia’s principal thrust is that of giving people the chance to give educational services or to improve on what is being offered, and must, therefore, include community involvement (MoE, 1996).

There are a lot of advantages of cooperation between the school and the community as both can benefit (Hamaleke, Daka and Mphande, 2020 and Sibanda, Daka, and Daka - Makowa, 2021). This can be possible if the school and the community understand each other. According to Davis et al., (2002:35), “the journey to get to know each other and come to a working agreement is never easy.” This is because wherever there are people, differences and conflicts are also there. Therefore, barriers are there when it comes to community involvement in schools.

One of the barriers to community involvement in schools is the inferiority complex by community members because the teachers are the ones who have been trained and have got the qualifications needed to educate their children (Gorinski and Fraser, 2006 and Daka, 2019). The members of the community would rather they left the implementation of policies and activities to the qualified teachers who are considered to be the experts. Community involvement in implementation is also seen as a disturbance to the implementation of the curriculum.

Language is another barrier to effective community involvement in implementation in secondary schools. When teachers are implementing the curriculum, they usually use English and most examinations in secondary schools are conducted in English. The use of English as the medium of instruction has marginalised most of the population with regard to involvement in educational matters (Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya, 2011). The use of English in secondary schools such as Zambia and Zimbabwe has not helped in the desired relationship between the teachers and the community members (Ternieden, 2009). A lot of communities have been excluded from classroom activities because languages in most African countries favour the development and use of ex-colonial languages of Europe as mediums of instruction (Miti, 2008). There is a threat to the interests and survival of the communities when English is used as it favours the minority (Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya, 2011).

There are a lot of challenges to education in rural areas especially for the girl child. That is why this study was done in the rural area. Child marriages are very common among girls than boys and in rural Bangladesh, women get married at an early age due to social pressures (Nasrin and Rahman, 2012). Yowela (2016:2) explains that “culture also promotes child marriages especially in rural Zambian communities; it creates problems to both sexes although girls are more affected since they are most vulnerable to early marriage and are the majority victims; it limits the child’s education, affects the general health and puts the affected in a disadvantaged position.” Hence, child marriage in rural areas disadvantages the girls as they drop out of school with little or no education.

Lack of qualified teachers is another factor that hinders the development of education in the rural areas of China (Mc quaide, 2009). Most teachers prefer to work in areas where there is development and can have access to certain things such as good roads, health facilities, good accommodation, and electricity. During the reform years, when the government lifted the regulation and control over labour mobility, a large number of experienced teachers left the poorer regions or countryside for developed areas and urban centres (Mc Quaide, 2009). Lack of qualified teachers does affect the teaching and learning process negatively and this is a challenge in rural areas.

People in rural areas are often suspicious of anything contrary to their way of life that is, their traditions and customs. In this case, involving them in the implementation of Comprehensive

Sexuality Education, which is quite different from the traditions, is usually treated with suspicion. Therefore, if they are not involved in education in their areas, they shun away and will not take part. For any education policy or activity to be successfully implemented, there is need to involve the communities especially in places such as the rural areas. Debrah (2015:130), argues that “current research in the area of community development encapsulates that the major questions of resource utilisation, ownership and sustainability are better understood in the context of community participation of community members.” It has been common in rural areas of Ghana for communities not to take part or abandon schools when they are not involved in policies and projects in schools located within their communities (Education Development Centre, 2004).

Most schools in rural areas are geographically isolated. They are far away from the homes of the learners and so the learners have to walk long distances to school. The geographical isolation of these schools further poses challenges to issues of educational access and equity because pupils are made to walk long distances on foot to get to the nearest school (Schaf et al., 2008). Low levels of formal qualifications in the local adult population and poor employment opportunities contribute to low motivation for education in rural areas (Mbozi, 2009). It is also very common in the rural areas for young people to try to behave in acceptable standards of the communities like not having any motivation for education. If a community has values, attitudes, practices, or activities that conflict with schools’ academic values, pupils get drawn away from what schools have to offer to conform to community norms (Redding and Walberg, 2012).

In the Zambian Constitution’ preamble, there is a declaration which states that Zambia is a Christian Nation which upholds the rights of every person to enjoy that person’s freedom of conscience or religion (The Constitution of Zambia, 1996). This implies that the laws of Zambia must be interpreted according to biblical principles. All scriptures in the Bible approve of no other sexual union than that between a husband and wife (Stanton, 2019). From this Christianity point of view, sex must only be between males and females who are married. Therefore, in the Zambian syllabus for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, homosexuality was left out.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

A case study research design was used in which qualitative data was gathered. According to Simons (2009:21), a case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in ‘real-life’. In this study, the targeted population included learners, teachers who teach the specific subjects in which Comprehensive Sexuality Education has been integrated, heads of departments who have Comprehensive Sexuality Education integrated into their subjects and school managers at selected rural secondary

schools, parents, church leaders, and headmen/women from the community. The sample comprised 92 respondents broken down as follows: 7 head teachers, 7 heads of department, 15 teachers, 50 learners, and 13 community members, which included 6 parents, 4 church leaders, and 3 headmen. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling in this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling which focuses on people with the needed information. Tongco (2007:1147) explains, that “the purposive sampling technique also called judgement sampling is a deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses.”

The Questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers who teach subjects in which Comprehensive Sexuality Education has been integrated. An interview guide was used to collect data from the heads of departments and the head teachers and community members. The focus group discussions were used for collecting data from the learners. Before going into the field to collect data, ethical clearance was sought from the ethical committee of the University of Zambia. A letter of introduction was obtained from the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies of the University of Zambia. The letter was presented to the District Education Board Secretary in Chibombo district to get permission to conduct research at selected secondary schools in Chibombo district. Permission was also obtained from the head teachers before arranging for appointments for collecting data from the school administrators and teachers. To address the issues of reliability and validity of the study, a detailed account was provided on the focus of the study, the informants and their role and positions with regard to implementation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum and this was the basis for the selection of the sample population from which data was gathered. Additionally, data collection and analysis strategies were reported in detail in this study. The qualitative data that was collected in this study was systematic and helped the researcher to easily discuss the findings. The information from the questionnaires, interview guide, and focus group discussion were analysed by coding and emerging themes.

#### V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1 shows responses on who the major community stakeholders involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the selected rural secondary schools of Chibombo district were.

Table 1: Major Stakeholders in the Implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education

| S/N | Stakeholders       | 100% |
|-----|--------------------|------|
| 1   | Parents            | 83   |
| 2   | Teachers           | 66   |
| 3   | Chiefs and headmen | 45   |
| 4   | Health personnel   | 38   |
| 5   | Church leaders     | 28   |

|   |              |    |
|---|--------------|----|
| 6 | Law officers | 28 |
| 7 | Learners     | 14 |

(Source: Field Data, 2021)

### Reasons why they were Considered as the Major Community Stakeholders

#### a. Parents

Parents were considered as major stakeholders due to the fact that the parents are the ones who provide the schools with learners and that they must participate in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. One respondent (Parent 1) explained in Lenje;

*Ndiswe tutuma bana bachikolo mushikolo alimwi ninga teshindiswe ashikolo ninga takuwo. Bashali balielete kushiba bana babo nchebeya kuchikolo.” (We are the ones who provide the school with learners and without us, the school would not exist. Parents need to know what their children are learning in school).”*

#### b. Teachers

The respondents included teachers as major stakeholders in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education at 59 per cent. One respondent (parent 5) explained in Lenje;

*Bana bachikolo balanguluka kubandika makani akonana ku bamayi babo kwiinda kuba mashali babo. Bamayi balite alimwi bala pandulula kabotu makani achatikisha konana kubana besu (Learners are very free to discuss sexual issues with their teachers than their own parents. The teachers are trained and in a better position to explain such sexual issues to our own children in schools).”*

#### c. Chiefs and Headmen

Chiefs and headmen were also perceived as helpers in sensitising the members of their communities on a lot of issues such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues and certain traditional or cultural practices that are bad. One respondent (Headman 2) explained in Lenje:

*“Bama nduna balichite nkusu muma sena mobakala. Bala yumiyumia bantu bamumishi kwambai batole lubasu mumakaniaiwiyo (The headmen/women have got big influence in the community. They can convince the members of their villages to participate in educational matters).”*

#### d. Health Personnel

Health personnel included nurses, clinical officers and doctors. Respondent explained that these were listed because they were the experts in health-related issues. One respondent (Administrator 1) stated that:

*“The health personnel such as doctors, nurses and Clinical officers are experts in health related issues*

*especially the issues related to reproductive health. They have got accurate information which is of benefit to learners and the community. They deal with issues to do with puberty and reproductive health which are part of Comprehensive Sexuality Education.”*

#### e. Civic Leaders

Civic leaders were cited as major stakeholders because they were the policymakers and had a huge influence in the making and in the implementation of the policies. They also had a big influence on the community. According to one respondent (Administrator 3):

*“Policymakers are able to address issues that are perceived as taboo. They are also able to explain openly why sexual-related issues are being taught in school such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education.”*

#### f. Law Officers

The respondents who listed them explained that law enforcers help to educate learners and the community on criminal offences such as gender-based violence, rape and others. Through an interview, one respondent (Head of Department 4) stated that:

*“The police officers have also helped to arrest some pupils who misbehave in school due to drug abuse and also drinking alcohol which usually results in violence and disturbing the learning process in the school.”*

#### g. Learners

Some respondents stated that the learners were among the major stakeholders involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in school because they had obtained knowledge on various issues in Comprehensive Sexuality Education and were also trusted by their peers. A member of one a focus group discussion stated:

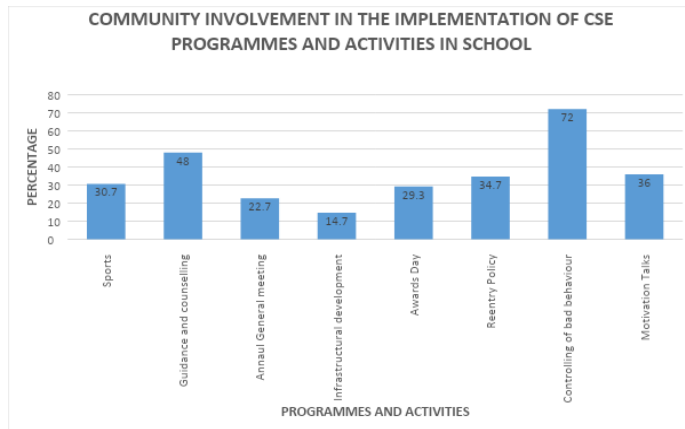
*“We are able to impart knowledge to our fellow learners about sexual issues like the use of condoms to prevent Sexually Transmitted Diseases and pregnancies. Some of our friends are sick and some have done illegal abortions which resulted in death.” (Group 3 FGD Member).*

#### How Head Teachers Promote Community Involvement

The head teachers in the selected secondary schools had used a number of ways to promote community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. These included programmes such as sports, guidance and counselling, Annual General Meeting (AGMs), infrastructure development, awards day, re-entry policy, motivational talks and controlling of bad behaviour.

Figure 4.1 shows the responses from the respondents on the ways that head teachers used to promote community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the selected schools.

Figure 1: How Head teachers Promote Community Involvement



(Source: Field Data, 2021)

Disciplinary cases in the schools was among the ways stated by the respondents as the main way in which head teachers used to promote community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. According to a respondent (Head teacher 5);

*“Some learners have been indulging themselves in unprotected sex, which resulted in pregnancies and some have even done abortions after a pregnancy test was done and confirmed that they were pregnant. It is during such times that people like parents, the health personnel and the police officer are called upon to attend classes to help control bad behaviour and also to talk to the learners.”*

Most of the teachers explained that community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education was also done through the Guidance and Counselling committee. According to a respondent (Teacher 10);

*“The guidance and counselling committee always prepares a programme every term where they fixed times and dates in which the community were called upon to help in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools. Such programmes are restricted to the Guidance and Counselling Committee.”*

Motivation talks was also another way in which the community was involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The motivation talks were done to encourage the learners to be focused with their education and not to be distracted. According to one respondent (head teacher 6);

*“It is during the motivational talks that Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues are also integrated into and talked about. These include teen pregnancies, Gender-Based Violence, substance abuse.”*

Sports was another way in which head teachers involved the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the selected secondary schools. According to one administrator (Head teacher 7), as highlighted in the quotation below, during sports activities,

schools gave chance to community members such as health personnel to talk about Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues:

*“When conducting sports activities in school, we do give chance for some members of the community such as the health personnel, police officers and also some parents to talk to the learners about Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues such as the dangers of drug abuse, the importance of abstinence, use of condoms, self-esteem and consequences of Gender Based Violence. This is usually done a few minutes before the pupils start to play ball games or athletics.”*

Annual General Meetings were another way in which the community was involved in the implementation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum. Some of the issues that are discussed include cross-cutting issues that are part of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. One of the administrators (Head teacher 5) explained that;

*“Some parents are appointed to talk about such issues to their fellow parents at the beginning of the Annual General Meeting. The parents are made to realise that such issues lead to absenteeism in class, absenteeism during examinations, loss of interest in education especially among the school girls who get pregnant, dropping out of school and also most common causes of child marriage.”*

#### Challenges Faced by Schools to Involve the Community

The schools in the rural areas particularly in Chibombo do face challenges in their quest to involve the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. There were a number of responses from the respondents on the challenges that the school faces in their quest to involve the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The following were some of the challenges faced by the rural secondary schools.

#### Traditions/Culture

Most schools in Chibombo are surrounded by villages headed by the village headmen/women. There are traditions and customs which are followed and these include those that deal with sexual-related issues. Tradition and culture do not allow for people to talk about sex publicly.

Another respondent (Church leader 4) also said:

*“According to our traditions and culture boys and girls are taught separately on different occasions sexual-related issues. Women are taught to be seen and not heard and that they are not supposed to expose their homes to the public especially when dealing with sexual-related issues such as rape, defilement, child marriage incest and Gender Based Violence especially in their homes. In schools, we see girls and boys being taught together and told to report crimes such as rape, defilement, child marriage, incest, and Gender Based Violence.”*



### Low Literacy Levels among the Community Members

The respondents explained that low literacy levels among the community members were a challenge in trying to involve them in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the selected rural schools. One respondent (Administrator 7) explained that:

*“Some members of the community have not gone very far in their educational levels. Some are Grade seven, nine and twelve dropouts. When trying to involve them in educational programmes such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education which they do not fully understand, they usually misinterpret the importance and benefits of Comprehensive Sexuality Education.”*

### The Use of English

One respondent (Parent 5), stated that:

*“The use of English in secondary schools makes it quite difficult for some members of the community to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education especially those that cannot express themselves in English. Most of the times when there are meetings and activities, only those who are able to speak in English are considered even when giving suggestions towards the development of the school. Also, most teachers are not able to speak in the local language which is Lenje. Most of the times when the community members are involved, there is always need for an interpreter.”*

### Shyness towards the Contents of Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Some respondents mentioned that some members of the community are too shy to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education due to its contents. There was 6 per cent of the responses from the respondents who stated shyness towards the contents of Comprehensive Sexuality Education as a challenge. One respondent (Teacher 12) explained that;

*“Contents of Comprehensive Sexuality Education are just too sensitive and some members of the community especially parents are too shy to stand before learners to talk about sexual-related issues.”*

### Measures to be put in Place to Promote Community Involvement

The respondents made suggestions on the measures that could be put in place to enhance community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 3: Measures to be put in Place to Promote Community Involvement

| SN | Measures the school managers can put in Place to Promote Community Involvement of Comprehensive Sexuality Education                   | Percentage (100 %) |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1  | Sensitisation meetings and workshops  | 60                 |
| 2  | Open Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes in school which involve the community   | 21                 |
| 3  | The school and community to speak the same language on Comprehensive Sexuality Education  | 35                 |
| 4  | Choosing leaders from the community to spearhead Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes   | 18                 |
| 5  | Use of familiar language and printed materials in familiar language when involving the community on Comprehensive Sexuality Education | 30                 |
| 6  | Couple Comprehensive Sexuality Education with gender pedagogy and make it a standalone subject  | 12                 |
| 7  | Involve the community during assembly and open day  | 1                  |
| 8  | Give incentives to the community such as food, t-shirts with Comprehensive Sexuality Education messages and money                     | 52                 |
| 9  | There should be laws to hold the community accountable on Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues                                    | 14                 |

(Source: Field Data, 2019)

Various measures to use to promote community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education were suggested by the respondents. These measures include introducing sensitisation meetings and workshops, opening Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes in school which involve the community, choosing leaders from the community to spearhead Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes, using of familiar language and printed materials in familiar language when involving the community on Comprehensive Sexuality Education, coupling Comprehensive Sexuality Education with gender pedagogy and making it a standalone subject, giving incentives to the community such as food, money and t-shirts with Comprehensive Sexuality Education messages and putting in place laws to hold the community accountable on Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues.

## V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Major Community Stakeholders in the Implementation

The results of the study showed that community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education was valued in the selected schools of Chibombo district. As stated in the literature review, involving stakeholders from the community in educational matters brings about a lot of merits which empowers the teachers to use various ways in the teaching and learning process (Chindanya, 2011, Swift-Morgan 2006). The study showed a number of people from the community who were considered to be the major community stakeholders involved in the implementation of

Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the selected rural secondary schools of Chibombo district.

From the interviews that were done with the parents, the majority of them explained that they were the owners of the learners who came to school and that there was need for them to know what they learnt in school and be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Involvement of the parents in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education was very important because the parents were made to know some of the challenges that their children faced especially the sexual related issues such as puberty, sex, relationships, pregnancies, substance abuse, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and also Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. For any school to have good performance and also maintain its effectiveness, there is need for parent involvement (Harris et al., 2003).

The educators who implement the curriculum and also in the forefront of implementing other educational programmes and activities in school are teachers (Daka, Banda and Namafe, 2020). They have an obligation of teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education as it is part of the school curriculum (Mchunu, 2007). Imparting relevant Comprehensive Sexuality Education knowledge on the learners was part of their responsibilities, however, there was need for them to work together with other stakeholders from the community to help learners not to involve themselves in harmful sexual-related activities.

The Chiefs and the headmen are the custodians of traditions and customs (Mbokazi, 2015 and Daka, Mwelwa, Chibamba, Mkandawire, and Phiri, 2020.). The study showed that traditional leaders such as the chiefs and headmen play a significant role in rural secondary schools. The study showed that people in the communities had respect for traditional leaders as they listened to them when they spoke. Therefore, their involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education had a positive impact on the learners.

The school could not work on its own without involving the health personnel who were experts in all health issues. Studies showed that teachers and health personnel work together in school when implementing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (Leung, 2018). They have the scientifically proven information which was also needed in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools. This was the reason for their involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

The law enforcers also helped a lot in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools. They included people such as the police officers and the Drug Enforcement Commission Officers. These people were included among the major stakeholders because they were experts when it came to criminal offences such as drug abuse, alcohol abuse, defilement, rape and Gender Based Violence. They were also able to educate the learners on the

consequences of the mentioned criminal offences (Mukalula-Kalumbi, 2015). Furthermore, studies have shown that schools usually make use of law enforcement through handling violence, crime prevention, mentoring, alcohol awareness and drug awareness classes (Coon and Travis, 2005).

The learners were the owners of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and it was important for them to be involved in its implementation. Learners have an impact on their fellow learners and their involvement in the implementation helped other learners to know the importance of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. They also helped their school mates by educating them about the dangers of substance abuse, risky sexual behaviour, and also the importance of reproductive health as well as having self-esteem. Learners helped their friends to understand issues such as the puberty stage which bring a lot of stress and confusion.

#### *Ways Head Teachers Promote Community Involvement*

The study established that the head teachers did not have programmes specifically for community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education but that they used other planned programmes in which Comprehensive Sexuality Education was integrated. These programmes included handling disciplinary cases, using guidance and counselling activities, sports activities and Annual General Meetings. These activities from literature have shown that they bear fruits also.

Studies have shown that in the United State of America, the school managers had planned programmes were people from the Law enforcement and health personnel were involved, not just handling disciplinary cases but also mentoring on how to leave healthy lives, crime prevention, alcohol awareness and drug awareness classes (Coon & Travis, 2005 and Leung, 2018). When imparted on learners, such knowledge helps them to follow acceptable standards of behaviour and also helps them to refrain from anything that is considered unacceptable behaviour. Annual General Meetings (AGMs) also help to promote community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (Mullins, 2006, MOE, 2006)). These parents are able to go and transfer information to their children.

#### *Challenges Faced by the Schools to Involve the Community*

In line with the third objective that looked at the challenges that the rural secondary schools faced in involving the community in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Studies have shown that conservative culture posed as a challenge when it came to the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (Mchunu, 2007). The differences in the way sexual issues were handled according to tradition created problems between the school and the community and this affected community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the selected secondary schools. In the

traditions and culture of communities where the selected schools were located, sexual-related issues were taught to boys and girls separately but Comprehensive Sexuality Education was taught to both boys and girls at the same time.

Some studies have shown that most people in rural areas especially in Africa had low educational levels and illiteracy (Mulkeen, 2005). In this study, it was revealed that low educational levels and illiteracy among the community members was also a challenge in trying to involve them in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Some members of the community felt that they were not educated like the teachers and that they felt inferior working with them. In addition, the emphasis on the use of English in secondary schools made it quite difficult for some members of the community to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education especially those that could not express themselves in English. The study found that most of the time, when there were programmes and activities in the selected secondary schools, only those who spoke English were considered for leadership positions in Parents Teacher Associations and school boards. Some studies have also shown that the use of English in schools has not helped in the development of the desired relationship between the teachers and the community members and that there is a threat to the interests and survival of communities as it favours the minority (Ternieden, 2009; Mufanachiya and Mufanachiya, 2011). A study by Mbozi et al., (2017) revealed that it was considered a taboo to involve elders to teach the young children about sexual-related issues as some contents were not suitable for certain age groups. This is because the contents of Comprehensive Sexuality Education such as sex, relationships, defilement, rape, and reproductive health were considered to be very sensitive. This made some members of the community too shy away from being involved in implementing such sensitive topics to the learners. Members of the community were against teaching the learners about certain sexual issues as it was not acceptable.

#### *Measures to be put in Place to Promote Community Involvement*

In order to enhance community involvement, the study revealed that there was need for sensitisation meetings and workshops particularly for all the teachers and community members to be oriented and educated in Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Also, through the meetings and workshops, community members could be made aware of the importance of their involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural secondary schools.

There was need for the school and the community to speak one language when it came to Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues. This was an indication that information which the school imparted on the learners must not be in conflict with the information which the community members imparted on the learners. There was need to make the community have a sense of ownership over their involvement

in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. This could be done by choosing leaders among the community members who could help to spearhead the Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes in school and also out of school. These leaders could be accountable for everything that they do as they led those involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. It was also another way of encouraging other members of the community to join in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Finally but not the least, the study showed that there is need to use familiar language. Therefore, people from the community must be allowed to use their familiar language when participating in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and also other educational programmes. The use of familiar language could also encourage other community members to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

The study brought out important points concerning community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in rural areas, particularly in the Chibombo district of the Central province of Zambia. Lack of correct and scientifically proven information on Comprehensive Sexuality Education among the learners especially in rural secondary schools of Chibombo district has led to a lot of problems in the schools and also the communities in which these schools are located. Among the many problems are teenage pregnancies, low self-esteem, illegal abortions, substance abuse, and child marriages. It is for this reason that the community needs to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the secondary schools as it looks at all sexual-related issues such relationships, values, attitudes, skills, culture, society, human rights, human development, sexual behaviour, and sexual reproductive health in a holistic way.

The study has also revealed some measures which can be put in place by the school managers to enhance community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. These include sensitisation meetings and workshops for teachers and the community. Schools need to open Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes and activities which involve the community. There is also need to choose leaders from the community to spearhead Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes and activities. The community members must be allowed to use familiar language when they are involved. Additionally, Comprehensive Sexuality Education should be coupled with gender pedagogy and also make it a standalone subject.

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. In this study, it was revealed that the teachers implemented Comprehensive Sexuality Education as

an integrated subject in biology, integrated sciences, religious education, civic education, and home economics. The teachers need to give Comprehensive Sexuality Education full attention through its implementation in class as well as through the community members such as the parents, headmen/chiefs, and other community members.

2. There is a need for teachers to be fully trained in Comprehensive Sexuality Education as most teachers were not familiar with Comprehensive Sexuality Education. All in-service teachers should be trained in Comprehensive Sexuality Education so that they are fully equipped with the needed information which could help in making community involvement in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools effective.
3. The school managers must ensure that deliberate effort out of classroom activities is planned in schools which will allow the community members to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes and activities.
4. Community members who are to be involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools must be allowed to use their familiar language and not just English. This could enable some members from the community who are not able to speak in English or who are not fluent in speaking in English to fully participate in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the schools.
5. The school managers must enhance awareness messages to the community members on the importance and benefits of them being involved in the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools and in their homes. Communication and information should be aimed at reaching the community within which the school is located. The community should be involved in spreading the Comprehensive Sexuality Education issues such as the consequences of teen pregnancies, child marriage, substance abuse, and Gender Based Violence.

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