



# Effects of Civic Education on Youth Participation in the Tenets of a Democratic Society: A Case of Youths in Four Rural Wards of Bahati Constituency in Mansa District of Luapula Province

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**Abstract:** Civic education helps citizens to understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government as all citizens need knowledge to make decisions about policy choices and proper choices of representatives. Citizens need to participate in governance through voting, volunteering, participating in other activities that benefit society. It is also important to state that civic learning experiences to education is the process of creating awareness and provision of information and equip and empower citizens to participate positively in the democratic processes of their community, country and the outside world. Thus, the study aimed at assessing the effects of civic education on youth participation in the tenets of a democratic society in the four rural ward of Bahati Constituency of Mansa district in Luapula Province of Zambia. The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative methods and a descriptive survey design that sampled Head teachers, teachers, NGO officials, Council chairperson, councilors, community members and the youth. Data was obtained from the respondents by means of interviews and questionnaires. Frequency, percentages, tables, graphs and pie-charts were used to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data. Data was then analyzed by the use of software MS access and MS Excel. The findings reviewed that civic education plays an important role in promoting youth and other citizens' involvement in all aspects of a democratic society, it is also a tool in promoting democracy and the study recommended that learners in schools should participate in governance of their classrooms, schools and be engaged in service and project based learning and NGOs and other stake holders to promote civic education in rural areas.

**Keywords:** citizen, civic education, development, democracy, participation, society, tenet.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Civic education is the study of the rights and obligations of citizens in society and it enables citizens to participate in democratic and development processes. The term is derived from a Latin word "civicus" meaning, relating to a citizen and the term civics also relates to the behaviour affecting other citizens as it hinges citizens' rights and duties, Crittenden (2007). Democracy cannot be achieved in the absence of civic education in the country and the promotion of democracy should be accompanied by massive civic education for the citizens of every nation because it is cardinal that, all countries have an active and informed citizens for democracy to thrive as well as to be sustained. The citizens must understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government as all citizens need knowledge to make decisions about policy choices and proper choices of representatives. Citizens need to participate in governance through voting, volunteering, participating in other activities that benefit society. The benefits of citizen participation are capacity building, learning, raising awareness and increasing understanding of public institutions and the way they work, enabling citizens to better access the services they need, and to understand the boundaries and limitations of different public bodies, building confidence and optimism among citizens. Therefore, involvement of citizens in governance and political process is an essential part of democracy and increased citizen participation in governance can only be enhanced through civic education. In enhancing this, Universities, schools, civil society organizations, Civic leaders and state agencies should partner with Government in conducting civic education so as, to increase public involvement in governance by educating citizens from all walks of life on the importance of participating in all aspects of a democratic society, Myers (2007).

It is also important to state that civic learning experiences to education is the process of creating awareness and provision of information and equip and empower citizens to participate positively in the democratic processes of their community, country and the outside world. This shows the tremendous role civic Education can play in the democratization process of a given country by actively involving citizens in the political affairs at different levels of their country, even beyond, Thomas (2007).

In recent times the world has seen many states creating greater opportunities for citizens to dialogue and debate on policy matters and issues of governance. However, the capacity of the states, especially in Africa and Zambia in particular to respond to greater citizens' participation in governance is debatable. The voices of the poor or the marginalized are also often not heard in most states as most of them do not participate in issues of governance. Involvement of the marginalized can be encouraged through civic education as failure of this bleeds voter apathy and a culture of public protests resulting from the inability of citizens to participate in decisions that affect their lives (Ambrose, 2000).

Citizen involvement in governance can come about through and in various forms such as state forums, legislations, NGOs, sensitisations, workshops, student forums, debates, social movements or creation of parallel governance structures and non-formal forms of citizen action are significant as they symbolize the transition from representative democracy to participatory democracy. It is evident that new spaces and opportunities may have been emerging for citizen engagement in governance at all levels, especially that of local governance, Biggs et al (1997). These should be developed and promoted through policy instruments, legal frameworks and support programs. However, it is also not clear whether such elements have led to parental engagement or help in strengthening citizen participation in governance in Zambia more especially in rural areas.

Numerous protests and demonstrations by people over public governance issues and constitution making processes are sometimes evident of lack of civic education on the citizens. Other examples of lack of or inadequate civic education can be attributed to students in higher learning institutions protests when they seem not to be satisfied with the political conditions prevailing in the nation. The most recent one is on the removal of student meal allowances and introduction of student loans and such demonstrations are clear indications that the general citizenry were not involved in the decisions that were made Barber, (1995). However, even with the introduction of civic education in all learning institutions and the promotion of civil society organization the impact seems to be less. Lack of participation of citizens in the decision making and electoral processes lead to bad governance system, which is characterized by unjust policies and oppressive systems of management, protests, violation of human rights, corruption, lack of citizens' control in decision making, loss of trust and confidence in the management of public affairs. If civic education on citizen participation in electoral, governance systems and developmental activities are not enhanced by all stake holders, bad governance might be perpetuated.

Furthermore, civic education is a continuous process and is not and should not be tied to the electoral cycle and should be carried out by Universities, schools, civil society organizations and state agencies and not necessarily by the electoral body. Crittenden, (2007). This should be done to ensure that the citizens are not only aware but participate in all aspects of a democratic society but in most instances, citizens are only well informed about any election in the offing nevertheless, though after an election nothing much is done. While efforts are intensified during the campaign period, indications are that more time should be spent not only on voter education about any election but on civic education as lack of continuous civic education on citizens and the youth in particular especially in rural Zambia results in poor participation of citizens in all aspects of a democratic society.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The current government of Zambia has introduced and is working towards effective realization of civic education to inculcate democratic culture in its citizens. There is enough evidence that as a country, we have not achieved the level of understanding and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities among the totality of the citizens that is required for the maintenance and improvement of our constitutional democracy. The implementation of these civic education

programmes seems not to improve citizen participation and awareness of civic issues that concern them. This has been seen through the reduction in voters turn out and the failure by citizens to participate in local developmental programmes, have interest in political affairs at national and local levels. The national and local government policies and legal frameworks provide for broad-based participation in national processes through civic education, UNDP, (2012), but only limited citizen involvement has been observed more especially as regards the youth in rural areas. Some of the important factors that limit public engagement in national processes include poor access to information, poor handling of civic education lessons in schools, weak civil society and general public apathy due to limited civic education.

### **1.3. The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of civic education on youth participation in the tenets of a democratic society in the four rural wards in Bahati Constituency of Mansa district in Luapula Province.

### **1.4. Research Objects**

The objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the effects of civic education on youth participation in the tenets of a democratic society in four rural wards in Bahati constituency of Mansa district.
- Identify factors that contribute to youth non-participation in the tenets of a democratic society in the four rural wards in Bahati constituency of Mansa district.
- Assess the strategies that can be put in place to enhance youth involvement in the tenets of a democratic society in the four rural wards in Bahati constituency of Mansa district.

### **1.5. Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by the progressivism theory by John Dewey and according to (Dewey, 1906), the central ethical imperative in education was democracy as he believed that a democratic society of informed and engaged inquirers was the best means of promoting human interest. Therefore, civic education is vital in social organization and improvement of human conditions. Further, Civic education is seen as standing on three main pillars of knowledge, values and behaviour, Parker (2002).

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the findings of the study would contribute to the knowledge gap amongst all the stake holders interested in civic education and youth participation in the tenets of a democratic society such as Non-governmental Organizations, civic leaders and teachers who can help promote the development of civic character by fostering recognition of public and private responsibilities and encouraging adherence to the values and principles of constitutional democracy.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Civic Education**

As already alluded to, the term civics derived from the Latin word ‘civicus’ meaning ‘relating to a citizen’ and the term relates to behavior affecting other citizens, particularly in the context of development. Therefore, civic education can rightly be defined as the study of the rights and obligations of citizens in society UNDP, (2012). In addition, civic education is also known as citizen education in democracy education and can broadly be defined as the provision of information and learning experiences to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes. Civic education is an important and effective tool that facilitates the participation of citizens in democratic and development processes and this tool helps citizens speak both on their own behalf and within a certain group Myers, (2002).

The two major types of civic education are liberal and diversity civic education. In liberal civic education, the student develops the individualistic skills needed in order to take part in the political process while in diversity civic education, the student understands the ways in which social groups

differ such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability, age, religious belief or political conviction Levinson, (2012). Based on these notions, civic educational acts may be seen as standing on three main pillars of knowledge, values and behavior

## **2.2. Human Rights, Obligations and Aspects of a Democratic Society**

Human rights are rights that one has simply because he or she exists as a human being, these rights are not granted by any state and these rights are referred to as universal human rights because they should be the same everywhere and for everyone and are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status. However, rights are a set of civil, political, social and economic rights that a person as a citizen of a country enjoys but each citizen has obligations to follow such as to obey the law, protect public property from vandalism, respect for others' rights, paying taxes and many others.

It is only through civic education that citizens will understand the concepts underpinning a democratic society such as responsibilities of citizens, government, political and special interests, the mass media and business, be aware how a constitutional government operates as well as appreciate their rights and responsibilities and participate in civic duties. Civic education should aim at developing and changing young people into effective, responsible, good and informed people, they should know what happens within and outside government and should be useful to the country. Hence, civic responsibilities should comprise of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation. In addition, youths should know the aspects of a democratic society which are; a system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections, active participation of the people as citizens in politics and civic life, protection of human rights of all citizens and the rule of law.

## **2.3. Effects of Civic Education on Youth Involvement in the Tenets of a Democratic Society**

From the study conducted by Kaumba (2015) on the student's perceptions of public participation in national governance in Lusaka district, the study established that public participation in national governance in Zambia is in a bad state. This is hampered by corruption, poverty and a lack of education of citizens' rights, implying that bad governance is to a larger extent taking center stage in Zambia. Furthermore, he stated that it was also clear from the study that public media and access to information was heavily controlled by government and this compromises the quality of transparency and accountability that is desired in a democratic state like Zambia.

First and foremost, devolution and decentralization cannot make people participate in local governance if civic education is not provided to the people. Even when the power is given to the people, they may not use it when they are not aware of such powers and if they are not provided with knowledge to use that power. De Brito (2010) adds that in recent years in Southern Africa, there were several elections in the region marked by extremely low voter turnout (less than 50%). These included the Mozambique elections of 2004 and 2009, the Lesotho election of 2007 and the Zambian presidential election of 2008.

On the other hand, Niworo et-al (2016) conducted a study in Ghana. This study explored the impact of civic education on political participation in the Sissala East District of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The study suggested that beneficiaries of civic education in the study area had high level of political participation, including the readiness to vote, join political party, contest elections, participate in community service and demanding accountability from duty bearers. From the study, it is evident that beneficiaries of civic education in the study area had high level of political participation, including the readiness to vote, join political party, contest elections, participate in community service and demanding accountability from duty bearers.

## **2.4. Factors that Hinder Youth Involvement in the Tenets of a Democratic Society**

YEZI Consulting & Associates (2013) conducted a study on Political governance in Zambia and the study was commissioned by Diakonia Zambia. The researchers had an opportunity to visit two districts and also carry out a number of interactions in Lusaka. A total of 56 Zambians with diverse backgrounds participated in the focus group discussions in Mansa. The study showed that community based action and face to face interactions with political representatives is what Zambians regard to be



more important about democracy as compared to voting. The analysis further shows that there are mainly three determinants of political participation: socio-economic, attitudinal and institutional. According to the above study, socio-economic factors include age, gender, and residential location and education factors influence citizens' active participation in democracy. In addition, it indicated that political attitudes shape citizen's interest in politics and a citizen's assessment of the performance of the local government councilor influences the ability and willingness to participate in processes that have an impact on governance.

Furthermore, the research indicated that poverty does indeed appear to reduce political participation in Zambia. Evidence from district level data as well as from individual-level survey data lends support to the notion that poverty undermines participation according to either of the means suggested above. In addition, one of the many factors, with a cyclic effect on people's participation in development and political life has been the circumstances that citizens find themselves due to lack of development prevailing in most parts of the country, and in particular the high levels of economic stress that are felt at individual and household levels.

Many respondents observed that there are limited opportunities for citizens' participation through the governance structures, and this is both influenced by existing structural and systems arrangements based on the manner in which the bureaucracy operates. More often than not there are no clear channels on how citizens are supposed to participate. If they are there, they are not known to the people. Another reason cited for this limited and ineffective participation by citizens in political and civic governance is because of the limited knowledge that citizens have of their civic duties, obligations and responsibilities caused by limited access to information.

There is a high prevalence of levels of illiteracy amongst many rural dwellers. High levels of ignorance are also manifested by citizens, who despite having gone to school, have not had a good orientation base to engage in national or local development issues. The majority of the citizens in the rural areas do not understand their civic roles as citizens and tend to think that their role ends after elections and leave everything to the leaders. Most of the citizens do not know what the leaders are supposed to do for them as well as what they are supposed to do to leaders and as a result, they are not able to hold them accountable. In addition, citizens in rural areas do not know their rights to participate in the development and governance process at both local and national levels.

The rural citizens attributed their frustration to the lack of a clear channel to government, officials' failure to consult their constituents, and a fear among citizens of the repercussions for speaking truthfully. Duty bearers, especially government officials in the districts are not easily accessible and do not share information with citizens. The absence of clear channels of communication between citizens and duty bearers has also not assisted and in many instances disadvantages local citizens to provide effective accountability actions on public servants. Respondents also believe that it is absolutely critical for the duty bearers to visit citizens where they live on a regular basis or develop clear channels of communication between the elected and the electorate. Parliamentary practices and schedules and in instances where an MP is appointed to a ministerial position means they are absent from their constituencies for longer periods as most of them are not residents of constituencies but are brought from urban areas.

There is lack of platforms to facilitate citizens' participation especially in the rural areas although levels of participation in urban areas are high because of the many platforms that exist, primarily provided by civil society organizations and the media. Radio talk show, writing to the print media especially through letters to the editors has provided an opportunity for citizens to exercise their right to be heard and participate in the development processes Falade, (2014). In contrast, there is minimal participation through government structures because of the centralized nature of government structures at different levels, which makes it difficult to access governance structures. The challenge is even higher when one moves away from Lusaka as most of the structures at the district are located in one place.

## **2.5. Strategies to Enhance Youth Involvement in the Tenets of Democracy**

In Zambian Universities and secondary schools, civic education and civics are taught as courses or as subjects for students and learners to pass examinations but in teaching civic education and civics, lecturers and teachers should include both core knowledge and learners' ability to apply knowledge to

different circumstances. Lecturers and teachers should involve learners in service and project based learning as well as involving them in student and youth governance. Students and learners should understand simulations of democratic processes, human rights education, democracy and education of tolerance Myers, (2002). At University and school levels, youths should be involved in the development of inter-sectoral social partnerships and management of self-governing associations of citizens.

At local level, as advocated by John and Camilo (2009) on youth participation in citizenship and local governance should include voter education, enhancing the awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizens, lobbying and advocacy, often aimed towards developing a more informed citizenry who could hold elected representatives more accountable. The youth like other citizens should not be left out in public participation such as in law amendment Mngoma, (2010) just like the views of the poor and their interests should be taken into consideration in decision making such as constitution amendment. Central and local governments should encourage the general populace to participate in policy making, local governance as well as involve communities and community organizations in local government programmes by sensitizing using Zambia National Information Services (ZANIS) public address systems, local community radios and publication of governance issues in local language newspapers and use of Zambia National Broadcasting Co-operation (ZNBC) local language section for debates, talks and seminars in local languages in rural areas.

Civil Society Organizations and state agencies are an effective tool for disseminating information and thus enlightening the public and when they are enlightened, they will be able to engage themselves in governance. Exchange and sharing of information within CSOs are among the activities that form the core of their interactional activities (O'Neill, 2008, Diamond and Platter, 2003). The correlation between increased protest action and an upsurge in civil society activity could be attributed to a raised awareness among citizens, who realize the need for a confrontational approach in engagement with the state Gaventa, (2006). Unfortunately, there are few or no civil society organisations doing advocacy among the youths and other citizens on governance and aspects of a democratic society in rural areas as most of them concentrate their work in urban areas.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Study Design**

The study adopted a mixed methods approach which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Exploratory and descriptive designs were as well considered appropriate as they also allowed for more flexible strategies of data collection in order to answer the research questions, (Best and Kahn, 2006). The research design was a descriptive survey, as Borg and Gall, (1989) pointed out that a descriptive study may often result in the formation of important principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems. The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative aspects of research. It was aimed at collecting information from respondents on the effects of civic education on youth participation in all aspects of a democratic society in the four rural secondary school of Mansa district in Luapula Province. It highlighted the teaching of civics in secondary schools, factors affecting youth involvement and strategies to enhance youth participation in all the aspects of a democratic society. Structured open-ended interviews were conducted and questionnaires were used to respondents.

#### **3.2. Research Sites**

The study was carried out in the four selected rural wards of Bahati constituency (Misakalala, Mushipashi, Malapula and Chiputa) in Mansa district of Luapula Province from which respondents were also sampled.

#### **3.3. Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The population for the study was purposefully drawn from the four rural wards. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select Head teachers (4), Council chairperson (1), Councilors (4) while the simple random sampling procedure was used to select the teachers (8), parents (40), NGO officials (3) and the youth (40), (Agesa,2012). The sample size comprised of 100 respondents. Also, the primary data was complimented by the secondary data which was derived from government policy documents, ministerial reports and relevant literature on the teaching and learning of initial literacy.

In the sampling of wards and institutions, the study adopted the stratified cluster random sampling technique. Sampling was done zone by zone. Wards and schools were clustered by zones. One zone was purposively selected based on highest number of wards and schools. The sampling was done at three levels: Sampling zones, schools and wards- level 1, Sampling Head teachers, Council chairperson and Councillors-level 2 and Sampling teachers, parents and the youth-level 3.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

In this research, data was analysed qualitatively as the semi structured interviews and observation schedules were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorization of themes from the semi structured interviews and observation schedules Kombo and Tromp (2006). Charts and graphs were used to analyse data. The data gathered was analysed according to the themes of the study, the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the interview guide was analysed manually and also, a combination of software MS Access, SPSS and MS Excel was used to analyse data. Analysis was mainly descriptive, that is, mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. Related statistics were applied where possible. Statistical testing took the form of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation and regression both simple and multiple.

### **3.5. Ethical Issues**

The researcher avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. Alternatively, permission consents, assents were obtained from respondents involved in the research and the research topic was strategically selected to ensure that there was no harm whatsoever to the research respondents. In this research, the researcher was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rule of respecting the privacy of individuals taking part in the research. In the same way, all the respondents of the research were to remain unidentified to the public as all their valuable views, opinions and perceptions were only known by the researcher for use only in the research and participant's identities will forever remain hidden.

The Researcher got permission from the local Council to interview Council Chairperson, NGO officials and Councillors, from the Chief to interview parents and the youth and from the Head teacher to interview the Head teachers and teachers. The names of respondents would remain anonymous for the sake of confidentiality, Bryman (2001) and Diener and Crandall (2008). However, the identity of respondents was concealed in the thesis but for identification in the thesis, the forty parents were allocated numbers 1 to 40, the forty youth were allocated ordinal numbers 1<sup>st</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup>, the eight teachers were allocated letters A to H, the four councillors were allocated primary colours Blue, Black, Green and Red, the four Head teachers were allocated names of famous villages Kantu, Muwana, Pata and Musho, the three NGO officials were allocated names streams Muwanguni, Masansa and Musenga while the one Council Chairperson was allocated the name of local hill Kalasa.

## **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The following findings and discussions were presented according to set research objectives:

### **4.1. Civic Education Teaching on the Tenets of Democracy**

According to study results, teachers, non-governmental organisations and government agents used the following topics to teach civic education in schools and community: internal democracy (10%), politics (15%), human rights (15%), rule of law (4%), elections (15%), and learners' exercise books (68.5%) while least used or available resources were equality and freedoms(2%), decision making (10%) and civic life (4%). Study results also indicated that 25% of the civic education educators concentrated on voter education.

Data also showed that there was no association between teaching and learning and what was obtaining on the ground. Teachers mostly were not qualified to teach civic education (93.3%) while organizations concentration was in town and district centre (90%) and therefore, learners and members of the community received less information on civic education and other tenets of democracy as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table1.** *Distribution of civic education teaching and learning topics*

Teaching materials/topics	Actual	Percentage	
		Yes	No
Internal democracy	10	10	90
Politics	15	15	85
Human rights	15	15	85
Rule of law	4	4	96
Elections	15	15	85
Decision making	10	10	90
Equality/Freedoms	2	2	98
Civic life	4	4	96
Voter education	25	25	75

Literature review that civic education should aim at developing and changing young people into effective, responsible, good and informed citizens in all aspects of any democratic society so that they become useful citizens of the society Tjeldvoll, (2016). According to Cortina and Stomquist, (2019), civic responsibilities should comprise of actions and attitudes which are associated with democratic governance and social participation. "Other studies Ninnes and Maeht, (2017) advised that teachers of civic education should use methods that encourage learners to reflect, think and do rather than reproduce from rote learning.

The teaching staff and stake holders involved in civic awareness should understand that it is only through civic education that learners, the youth and other citizens can learn and understand the concepts underpinning a democratic society such as citizens' rights and obligations as well enable them participate in civic duties Tjeldvoll, (2016). However, the methods used in teaching civic education as reviewed by findings from this study did not allow teachers to think about the knowledge and skills of learners, their ability and the kind of experience they bring to the lessons, did not use a variety of teaching methods. Teaching methods and techniques used were not according to learners' experience and did vary for effective teaching and learning to be encouraged (Quist 2000:78).

#### **4.2. Effects of Civic Education on Youth Involvement in the Tenets of Democracy**

Regarding areas of effects of civic education on youth involvement in aspects of democracy, survey results as illustrated in Table 2 below, showed that opinions from respondents scored highly on youth being informed on aspects of a democratic society(78.4%), followed by becoming responsible citizens at 73.6%, knowing their roles in development(69.7%), enlightened on governance issues at 53.6% and the least was youth participation in politics at 49.6%.

**Table2.** *Distribution of effects of civic education on the youth*

Teaching method	Percentage	
	Yes	No
Civic information	78.4%	21.6%
Responsible citizens	73.6%	26.4%
Role in development	69.7%	30.3%
Enlightened on governance issues	53.6%	46.4%
Participation in politics	49.6%	50.4%

On frequency of teaching civic education in schools, the results showed that the most common frequency of teaching civic education in sampled schools was daily (1.2%) and weekly (98.8%) while the frequency for specifically teaching aspects of a democratic society was 0.1% daily and 0.9% weekly. The most common topics used in teaching civic education was civic responsibilities (37.1%), followed by citizenship and nationalism (19.4%), interpersonal relations (18.6%), rights, duties and obligations (11.3%), other (7.0%) and lastly responsible parenthood (5.6%).

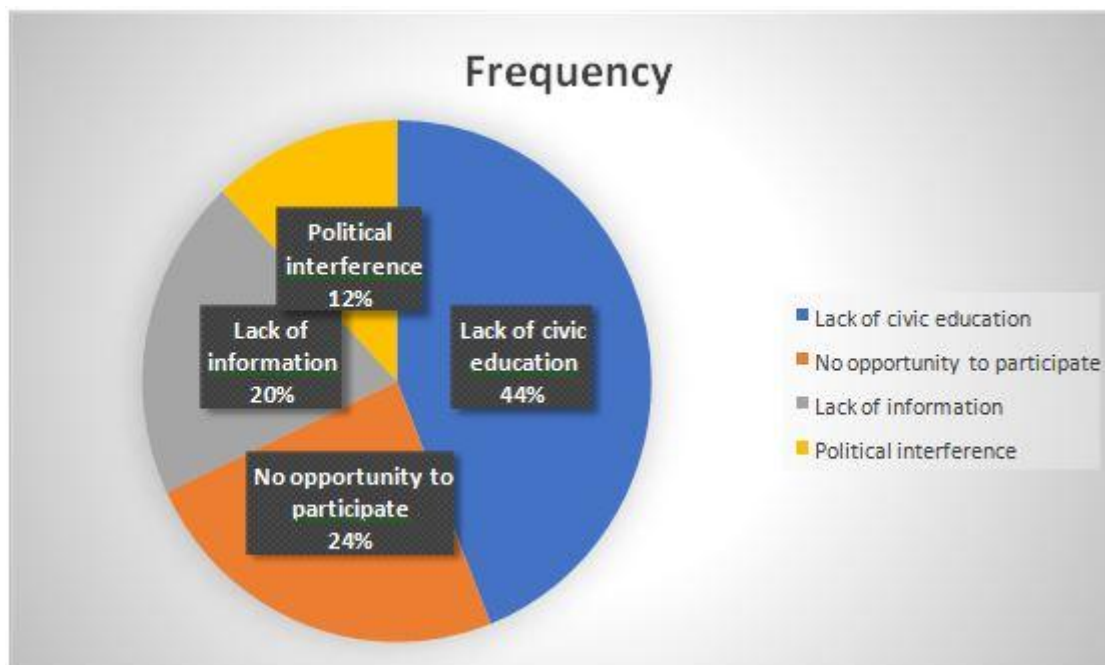
On effects of civic education on youth involvement in aspects of democracy, the study showed that 78.4% of the respondent agreed that, civic education provides civic information to youths and other citizens. Others indicated that, civic education enables youths to become good, informed and responsible citizens Tjedvoll, (2016). The study further revealed that civic education has an effect on the youth if well utilized, as it would enable them to take up roles in development (69.7%). In



addition, the study revealed that civic education if well conducted in schools and the communities can enlighten both the youth and other members of the community on governance issues (53.6%) while (49.6%) of the findings of the study from all the participants reviewed that civic education would enable youths to participate in politics and Peters, (2016) noted that civic education enables citizens to be aware how government operates, appreciate their rights and responsibilities and participate in civic duties.

#### 4.3. Factors that Hinder Youth Involvement in the Tenets of Democracy

From the study, the responses of factors that hinder youth involvement in the aspects of a democratic society were lack of civic education at 44%, youths not given opportunities to participate at 24%, lack of information at 20% and political interference at 12%. This information is as illustrated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure1.** Factors that hinder youth involment in democratic dispensations

The study showed the factors that hinder youth involvement in the aspects of a democratic society were lack of civic education at 44%, youths not given opportunities to participate at 24%, lack of information at 20% and political interference at 12%. Most of the youth do not have adequate civic information that can make or motivate them to have interest in governance issues. Civic education helps citizens make informed judgments about the nature of civic life, politics, and government, and why politics and government are necessary, Wilson and Erskine, (2016).

The citizens especially the youth in a democratic society need civic skills for them to exercise their rights and discharge their responsibilities as members of self-governing communities. They not only need to acquire a body of knowledge such as that embodied in mathematics and sciences but they also need to acquire relevant intellectual and participatory skills that are in civic education and that the development of participatory skills should begin in the earliest grades and should continue throughout the course of schooling Letendre and Fukuzawa, (2016). The youngest pupils can learn to interact in small groups or committees, to pool information, exchange opinions or formulate plans of action commensurate with their maturity. They can learn to listen attentively, to question effectively, and to manage conflicts through mediation, compromise, or consensus building. Older students can and should be expected to develop the skills of monitoring and influencing public policy. They should learn to research public issues using electronic resources, libraries, the telephone, personal contacts, media and attending public meetings ranging from student councils to school boards, councils and so on.

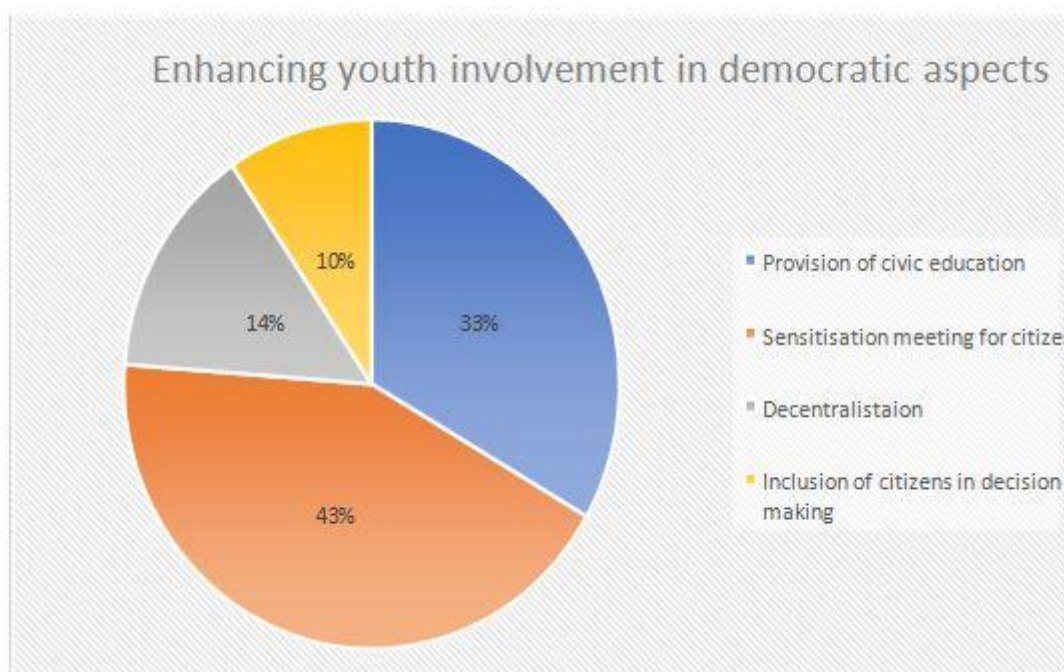
The study also looked at Head teachers, teachers and parents’ views on factors that hinder youth participation in the aspects of a democratic society and highest was politicians being liars at 28.8%, followed by government not considering citizen’s views at 23.2%, citizens not knowing their rights and corrupt leaders at 10% while the least was lack of civic education at 9.6 as illustrated in Table 3 below.

**Table3.** *Distribution of Head teachers, teachers and parents’ responses on factors hindering youth involvement in the tenets of democracy*

RESPONSE	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Citizens don’t know their rights	10	19.2%
Lack of Civic Education	5	9.6%
Citizens ’s views are not considered	12	23.2%
Politicians are liars	15	28.8%
Corruption by Leaders	10	19.2%
TOTAL	52	100%

**4.4. Strategies to Enhance Youth Involvement in the Tenets of a Democratic Society**

From the study, the responses on strategies to enhance youth involvement in the aspects of a democratic society were inclusion of citizens in decision making at 43%, intensification on the teaching and learning of practical civic education at 33%, decentralization of organizations involved in civic education at 14% and the least was sensitization meetings and workshops at 10% as illustrated in Figure 2 below.



**Figure2.** *Youth involvement in democratic dispensations*

The study revealed strategies that can promote youth involvement in aspects of governance and the first being provision of civic education at all levels as it plays a vital role in enhancing citizens’ personal, political, and economic responsibilities such as taking care of one's self, supporting one's family and caring for, nurturing, and educating one's children. They also include being informed about public issues, voting, paying taxes, serving on juries, performing public service, and serving in leadership positions commensurate with one's talents Nielsen and Gummings (1997).

In promoting civic education, the study revealed that it is important to use formal and informal ways so that citizens are sensitized effectively. Formal instruction in civics and governance should provide a basic and realistic understanding of civic life, politics, and government as well as familiarize students with the constitutions of the country and the state in which they live, because these and other core documents are criteria which can be used to judge the means and ends of government

Holowinsky and Shimahara (2016). It should also be emphasized that the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a constitutional democracy, civic responsibilities such as obeying the law, being informed and attentive to public issues, assuming leadership when appropriate, paying taxes, voting, serving as a juror or in the armed forces, monitoring the adherence of political leaders and governmental agencies to constitutional principles and taking appropriate action if that adherence is lacking as well as performing public service.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The conclusion drawn were that civic education plays an important role in promoting citizen involvement in all aspects of a democratic society as citizens who are equipped with civic knowledge will be able to participate effectively in the affairs of the nation. Civic education being a social science, deals with all aspects of human life and environment and therefore, helps the citizens to make choices. Civic education should be taught realistically for it to address the central facts about political as well as governance processes. It is also a tool in the promotion of democracy in developing nations. Without civic education, it is difficult to implement the tenets of democracy. All stake holders involved in teaching civic education at all levels should be practical and promote citizen involvement in local and central governance as well as promote the development of civic character by fostering recognition of public and private responsibilities and encouraging adherence to the values and principles of constitutional democracy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are actions that should be taken on the basis of the findings of this study:

- The Ministry of Education should make sure that sustained and systematic attention is given to civic education in the Zambian curriculum
- Head teachers should ensure that pupils participate in the governance of their classrooms and schools as well engaging learners in service and projects based learning.
- Civic society organization should be active in the promotion of civic education in communities in rural areas as well as adopt informal methods of orienting citizens on the aspects of democracy
- The government and other stake holders to use massive civic enlightenment through the media, adult education programme and civil associations.
- Decentralization of ECZ at Provincial and District levels to solely deal with voter education and elections.

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