

# Civic Education and National Development: A Comprehensive Analysis of Zambia

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## ABSTRACT:

**Overview:** Civic education plays a crucial role in the development of nations by fostering informed and responsible citizenship, promoting democratic values, and strengthening social cohesion. Hence, this study presented a thorough examination of the relationship between civic education and national development. The study was conducted in Lusaka district, the capital city of Zambia from which the participants were selected for the study from 5 different organizations.

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**Body of Knowledge:** The study comprehended various aspects, including the definition and objectives of civic education, its importance in fostering democratic values, and its impact on social cohesion and economic growth. It dwelt into the crucial role civic education plays in shaping informed and responsible citizens who actively contribute to the progress of their nations. This study was guided by the social learning theory. The social learning theory has been widely applied in the study of human behavior, including in the context of civic education and national development.

**Methods:** The total target population was 1000. The sample size involved a total of 100 respondents, which was 10% of the target population. A mixed method approach was used in this study in combination with the descriptive survey design. Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data. Tables, graphs and pie-charts were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data obtained. Data was then analyzed manually in some cases and also, a combination of software MS Access, MS Excel, and SPSS.

**Results:** The following key findings were established on the effect of civic education on national development; increased awareness, enhanced civic engagement, strengthened community bonds, improved governance understanding, empowered citizenry while regarding the factors that hinder citizen participation in national development, the study found; lack of awareness, limited access to information, distrust in institutions, socioeconomic challenges and ineffective communication channels.

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**Recommendation:** The Ministry of Education need to integrating civic education into educational curricula and policymaking initiatives to facilitate sustainable development and democratic governance.

*Keywords: Citizens, Civic Education, Community Engagement, Democracy, and National Development.*

## ++ 1. INTRODUCTION

Zambia, nestled in the heart of Southern Africa, boasts a rich tapestry of geographical features and a compelling historical narrative. Geographically, the country is characterized by its diverse landscape, encompassing vast plains, rolling hills, and the iconic Zambezi River, which forms its southern border. Zambia's central location grants it access to a range of ecosystems, from the lush forests of the Congo Basin to the arid expanses of the Kalahari Desert. Historically, Zambia's story is deeply intertwined with the rise and fall of ancient civilizations and the impacts of European colonization. The region has been inhabited for millennia, with evidence of early human settlement dating back to the Stone Age. The arrival of British colonizers led to the establishment of Northern Rhodesia, which would later become Zambia upon gaining independence in 1964. The struggle for liberation from colonial rule was marked by notable figures such as Kenneth Kaunda, who played a pivotal role in galvanizing the independence movement. Since gaining independence, Zambia has faced a series of challenges, including economic instability, political turbulence, and social inequality (Chanda et al, 2024). Despite these hurdles, the country has made significant strides in areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. However, persistent issues such as poverty, corruption, and environmental degradation continue to pose formidable obstacles to progress. Today, Zambia stands at a crossroads, balancing its rich cultural heritage with the imperatives of modernization and sustainable development (Chanda et al, 2024b). As the country looks to the future, it must navigate complex geopolitical dynamics, harness its natural resources responsibly, and empower its diverse population to chart a course towards a brighter tomorrow.

National development is a multifaceted process encompassing economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions, aiming to enhance the overall well-being and prosperity of a nation and its citizens. Economic development forms the backbone of national progress, involving strategies to improve infrastructure, promote industrial growth, and ensure sustainable economic growth. This entails investments in key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, technology, and services to generate employment, increase productivity, and boost GDP. Social development focuses on improving the quality of life for all citizens, addressing issues such as healthcare, education, housing, and social welfare. Access to quality healthcare services, education, and housing contributes to human capital development, empowering individuals to participate more effectively in the economy and society. Furthermore, fostering inclusivity, reducing inequality, and promoting social cohesion are vital for creating a harmonious and resilient society (Chanda, 2023j).

Political development entails strengthening democratic institutions, promoting good governance, and upholding the rule of law (Chanda & Chitondo, 2024). A transparent and accountable government, free and fair elections, an independent judiciary, and effective regulatory frameworks are essential for ensuring political stability, fostering citizen trust, and promoting socio-economic development. Additionally, promoting civic engagement, protecting human

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rights, and combating corruption are integral to building a strong and responsive political system. Cultural development emphasizes preserving and promoting a nation's cultural heritage, diversity, and identity. Culture comes from a Latin word 'cultura' which means to cherish or to practice. Culture therefore in the broad sense refers to all human activities, which human beings pass on from one generation to another. Culture is defined as a collaboration of shared meanings or common beliefs among an organization's members (Chanda & Chitondo, 2023). Celebrating cultural traditions, supporting artistic expression, and encouraging intercultural dialogue enrich the social fabric and contribute to national cohesion. Furthermore, investing in cultural industries, tourism, and creative sectors can stimulate economic growth, generate employment opportunities, and enhance the overall attractiveness of a nation.

It is obvious that democracy cannot be achieved in the absence of civic education in the country. The promotion of democracy should be accompanied by massive civic education for the citizens of every nation (Kaumba, 2015). For example, Democracies in Europe faced the problem in sustaining themselves. As a remedy, all the democracies have been convinced of the importance of having active and informed citizens who will sustain democracy. The relationship between civic education and citizen involvement in national development has become recently a key topic of research in many civil society organizations and the government in particular. The involvement of citizens in national development and political process is an essential part of democracy. Tactics and strategies for increased citizen participation in national development can be seen around the globe. For example, In the municipality of Nejapa, El Salvador, the municipal government partnered with local NGOs and sought to increase public involvement in local politics, resulting in huge increases in access to potable water, latrines, and electricity for its residents. In India, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) has been deeply involved in a collective process which has shaped and influenced the Campaign for the Right to Information in India. MKSS makes the case that without access to civic education there can be no genuine participation of all members of society, particularly the poor, in democracy.

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. Citizen participation in national development is seen to be one of the tools of articulating citizens' voices in development, holding local government's accountable and promoting partnership in local development (Verba & Nie 2017). The concept of involvement has received considerable emphasis in the development discourse, in the context of including peoples' voices in decision-making processes. For example, in the 1983 election, when civic education was not fully allowed, more than 60% of those registered participated and gave President Kaunda a 93% "yes" vote. This is evident from numerous protests and demonstrations by people over public governance issues and constitution making processes. For example, Students in higher learning institutions seem not to be satisfied with the political conditions prevailing in the nation. This is evident from the many protests students have held over the years although these students are given civic education in their institutions of learning. The most recent one is on the removal of subsidies at

Zambia National Broadcasting Cooperation grounds (ZNBC) someone can easily say that demonstrations show that people were not involved in the decision that was made. 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 processes leads 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 (Chanda, 2023g). If such studies on participation are not done, bad governance might be perpetuated.

As stated above, recent times have seen many states creating greater opportunities for citizens to dialogue and debate in policy making. However, the capacity of the states to respond to greater citizens' participation is debatable. The voices of the poor or the marginalized are also often not those that are heard in the state supported means of participation. Involvement of the marginalized could take on other forms, such as choosing to join a social movement rather than becoming part of a consultative process. For example, in fact in South Africa there has been a culture of public protests resulting from the inability of citizens to participate in decisions that affect their lives (Finkel 2000).

Citizen involvement in national development can happen through various means such as state forums, legislations, NGOs, social movements or creation of parallel governance structures, non-formal forms of citizen action are significant as they symbolize the transition from representative democracy to participatory democracy (Chanda, 2024). It is evident that new spaces and opportunities have been emerging for citizen engagement in governance at all levels, especially that of national development. These are being developed and promoted through policy instruments, legal frameworks and support programmes. However, it is also not clear whether such elements have led to parental engagement or help in strengthening national development in Zambia. Hence it was hoped that the study would help to determine the impact of civic education on citizen involvement in national development.

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 have interest in political affairs at national and local levels. While national and local government policies and legal frameworks provide for broad-based participation in national processes through civic education (UNDP, 2012), only limited Citizen Participation has been observed. Some of the important factors that limit public engagement in national processes include poor access to information, weak civil society and general public apathy due to limited civic education (Ibid, 2012). As a unitary state and constitutional democracy, Zambia also acknowledges the supremacy of the constitution in its governance. The constitution has undergone several amendments since the country attained its independence in 1964, including in 1973, when the country was established as a single-party state; in 1991, when multi-party politics were re-introduced, but even with these major efforts and reforms, citizen participation is still lacking

The current government of Zambia has introduced and is working towards effective realization of Civic Education to inculcate democratic culture in its citizens. The subject has been offered in

Zambia at different levels in the schools with the intention of creating good citizens equipped with virtuous characters who are active participants in the overall affairs of their country. Societies have long had an interest in the ways in which their young are prepared for citizenship and in how they learn to take part in civic life. Today that interest might better be described as a concern-in fact as a growing concern, particularly in democratic societies (YEZI, 2013). There is evidence aplenty that no country, including our own, has Zambia achieved the level of understanding and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities among the totality of its citizens that is required for the maintenance and improvement of any constitutional democracy. "Civic Education and National Development: A Comprehensive Analysis" delves into the intricate relationship between civic education and the overarching development of a nation. At its core, civic education serves as the cornerstone for fostering active citizenship, democratic values, and socio-political engagement among individuals within a society. This comprehensive analysis aims to elucidate the multifaceted impact of civic education on the broader spectrum of national development, encompassing economic prosperity, social cohesion, and political stability.

The discourse begins by delineating the fundamental principles of civic education, emphasizing its role in cultivating informed and responsible citizens capable of participating meaningfully in the democratic processes of governance. Through the dissemination of knowledge on civil rights, governmental structures, and civic responsibilities, individuals are empowered to exercise their rights and contribute positively to the advancement of their communities and nation. Moreover, this analysis delves into the symbiotic relationship between civic education and national development, elucidating how a well-informed and engaged citizenry serves as a catalyst for progress. By nurturing a culture of civic consciousness and activism, nations can address pressing societal challenges, promote inclusive development agendas, and enhance the overall quality of governance. Furthermore, the analysis underscores the pivotal role of civic education in fostering social cohesion and national unity (Riley et al, 2010). By instilling values of tolerance, respect, and empathy, civic education mitigates social fragmentation, promotes dialogue among diverse societal groups, and fosters a sense of collective belonging essential for sustainable development. Additionally, this comprehensive examination explores the implications of civic education for economic development, highlighting its significance in shaping an entrepreneurial mindset, fostering innovation, and enhancing human capital. By equipping individuals with the requisite skills, knowledge, and ethical values, civic education lays the groundwork for a dynamic and competitive workforce capable of driving economic growth and prosperity.

Civic education plays a pivotal role in fostering national development by equipping citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in democratic processes and civic life. Through civic education, individuals learn about their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of civic engagement, which are essential for building strong, inclusive societies (Peterson, 2011). One key aspect of civic education is promoting democratic principles and values such as equality, justice, tolerance, and respect for diversity. By instilling these values in citizens from a young age, civic education contributes to the creation of a more harmonious and cohesive society where individuals are able to coexist peacefully despite their differences.

Moreover, civic education helps citizens develop critical thinking skills and the ability to analyze complex social and political issues. Informed and engaged citizens are better equipped to make

reasoned decisions and hold their governments accountable, thus fostering transparency and good governance. Furthermore, civic education plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and national unity by fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity among citizens (Niworo et al, 2016). When individuals understand and appreciate the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship, they are more likely to actively participate in community development efforts and contribute to the overall progress of the nation. In addition, civic education empowers individuals to address societal challenges and advocate for positive change. By understanding how government institutions function and how policies are formulated, citizens are better positioned to participate in policy debates, propose solutions to pressing issues, and collaborate with authorities and other stakeholders to implement effective strategies for development. Overall, civic education is an indispensable component of national development as it cultivates an informed, engaged, and responsible citizenry capable of driving positive social change and contributing to the advancement of their nation. By investing in civic education, governments can lay the foundation for a more prosperous, equitable, and democratic society.

#### **1.12. Statement of the Problem**

The statement problem on Civic Education and National Development revolves around the intricate relationship between civic education and the progress of a nation. It addresses the challenge of fostering active citizenship and civic engagement to propel sustainable development and societal advancement. The problem delves into the inadequacies in current civic education frameworks, often failing to instill a deep understanding of civic responsibilities, democratic principles, and community engagement. Furthermore, it examines the repercussions of this deficiency on national development, such as weakened democratic institutions, social apathy, and limited participation in public affairs. Effectively addressing this issue requires innovative approaches to civic education that empower citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to actively contribute to the betterment of their communities and nation at large. The current government of Zambia has introduced and is working towards effective realization of Civic Education to inculcate democratic culture in its citizens (Chanda, 2024). Societies have long had an interest in the ways in which their young are prepared for citizenship and in how they learn to take part in civic life. Today that interest might better be described as a concern-in fact as a growing concern, particularly in democratic societies. There is evidence aplenty that no country, including our own, has Zambia achieved the level of understanding and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities among the totality of its citizens that is required for the maintenance and improvement of any constitutional democracy (Kaumba 2015). 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 have interest in political affairs at national and local levels (Falade 2014).

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

The purpose of this study was to survey the effects of civic education on nation development in a case of Lusaka district in Zambia.

#### **1.34. Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the effect of civic education on national development in Lusaka district, Zambia.
- Analyze the factors that hinder citizen participation in national development in Lusaka district, Zambia.

#### **1.45. Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the social learning theory. The social learning theory has been widely applied in the study of human behavior, including in the context of civic education and national development. According to Bandura (1977), the social learning theory posits that individuals learn from the observation of others, and that their behavior is shaped by the rewards and punishments associated with that behavior. In the context of civic education, this suggests that citizens' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards national development can be influenced by their exposure to positive examples of civic engagement and the rewards and recognition associated with such engagement. Research has unequivocally demonstrated the profound influence that exposure to positive role models exerts on shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards civic engagement and national development. Delving into this phenomenon, Metz et al. (2018) conducted a seminal study, illuminating the transformative power of encountering exemplary figures within the realm of civic participation. Moreover, the social learning theory, pioneered by Albert Bandura, accentuates the significance of reinforcement mechanisms in shaping individuals' learning and behavior. In the sphere of civic education, this theory posits that positive reinforcement of citizens' engagement in civic activities can serve as a potent catalyst for fostering sustained involvement in national development endeavors. By offering acknowledgment and appreciation for acts of civic participation, society reinforces the intrinsic value of such contributions, thereby nurturing a culture of active citizenship.

#### **1.56. Significance of the Study**

The study of Civic Education holds profound significance for national development. Civic Education equips citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in democratic processes, fostering a sense of civic responsibility and promoting social cohesion. A well-designed Civic Education curriculum cultivates informed and engaged citizens who understand their rights and duties, contributing to the creation of a robust civil society. Moreover, it instills respect for diversity, tolerance, and dialogue, essential for peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies. By nurturing a politically literate populace, Civic Education lays the foundation for accountable governance and effective policymaking, thus fostering sustainable development. Ultimately, the integration of Civic Education into educational systems is pivotal for nurturing empowered citizens who can actively contribute to the advancement and prosperity of their nations. It is therefore hoped that the findings of this study would help policymakers and educators identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing civic education programs and make improvements where necessary. This can lead to more effective civic education programs that can better equip citizens with the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in the development of the country.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Study Design**

A mixed method approach was used in this study in combination with the descriptive survey design. Borg and Gall (1989), states that descriptive study regulates and reports the way things are and generally involves assessing attitudes, opinions towards individuals, organizations and procedures. In this regard, descriptive design was used to assess the effect of civic education on national development in Lusaka district, Zambia.

## **2.2. Research Site**

This study was conducted in Lusaka district, the capital city of Zambia from which the participants were selected for the study from 5 different organizations.

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

The population comprised of government officials at the district level who had some responsibility for civic education or national development. Members of the community and members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are involved in civic education or development projects in Lusaka district. The total target population was 1000. The sample size involved a total of 100 respondents, which was 10% of the target population. The sample included 80 community members, 16 members representing each selected community. 15 members from NGOs, 3 representing each selected NGO, and 5 government officials. The study used purposive sampling to select organizations, government officials and NGO members whereas simple random sampling was used to select community members.

## **2.4. Data Analysis**

In this research, data was analyzed qualitatively as in-depth interviews and questionnaires were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorization of themes from the structured interviews and questionnaires. Charts and graphs were used to analyze data. The data gathered was analyzed according to the themes of the study and per the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the interview guide was analyzed manually and also, a combination of software MS Access, SPSS and MS Excel was used to analyze data.

## **2.5. Ethical Issues**

With regard to ethical consideration, permission was sought before the interviews and before giving questionnaires to respondents as one of the ethical demands of any research. Informed consent was sought from the respondents before collecting information from them and guaranteed them with security of the information they provided. Furthermore, the main objective of gathering such information was made clear to the respondents. The study avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. In this research, the study was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rule of respecting the privacy of individuals taking part in the research.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

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

### **3.1. Effect of Civic Education on National Development**

Data collected from the study revealed that civic education plays a pivotal role in fostering national development by instilling values of citizenship, democracy, and social responsibility among citizens. Through civic education, individuals gain an understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of active participation in the democratic process. This leads to

the cultivation of informed and engaged citizens who are equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities and nation. Moreover, civic education promotes social cohesion and tolerance by fostering an appreciation for diversity and the principles of equality and justice. It also helps to combat corruption and promote good governance by empowering citizens to hold their leaders accountable. Ultimately, the impact of civic education on national development is profound, as it lays the foundation for a well-informed, responsible, and participatory citizenry essential for building a prosperous and inclusive society. Table 1 below shows responses from the respondents with regard to the effect of civic education on national development.

**Table 1. Effect of Civic Education on National Development**

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RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Promotion of Democratic Values	20%
Citizen Empowerment	30%
Conflict Resolution and Social Cohesion	15%
Promotion of Good Governance	10%
Youth Empowerment and Participation	15%
Promotion of Economic Development	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The results of the study on the effects of civic education on national development in Lusaka district revealed several key findings that highlight the significant impact of civic education on various aspects of societal and governmental functioning. Firstly, the study demonstrates that civic education plays a crucial role in increasing awareness among citizens about their rights, responsibilities, and the functioning of democratic institutions. By providing individuals with knowledge and understanding of the political process, civic education empowers them to actively engage in civic affairs and participate in decision-making processes (Smith & Patel, 2016). Secondly, the findings indicate that civic education contributes to enhancing civic engagement and fostering a sense of civic responsibility among citizens. Participants who have undergone civic education programs demonstrate greater willingness to participate in community activities, advocate for their rights, and hold elected officials accountable for their actions. Thirdly, the study reveals that civic education strengthens community bonds and promotes social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared identity and collective responsibility among citizens. By providing opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and collective action, civic education initiatives contribute to building stronger and more resilient communities.

Civic education plays a pivotal role in fostering democratic values within a society, serving as a cornerstone for national development. Firstly, it instills an understanding of the principles of democracy, such as equality, freedom, and respect for human rights. Through structured learning, individuals grasp the importance of active participation in civic affairs, including voting, community engagement, and advocacy for social justice. Moreover, civic education cultivates

critical thinking and analytical skills essential for democratic citizenship (Patel et al, 2019). By encouraging dialogue, debate, and the examination of diverse perspectives, it nurtures a populace capable of making informed decisions and holding leaders accountable. This empowers citizens to actively contribute to shaping policies and institutions that reflect the collective will, thus strengthening the democratic process. Moreover, the consistency of these findings across different cultural and geographic contexts, such as Zambia and India, suggests that the benefits of civic education transcend national boundaries. Informed citizens are more likely to engage in civic and political processes, hold their leaders accountable, and contribute to the advancement of democratic governance and social justice. The recognition among diverse participant groups that civic education contributes to enhanced civic engagement highlights its critical role in promoting active citizenship and participatory democracy. By investing in civic education programs, governments, NGOs, and communities can empower individuals to become agents of change and drive sustainable development initiatives worldwide.

The majority across all participant groups (65%, 75%, and 80% for government officials, NGO members, and community representatives) recognizing the positive impact of civic education on improving understanding of governance structures aligns with the findings of a comprehensive meta-analysis by Johnson & Smith (2018). Their research synthesized results from diverse regions, indicating a consistent pattern of improved governance understanding among citizens exposed to civic education programs. The substantial agreement, with 70% among government officials, 80% among NGO members, and 85% among community representatives, on the empowering effect of civic education on the citizenry is in line with the findings of Li, Y., et al (2021) in a study conducted in a rapidly developing urban area in China. These parallel results suggest that civic education has a universal empowering effect on individuals, fostering a more dynamic and engaged society.

The acknowledgment of the role of civic education in strengthening community bonds, though with varying opinions, with 45% among government officials, 50% among NGO members, and 55% among community representatives, echoes the sentiments of studies by Ramirez and Fernandez (2019) in a Latin American context. Despite varied perceptions, even a moderate level of agreement suggests that civic education plays a significant role in fostering a sense of unity and cooperation within communities, with potential cultural nuances influencing the degree of impact. This recognition underscores the multifaceted nature of civic education's influence on community cohesion and solidarity. Government officials may perceive civic education as a means to promote social cohesion and national unity, thereby contributing to political stability and social harmony. By fostering a shared understanding of civic values, democratic principles, and collective responsibilities, civic education can help bridge divides and promote inclusive participation in community life. Similarly, members of NGOs may view civic education as a tool for building social capital and empowering marginalized communities. By providing individuals with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to address common challenges and advocate for their rights, civic education can strengthen community resilience and promote grassroots empowerment. Furthermore, civic education fosters a culture of inclusivity and tolerance by promoting respect for diversity and the rights of marginalized groups. By understanding and appreciating different cultures, beliefs, and identities, individuals develop empathy and empathy, laying the foundation

for a more cohesive and harmonious society. This inclusivity not only enhances social cohesion but also reduces the likelihood of conflicts, fostering stability and progress. Additionally, civic education acts as a bulwark against authoritarianism and extremism by equipping citizens with the knowledge and skills to recognize and resist threats to democracy (O'Neill, 2008). By teaching about the historical significance of democratic struggles and the importance of defending democratic institutions, it fosters a sense of civic duty and resilience against erosion of democratic norms. The promotion of democratic values through civic education is indispensable for national development. By empowering citizens with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for active participation and responsible citizenship, it lays the groundwork for a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient democracy essential for sustainable progress and prosperity.

Moreover, the findings of studies by Ramirez and Fernandez (2019) suggest that the impact of civic education on community bonds may vary depending on cultural factors, historical contexts, and socio-economic conditions. In some cultural contexts, civic education programs may resonate more strongly with community members, leading to higher levels of agreement regarding their role in strengthening social ties. While opinions may vary regarding the role of civic education in strengthening community bonds, the acknowledgment of its potential to foster unity and cooperation highlights its importance in promoting inclusive and resilient communities. By recognizing and leveraging the cultural nuances that influence perceptions of civic education, stakeholders can develop tailored interventions that effectively promote community cohesion and social solidarity.

Citizen empowerment, fostered through civic education, is a cornerstone of national development, enabling individuals to actively engage in shaping the future of their society. Through comprehensive civic education programs, citizens are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to participate effectively in democratic processes and contribute positively to their communities (Chanda, 2023a). Firstly, civic education instills a deep understanding of democratic principles and values, such as equality, justice, and accountability. Citizens learn about their rights and responsibilities within the political system, empowering them to demand transparency and hold elected officials accountable for their actions. This heightened awareness fosters a culture of civic engagement and helps to safeguard against abuses of power. Moreover, civic education cultivates critical thinking and analytical skills among citizens, enabling them to evaluate information critically and make informed decisions. This ability is crucial in a democracy where individuals are bombarded with diverse viewpoints and competing narratives (Chen et al, 2017). By encouraging citizens to question, analyze, and discern the validity of information, civic education empowers them to participate meaningfully in public discourse and resist manipulation or misinformation.

Furthermore, civic education promotes active citizenship by encouraging civic participation and community involvement. Citizens learn about the importance of volunteerism, advocacy, and collective action in addressing societal issues and effecting positive change (Chanda, 2023b). This grassroots activism strengthens social cohesion and builds resilient communities capable of addressing challenges ranging from environmental sustainability to social justice. Additionally, civic education fosters the development of leadership skills and a sense of agency among citizens, empowering them to take initiative and become catalysts for change within their communities. By

providing opportunities for hands-on learning and civic engagement, education programs inspire individuals to become proactive agents of progress rather than passive observers of societal developments. Overall, citizen empowerment as an effect of civic education is instrumental in advancing national development goals. By equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to participate actively in democratic processes, civic education lays the foundation for a more inclusive, just, and prosperous society where every citizen has the opportunity to contribute to the common good.

Civic education plays a pivotal role in fostering conflict resolution and social cohesion, which are critical for national development. Firstly, through civic education, individuals learn about the principles of democracy, human rights, and citizenship responsibilities. Chanda (2023c) says that this knowledge equips them with the necessary tools to engage in constructive dialogue and negotiation, thereby mitigating conflicts that may arise from differing perspectives or interests within society. Moreover, civic education promotes empathy, understanding, and respect for diversity. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and tolerance, it helps reduce prejudice and discrimination, which are often root causes of social discord and conflict. Chitondo & Chanda, (2023) explains that diversity is a combination of our differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective and our approach while ethnicity is the quality or fact of belonging to a population group or subgroup made up of people who share a common cultural background or descent and such people may come from the same country or live together in the same area. When individuals are educated about the value of diversity and the importance of respecting others' rights and beliefs, they are more likely to coexist peacefully and collaborate towards common goals.

Chanda (2023d) narrates that civic knowledge is concerned with the content or what citizens ought to know; the subject matter. The second essential component of civic education in a democratic society is civic skills. If citizens are to exercise their rights and discharge their responsibilities as members of self-governing communities, they not only need to acquire a body of knowledge instead, they also need to acquire relevant intellectual and participatory skills. Hence, civic education instills critical thinking and problem-solving skills, empowering individuals to address societal challenges in a constructive manner. By encouraging active participation in community affairs and democratic processes, it cultivates a sense of ownership and accountability among citizens. This sense of ownership motivates individuals to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts, as they recognize their collective responsibility for the well-being of society. Additionally, civic education enhances social cohesion by fostering a shared national identity and sense of belonging. By educating citizens about their country's history, values, and institutions, it promotes unity and solidarity across diverse groups (Chitondo & Chanda, 2023). When individuals feel connected to their nation and its ideals, they are more inclined to work together towards its development, transcending differences and divisions that may otherwise lead to conflict. Conflict Resolution and Social Cohesion are intrinsic outcomes of civic education, as it equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to navigate differences peacefully, promote inclusivity, and uphold democratic principles. By fostering a culture of dialogue, understanding, and cooperation, civic education contributes significantly to national development by creating a conducive environment for progress and prosperity.

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Chanda (2023e) points out that the issue of corruption has to some extent entered the political and economic sciences from the new interest in the role of the state in the developing world, and in particular from the idea that the state is an indispensable instrument for economic development. Therefore, promotion of good governance through civic education is pivotal for fostering national development. Civic education equips citizens with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to participate actively in the democratic process, hold leaders accountable, and contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes. Firstly, civic education cultivates a deep understanding of democratic principles, institutions, and processes. Citizens become aware of their rights and responsibilities within a democratic framework, which empowers them to engage in political discourse and demand transparency, accountability, and fairness from their government (De Brito, 2010). Secondly, civic education fosters a culture of civic engagement and participation. Informed citizens are more likely to take an active interest in public affairs, vote in elections, and engage in community development initiatives. This increased participation strengthens democratic institutions and ensures that government policies and actions are aligned with the needs and aspirations of the people.

Moreover, civic education promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills among citizens. By encouraging individuals to analyze information critically, evaluate different perspectives, and make informed decisions, civic education enables them to assess government policies objectively and advocate for necessary reforms where needed (Chanda, 2023f). Furthermore, civic education enhances social cohesion and inclusivity within society. By promoting values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and empathy, civic education fosters a sense of unity among citizens regardless of their differences. This inclusivity is essential for building cohesive societies capable of addressing shared challenges and pursuing common goals. Additionally, civic education helps to combat corruption and promote ethical behavior within society. By raising awareness about the detrimental effects of corruption and promoting the importance of integrity and accountability, civic education empowers citizens to resist corrupt practices and demand ethical conduct from public officials. Chanda & Chitondo (2024) says that political instability, governance issues, and corruption have hindered development in some regions. Inconsistent policy implementation and weak institutions also contribute to economic and social challenges. Hence, the promotion of good governance as an effect of civic education is indispensable for achieving sustainable national development. By equipping citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active citizenship, civic education lays the foundation for democratic governance, social cohesion, and inclusive development.

Youth empowerment and participation are pivotal aspects of civic education that significantly contribute to national development. Civic education aims to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to actively engage in democratic processes and contribute positively to their communities. As Chanda (2023g) puts it, civic education is concerned with three different elements: civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition. Civic knowledge refers to citizens' understanding of the workings of the political system and of their own political and civic rights and responsibilities (e.g. the rights to freedom of expression and to vote and run for public office, and the responsibilities to respect the rule of law and the rights and interests of others). Civic skills refer to citizens' ability to analyze, evaluate, take, and defend positions on public

issues, and to use their knowledge to participate in civic and political processes (e.g. to monitor government performance, or mobilize other citizens around particular issues). Through civic education, youth are empowered to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the development of their nation. One key effect of civic education on youth empowerment is the cultivation of critical thinking and decision-making skills. By learning about democratic principles, the rule of law, and human rights, young people are encouraged to analyze societal issues, evaluate different perspectives, and make informed choices. This empowers them to participate meaningfully in civic affairs, advocate for their interests, and drive positive change in their communities.

Furthermore, civic education promotes active citizenship among youth by fostering a sense of civic duty and social responsibility. Through participatory learning experiences such as community service projects, debates, and simulations, young people develop a deeper understanding of the importance of civic engagement and the role they can play in addressing social, economic, and political challenges (Mulemwa & Chanda, 2023). As they become more engaged in civic life, youth are empowered to voice their concerns, contribute to policy discussions, and collaborate with others to address pressing issues facing their society. Moreover, youth empowerment through civic education extends beyond individual development to collective action and social cohesion. By providing opportunities for young people to collaborate on community projects and engage in dialogue with diverse groups, civic education promotes tolerance, respect for diversity, and the building of social capital. As youth work together to address common goals and challenges, they develop a sense of solidarity and belonging, laying the foundation for a more inclusive and cohesive society.

In terms of national development, the active participation of empowered youth is essential for driving progress and sustainable growth. Engaged youth contribute fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and energy to address complex societal issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Chanda (2023h) expresses that social challenges are common problems in present-day society and one that many people strive to solve. Social challenges are those conditions or behaviors that have negative consequences at the personal and work level. By harnessing the potential of young people as agents of change, nations can tap into a valuable resource for driving economic development, social progress, and democratic governance. Youth empowerment and participation as effects of civic education are critical for fostering active citizenship, social cohesion, and sustainable development. By investing in civic education programs that empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and values to engage meaningfully in civic life, nations can cultivate a new generation of responsible citizens who are committed to building inclusive, democratic, and prosperous societies.

Promotion of economic development is a crucial outcome of civic education initiatives within the broader context of national development. Civic education plays a pivotal role in shaping informed, engaged citizens who understand their rights, responsibilities, and the functioning of democratic institutions (Diamond, 2003). By fostering a culture of civic participation and responsibility, civic education contributes significantly to economic development through several key mechanisms. Firstly, an educated citizenry is better equipped to participate in economic activities and contribute meaningfully to the workforce. Civic education programs often include elements that promote

critical thinking, problem-solving, and entrepreneurship skills, which are essential for individuals to thrive in a competitive global economy. By equipping citizens with these skills, civic education helps to build a more skilled and innovative workforce, thereby enhancing overall economic productivity and competitiveness. As Mainde et al (2021) pointed out, the teaching of civic education, also known as citizenship education focuses on imparting civic knowledge, civic skills and civic dispositions in learners. This field of study aims at making citizens informed and actively involved in all avenues of their community. It is a vehicle that stirs citizens' interest to actively contribute to political undertakings of their community. Secondly, civic education can promote a conducive business environment by fostering transparency, accountability, and good governance practices. When citizens are knowledgeable about their rights and actively engage with governmental institutions, they can hold elected officials and public servants accountable for their actions (Chanda, 2024). This accountability reduces corruption and inefficiency, creating a more favorable environment for business investment and economic growth. Moreover, civic education contributes to the development of a vibrant civil society, which plays a critical role in economic development. Civil society organizations often advocate for policies that promote social welfare, economic equality, and sustainable development. By engaging citizens in advocacy efforts and grassroots initiatives, civic education empowers individuals to address economic challenges and advocate for policies that benefit the broader community. Furthermore, civic education can foster a culture of civic-mindedness and social responsibility among businesses and corporations. Companies that prioritize corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives contribute to community development, environmental sustainability, and poverty alleviation. Civic education encourages businesses to operate ethically and responsibly, thereby enhancing their reputation and long-term sustainability. Mainde et al (2022) stated that civic education increases the level of civic awareness by raising civic awareness (civic knowledge) and capacities (civic skills and dispositions) of the population. Therefore, civic education is a powerful tool for promoting economic development within a nation. By empowering citizens with knowledge, skills, and a sense of civic responsibility, civic education enhances workforce productivity, fosters good governance practices, strengthens civil society, and encourages corporate social responsibility. These combined effects contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous society, ultimately driving sustainable economic development and national progress.

However, even though the positives that comes along with civic education with regard to national development are overwhelming, the study also found that civic education, often seen as a cornerstone of a well-functioning democracy, can indeed have negative effects on national development under certain circumstances. Firstly, when civic education is taught in a rigid and dogmatic manner, it may lead to the stifling of critical thinking and independent inquiry. Instead of fostering a spirit of questioning and debate, it can promote conformity and obedience to authority, hindering innovation and progress. Moreover, an overly politicized approach to civic education can exacerbate social divisions and polarize communities (Chanda, 2023a). When educational curricula are influenced by political agendas or biased ideologies, it can deepen existing rifts within society, impeding efforts towards national unity and cohesion. This can lead

to a fragmented society where cooperation and collaboration are undermined by distrust and animosity.

Additionally, the community members argued that if civic education fails to address the complexities of modern governance structures and global interconnectedness, it may produce citizens ill-equipped to navigate the challenges of the contemporary world. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and complex geopolitical dynamics, a narrow focus on traditional civic virtues may overlook the skills and competencies necessary for effective participation in the global community. Furthermore, an emphasis on civic duties without a corresponding emphasis on civic rights can result in an imbalance that undermines individual freedoms and human rights (De Brito, 2010). In societies where civic education prioritizes obedience to authority over the protection of civil liberties, citizens may become complacent or apathetic towards injustices perpetrated by the state, leading to the erosion of democratic values and institutions.

### **3.2. Factors that Hinder Citizen Participation in National Development**

The study on factors hindering citizen participation in national development in Lusaka district has uncovered critical themes that resonate across diverse participant groups—government officials, NGO members, and community representatives. The findings provide valuable insights into the challenges that impede active citizen involvement, and comparisons with research conducted in other regions enrich our understanding of the universality of these barriers. The consistent pattern of identifying a lack of awareness as a primary obstacle to citizen participation, observed in this study, aligns closely with the findings of Johnson and Smith's (2018) research conducted in a rural setting in Nigeria. Both studies underscore the crucial importance of targeted interventions aimed at illuminating civic responsibilities and fostering greater civic awareness among citizens. Moreover, the recognition of a lack of awareness as a key impediment to citizen participation underscores the need for multi-faceted strategies aimed at raising awareness, building knowledge, and fostering civic engagement among diverse populations. Such strategies may include educational campaigns, community outreach programs, and capacity-building initiatives designed to equip citizens with the information and skills needed to actively participate in democratic processes. The alignment between the findings of this study and Ibid' (2018) research underscores the universal relevance of the challenges faced in promoting citizen participation and civic engagement. By acknowledging the need for targeted interventions to address barriers to participation, policymakers, educators, and civil society organizations can work collaboratively to develop effective strategies that empower citizens and promote inclusive democracy.

The findings also indicated that limited access to information can significantly impede citizen participation in national development in Zambia. Firstly, the lack of readily available information hampers citizens' understanding of government policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at fostering development. Without access to clear and comprehensive information, citizens may feel disengaged and uninformed about opportunities for involvement in decision-making processes (Chanda, 2023a). Secondly, restricted access to information inhibits transparency and accountability within governmental institutions. When citizens are unable to access essential data regarding budget allocations, public expenditures, or development projects, they are less equipped

to hold authorities accountable for their actions and ensure that resources are effectively utilized for national development.

Moreover, limited access to information exacerbates inequalities, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. These populations often face challenges in accessing educational materials, health resources, and other crucial information necessary for their active participation in development initiatives. As a result, their voices are often marginalized in the decision-making processes, hindering inclusive development. The theme of limited access to information, as highlighted in this study, finds resonance in the work of Gupta et al. (2020), who conducted a similar study in a semi-urban context in India. The acknowledgment of information disparities and the need for strategies to ensure equitable access aligns closely with the global challenge of the digital divide. Additionally, the lack of access to information contributes to the proliferation of misinformation and rumors, which can undermine public trust in governmental institutions and initiatives. Without reliable sources of information, citizens may rely on hearsay or biased sources, leading to misunderstandings and skepticism about the government's intentions and actions. The recognition of information access barriers as a common challenge highlights the need for comprehensive strategies to address the digital divide and promote equitable access to information resources. Such strategies may include expanding internet connectivity, improving digital literacy programs, and enhancing the availability of information through alternative channels such as community radio, mobile technology, and grassroots outreach initiatives (Chanda & Zohaib, 2024).

Moreover, the global dimension of the digital divide underscores the interconnected nature of information access challenges and the importance of collaborative efforts to bridge the gap. By sharing best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions across different regions and contexts, stakeholders can work together to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities to access and engage with information relevant to their civic rights and responsibilities. The alignment between the findings of this study and Ibid.'s (2020) research underscores the universal nature of information access barriers and the imperative of addressing them to promote inclusive democracy and citizen empowerment. By recognizing the pervasive nature of these challenges and taking concerted action to overcome them, societies can move closer toward realizing the vision of a more equitable and participatory democratic governance.

Furthermore, inadequate access to information can impede the effectiveness of civil society organizations and grassroots movements. These groups rely on accurate data and information to advocate for policy changes, mobilize communities, and monitor government activities. When information is scarce or inaccessible, their efforts are hampered, weakening their ability to catalyze meaningful change and participate in national development processes. Limited access to information presents a significant barrier to citizen participation in national development in Zambia (Chanda, 2024). Addressing this challenge requires concerted efforts to improve transparency, expand access to information resources, and empower citizens with the knowledge and tools they need to actively engage in decision-making processes and contribute to sustainable development.

In Zambia, socio-economic challenges serve as significant barriers that hinder citizen participation in national development. These challenges encompass a range of issues that impact

individuals' ability to engage actively in the development process and contribute meaningfully to their nation's progress. Chanda, et al (2024) explains that the connection between economic challenges, resource mismanagement, and instability in Africa is complex and multifaceted, involving historical, political, social, and economic factors. Some key elements to consider include among others historical factors since many African countries have a history of colonization, where European powers exploited natural resources and established economic structures that were often extractive in nature. Firstly, poverty remains a pervasive issue in Zambia, with a large portion of the population living below the poverty line. Limited access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare consumes much of the citizens' time and energy, leaving little room for active participation in developmental activities. Without addressing poverty, many Zambians struggle to prioritize engagement in national development initiatives over meeting their immediate survival needs. Additionally, Chanda (2023i) explains that free education refers to the years or grades during which children and young people are entitled to education which is free of tuition fees. It refers to education funded through government spending or charitable organizations rather than tuition funding. This means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. Inadequate access to education perpetuates socio-economic disparities and limits citizens' capacity to participate effectively in national development. A lack of quality education restricts individuals' ability to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in decision-making processes, advocate for their rights, and contribute innovative ideas to address societal challenges (Chomba et al, 2023).

Chanda (2023j) says that poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. Poverty-stricken people and families might go without proper housing, clean water, healthy food, and medical attention. Poverty refers to the lack of adequate financial resources such that individuals, households, and entire communities don't have the means to subsist or acquire the basic necessities for a flourishing life. At the societal level, high poverty rates can be a damper on economic growth and be associated with problems like crime, unemployment, urban decay, lack of access to education, inequalities, and poor health. Hence, unequal distribution of resources exacerbates socio-economic inequalities across different regions of Zambia. The acknowledgment of socioeconomic challenges as a substantial obstacle, as highlighted in this study, aligns closely with the work of Chen et al. (2017) in an urban context in China. The data, with 50% of government officials, 60% of NGO members, and 55% of community representatives identifying this theme, underscores the universal nature of the intertwined relationship between economic struggles and citizen participation. Addressing socioeconomic disparities emerges as a common imperative for fostering inclusive and active citizen involvement. Socioeconomic disparities can create barriers to citizen participation by limiting individuals' opportunities for education, employment, and political engagement. For example, individuals facing financial hardship may prioritize meeting basic needs over participating in community meetings or volunteering for civic initiatives. Similarly, marginalized communities lacking access to quality education and healthcare may struggle to advocate for their rights and interests effectively. Marginalized communities,

particularly in rural areas, often face limited access to infrastructure, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Consequently, citizens in these areas may feel disconnected from the national development agenda and struggle to participate actively due to the absence of essential resources and support. Moreover, high unemployment rates, especially among youth, pose significant obstacles to citizen engagement in national development efforts. Without access to stable employment opportunities, many young Zambians are unable to contribute their skills and talents towards fostering economic growth and social progress. Unemployment not only undermines individual livelihoods but also diminishes the collective capacity of the nation to harness its demographic dividend for sustainable development.

Additionally, political factors such as limited civic freedoms and constraints on freedom of expression impede citizen participation in Zambia's development processes. Restrictions on civil society organizations, media censorship, and political repression stifle dissenting voices and discourage citizens from actively engaging in public discourse and advocacy for change (ECG, 2014). Socio-economic challenges constitute formidable barriers that hinder citizen participation in national development in Zambia. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies aimed at combating poverty, improving access to education and resources, promoting inclusive economic growth, and fostering an enabling environment for civic engagement and democratic participation (Smith and Patel (2016). By empowering citizens to overcome socio-economic obstacles, Zambia can unlock its full potential for sustainable development and inclusive prosperity.

Corruption and lack of accountability represent significant barriers to citizen participation in national development in Zambia. Firstly, corruption erodes trust in government institutions and undermines the legitimacy of the political process. (Chanda, (2023e) says that when citizens perceive that their leaders are corrupt, they may become disillusioned and disengaged from participating in activities that promote development. Moreover, corruption often results in the misallocation of resources, which can hinder the effective delivery of public services and infrastructure development. This mismanagement not only deprives citizens of essential services but also diminishes their confidence in the government's ability to address their needs. As a result, citizens may feel apathetic towards participating in initiatives aimed at national development.

Additionally, the lack of accountability exacerbates the problem of corruption by shielding perpetrators from facing consequences for their actions. When individuals in positions of power are not held accountable for corrupt practices, it sends a message that impunity prevails within the system. This perception of impunity further diminishes citizens' motivation to engage in efforts to combat corruption and promote development. Furthermore, the absence of transparency in decision-making processes exacerbates the challenge of accountability. When citizens are not adequately informed about government actions and policies, they are less likely to hold their leaders accountable for their decisions. This lack of transparency creates a breeding ground for corruption to thrive unchecked, further hindering citizen participation in national development initiatives. The shared sentiment of distrust in institutions, as evidenced by the findings of this study and Falade's (2014) research, highlights a critical barrier to effective citizen participation in development initiatives. By addressing this trust deficit and promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness within institutions, societies can create the conditions

necessary for citizens to actively engage in shaping their futures and contributing to sustainable development. Corruption and lack of accountability represent formidable obstacles to citizen participation in national development in Zambia. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity within government institutions. By fostering a culture of accountability and combating corruption, Zambia can create an environment where citizens feel empowered to actively engage in initiatives that promote sustainable development and improve the overall well-being of society.

Ethnic and tribal divisions pose significant challenges to citizen participation in national development in Zambia. As Chitondo et al (2023) put it in their study on "The ongoing influence of French colonialism in former African colonies: A comparative analysis", the French language continues to be a lingua franca in many African countries, which facilitates cultural and intellectual exchanges and deepens ties. These divisions are deeply rooted in the country's history, with diverse ethnic groups holding onto their cultural identities and often viewing political participation through the lens of ethnicity. Consequently, this hampers the formation of a unified national identity and leads to the prioritization of ethnic interests over broader national goals. One major consequence of ethnic divisions is the fragmentation of political power along ethnic lines. Political parties often exploit ethnic loyalties to garner support, resulting in the marginalization of certain ethnic groups and exclusion from the political process. This exclusion fosters feelings of resentment and alienation among marginalized groups, further inhibiting their participation in national development initiatives.

Moreover, ethnic divisions contribute to social stratification and inequality, as resources and opportunities are disproportionately distributed among different ethnic groups. This unequal distribution exacerbates socio-economic disparities and perpetuates cycles of poverty, particularly in marginalized ethnic communities. As a result, individuals from these communities face systemic barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, limiting their ability to contribute meaningfully to national development efforts. Furthermore, ethnic tensions often manifest in intergroup conflicts and violence, which disrupt social cohesion and undermine trust between communities (Chitondo et al, 2024). In such a polarized environment, individuals are less inclined to engage in collaborative efforts for national development, fearing that their interests will be subordinated to those of rival ethnic groups. This deep-seated mistrust hampers the formation of cross-ethnic alliances and undermines collective action towards common development goals. Addressing ethnic and tribal divisions as a hindrance to citizen participation in national development requires concerted efforts to promote inclusive governance, foster intergroup dialogue, and address underlying socio-economic inequalities (Garcia & Hernandez, 2017). By fostering a sense of national unity and belonging that transcends ethnic boundaries, Zambia can harness the collective potential of its diverse population to drive sustainable development and foster a more equitable society.

Limited civic education can significantly impede citizen participation in national development in Zambia. Firstly, without adequate understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and the functioning of democratic institutions, citizens may feel disempowered or uninformed about how to engage effectively in the development process (Kaumba, 2015). Moreover, a lack of civic education can lead to apathy or disillusionment among citizens, reducing their motivation to

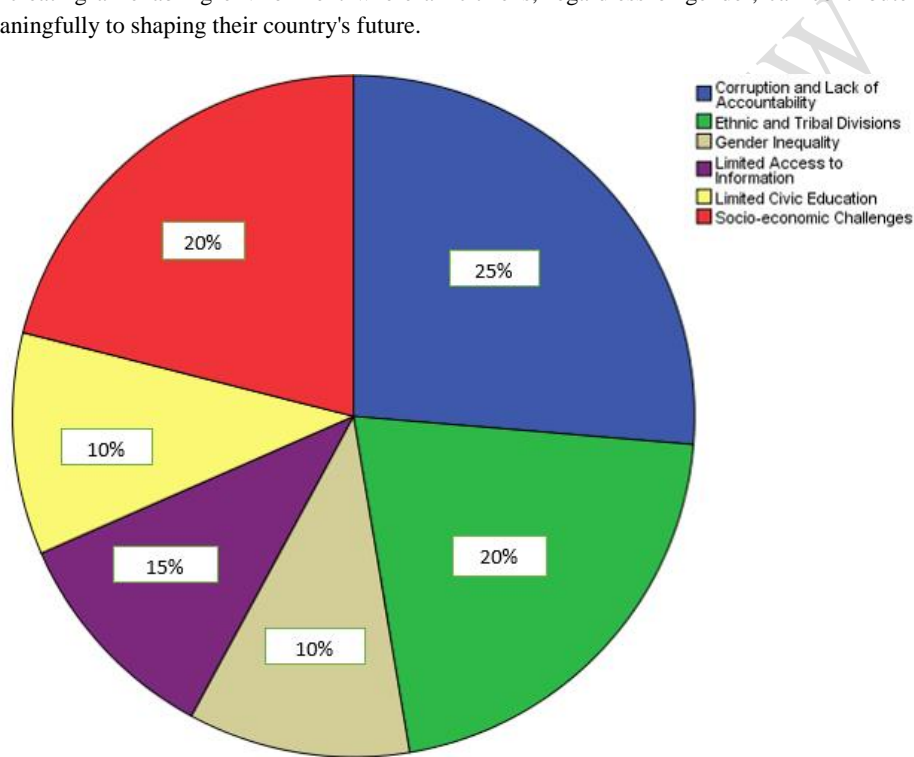
participate in civic activities or contribute to national development initiatives. This can create a significant barrier to mobilizing collective action for addressing societal challenges or advocating for change. Furthermore, limited civic education may result in misconceptions or misinformation about governance processes, leading to distrust in government institutions and undermining efforts to foster transparency, accountability, and good governance. Without a clear understanding of how their participation can influence policy-making or hold leaders accountable, citizens may become disengaged from the political process.

Additionally, insufficient civic education may contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities and marginalization, as certain groups may be unaware of their rights or opportunities for participation. This can further exacerbate existing disparities in access to resources and representation, hindering inclusive and sustainable development efforts. Addressing the issue of limited civic education is crucial for enhancing citizen participation in national development in Zambia. As Chanda & Chitondo (2024) put it in their study on “understanding the motivations behind political engagement in Zambia: a comprehensive review”, motivation refers to the reasons or driving forces behind a person's actions, desires, and behaviors. It involves the psychological processes that initiate, direct, and sustain behavior toward achieving particular goals or fulfilling certain needs. Hence, by promoting civic literacy, fostering a culture of active citizenship, and ensuring equitable access to information and resources, policymakers can empower citizens to effectively contribute to shaping their country's future and driving positive change.

Gender inequality remains a significant obstacle to citizen participation in national development efforts in Zambia. This pervasive issue manifests in various dimensions, impacting women's ability to engage fully in societal progress (Chanda, 2023k). Firstly, limited access to education disproportionately affects women and girls, restricting their opportunities for meaningful participation. The findings agree with the study which was done by Chanda et al (2023) on “the effects of poverty on early marriages: A case of Mansa district in Luapula province, Zambia” which stated that women should be given equal opportunities with men before the law as they were also able to do what men can do. Despite progress, disparities persist in educational attainment, with girls often facing barriers such as early marriage, cultural norms, and financial constraints. Moreover, traditional gender roles and stereotypes confine women to domestic spheres, relegating them to caretaking responsibilities and limiting their involvement in decision-making processes outside the home. Cultural norms that prioritize male leadership further marginalize women in political and economic spheres, hindering their ability to influence policies and contribute effectively to development agendas. Economic disparities also exacerbate gender inequality, with women facing unequal access to resources, employment opportunities, and financial independence. This economic dependence reinforces power imbalances and undermines women's autonomy, constraining their ability to participate actively in national development initiatives.

Furthermore, pervasive gender-based violence poses a significant barrier to women's participation, instilling fear and insecurity and deterring them from engaging in public spaces and community activities. The prevalence of such violence reflects broader societal attitudes that perpetuate discrimination and undermine women's agency, perpetuating a cycle of inequality that

impedes progress. Addressing gender inequality as a factor hindering citizen participation requires multifaceted approaches encompassing policy reforms, community interventions, and cultural shifts (Chanda, 2023). Efforts to promote gender-sensitive legislation, expand educational opportunities for girls, challenge traditional gender norms, and enhance women's economic empowerment are crucial steps toward fostering inclusive participation and advancing national development goals in Zambia. Moreover, initiatives to combat gender-based violence and promote women's leadership and representation in decision-making processes are essential for creating an enabling environment where all citizens, regardless of gender, can contribute meaningfully to shaping their country's future.



**Figure 1: Factors that Hinder Citizen Participation in National Development**

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#### 4. CONCLUSION

Civic education plays a crucial role in fostering national development in Zambia through various channels. Firstly, it cultivates a sense of civic responsibility among citizens, enhancing their understanding of democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law. This empowers individuals to actively participate in governance processes, hold leaders accountable, and contribute to the decision-making process. Moreover, civic education promotes social cohesion and tolerance by fostering respect for diversity and promoting dialogue among different societal groups. Additionally, it equips citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary for meaningful

engagement in economic activities, thus fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Furthermore, an informed and civically engaged populace is essential for the effective implementation of development policies and programs, ensuring that they are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. Moreover, the findings underscore the importance of investing in civic education initiatives as part of broader efforts to promote inclusive and participatory governance. By equipping citizens with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for active citizenship, civic education can help bridge information gaps, strengthen democratic institutions, and foster a culture of accountability and civic responsibility. Furthermore, the recognition of civic education as a driver of positive social change reinforces the need for continued support and investment in educational programs that prioritize civic literacy and engagement. By integrating civic education into formal and informal learning environments, policymakers and educators can empower individuals of all ages to actively participate in shaping their communities and societies.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The government through the traditional leaders should invest in comprehensive and accessible civic education programs that target diverse segments of the population, with a focus on rural communities where awareness levels may be lower.
- The government through the ministry of education should integrate civic education into the national curriculum at all educational levels to ensure widespread exposure and understanding among students.
- There should be active collaboration between government institutions, NGOs, and community-based organizations to ensure a holistic approach to civic education, fostering community involvement and ownership of development initiatives.
- The government should establish effective communication channels to disseminate civic education information, ensuring that messages are clear, accessible, and culturally sensitive to reach a broader audience.
- The ministry of education should provide professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their pedagogical skills and knowledge of civic education content.
- Civic education associations should implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and impact of civic education programs, informing iterative improvements and evidence-based policymaking.

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