RELIGIOUS PLURALISM FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN LESOTHO SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Supervisor/Promoter

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, RASEBATE ISAAC MOKOTSO, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work.

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I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Neither the part of the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any university;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. None of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published.

Signed:

Date: 16/03/2017

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mom – Anacletta ‘Mampiti ‘Mabonang Shoaepane Nkau-Mokotso, who will always live in my memories.

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Praise is to Him who governs the destiny of man – Almighty God.

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ABSTRACT

The current work employed qualitative phenomenological study to determine the reasons for the continued teaching of single Christian religious education in Lesotho secondary school in view that there are now compelling circumstances for pluralistic religious education. Central is the fact that Lesotho is cosigner of series of international declarations, conventions and recommendations on inclusive education which has a direct implication of inclusive teaching of religious education that can only be achieved through the teaching of multi-religious traditions. Secondly, Lesotho is no longer a religiously homogeneous society (even though this has not been the case since Christianity found the already existing Basotho indigenous religion). It is increasingly becoming a home for religious diversity through forces of a progressively globalized world. Thirdly, Lesotho is said to be a democratic state, and thus has to acquaint itself with democratic principles of education where selective knowledge rather than liberal knowledge that provide students with different perspectives is discouraged. In order to examine the reasons behind the continued mono-religious approach to the teaching of religious education regardless of the mentioned compelling factors for pluralist religious education, the study embarked on empirical research. Participants in this empirical research were selected on the basis of purposeful sampling where only those with rich information related to the topic were selected, mainly the religious education teachers and the principal. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data which was analyzed through interpretive phenomenological analysis in which the emergent themes were interpreted through explanations provided by relevant literature. Emergent themes were further synthesized through qualitative inductive and ideography to develop theories or hypotheses of the contributing factors to the continued teaching of single Christian religion in Lesotho schools. It is theorized that the contributing interrelated factors are 1) misconceptions in inclusive education, 2) paternalistic religious education and 3) religious illiteracy. Through discussions in which theories or hypotheses were linked with the literature, it was discovered that the causes of misconceptions in inclusive education are inexplicit content of inclusive education and ambiguous implementation process. Paternalistic religious education is caused by assimilationist and evangelistic perspectives of Christian religious education, and religious illiteracy is caused by religious sectarianism, media religious representation of religion and privatization of religion. From the findings recommendations are made for research community, education policy, practice, students and communities, and theory.

KEYWORDS

Inclusive education, misconceptions, paternalism, religious education, religious education teachers, religious illiteracy, religious pluralism

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Western formal education in Lesotho had been introduced by Christian missionaries for whom Christian teaching was fundamental. The teaching of Christianity as the sole religious education continued through the colonial period to the post-colonial and to the present. However, in recent times, this mono-religious teaching approach has been challenged by emergent multi-religious traditions in which their members are not catered for in Christian churches and schools which are legally defined as public schools. More importantly, Lesotho is a signatory of international declaration of inclusive education which when related to religion may mean the teaching of religious pluralism to include students from different religious traditions.

This current study therefore utilized qualitative phenomenological research underpinned by interpretivist paradigm to investigate the reasons for the continuity of a mono-religious approach to the teaching of religious education as well as the possibility of introducing pluralistic religious education in Christian-church owned schools as a response to international call for inclusive education and even the realization of the existence of other religious traditions in the country.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Lesotho's physical structure

Lesotho is an African country situated in the Southern African region with an area of 30 359 square kilometres, just about the size of Burundi, entirely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of Lesotho

Source: World Atlas (2015)

Lesotho's topography is divided into four zones based on altitude, mainly the Lowlands, Foothills, Mountains and the Senqu River Valley. However, the commonly used division are only two, mainly the Maluti (Highlands) that is composed of the mountains and the Senqu River Valley which are basically rural, and Mabalane (the Lowlands) including Low-veldts and the Foothills, both urban and semi-urban.

Lesotho lies between 1 500 and 3 000 meters above sea level (Sechaba Consultant 1994:9). The climate of Lesotho consists of cool to cold dry winters and hot, wet summers. Lesotho has two elevation extremes of lowest point of 1 400 meters at the junction of Senqu and Makhaleng rivers and Thabana-Ntlenyana as the highest point of 3 482 meters. The main Lesotho natural resources are water, agricultural and grazing land, diamonds, clay and sand. The Lesotho Highlands Scheme controls, stores and redirects most of the Lesotho water to South Africa (World Fact Book, 2008).

Figure 2: Topographic map of Lesotho
Source: World Fact Book (2008)

1.2.2 Political and economic status of Lesotho

Lesotho attained its independence from British colonial rule in 1966 and has since adopted constitutional monarchy system. The country is ruled by a king and governed by a 33-member Senate and a 120-member National Assembly. The May 2012 election resulted in a first coalition government in Lesotho and a peaceful transition of power. The first coalition comprised the All Basotho Convention (ABC), the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and the Basotho National Party (BNP). The Democratic Congress, whose leadership comprised the former government, formed a strong opposition in parliament. Around mid-June 2015, the coalition government encountered its greatest political challenge since its formation in June 2012, as there were disagreements among the key coalition partners which led to the prorogation of parliament by the then Prime Minister, the leader of ABC thereby raising concerns about

the ability of government to manage the legislative agenda to support its economic programs.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) led peace mediation efforts to resolve the existing political impasse in Lesotho. The intervention of SADC led to the preparation of snap elections which resulted in parliament being closed in December 2014 and general elections taking place in February 28, 2015. The results of the 28th February 2015 election brought another coalition government as the second in Lesotho politics, as there was no party which came with the results that could enable it to form a new government on its own. The current coalition is made up of seven political parties namely, Democratic Congress (DC), Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), Patriotic Front for Democracy (PFD), Maramatlou Freedom Party (MFP), Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), Lesotho Peoples' Congress (LPC), National Independent Party (NIP). The new coalition government controls 65 seats out of 120 parliamentary seats (UNDP, 2014).

Economists projected that in fiscal year 2015/16 Lesotho's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is expected to pick up to 4% primarily boasted by mining production, construction and government services. Projections for FY2014/15, indicates that GDP fell by 1.8% from the expected 4.9% to 3.1% mainly because of continuing political instability. The agricultural produce declined due to loses in crop production as a result of early frost and heavy rains. The manufacturing sector declined because Philips light bulb factory and three textile firms were closed in early 2014. Three major US wholesale buyers canceled their textile orders as political uncertainties continued. In addition, the South African economy has slowed down and has contributed negatively on manufacturing exports, foreign direct investments (FDI) and remittances. Due to the difficult political situation, there has been an under-execution of public investment as a result its contribution to GDP became smaller than it was expected (UNDP, 2014).

Instead of declining, poverty seems to be increasing in Lesotho. According to UNDP (2014), the ratio of very poor household members has increased from 34% in 2003 to 35.1% in 2013, while the percentage of poor household members increased from 56.6% in 2003 to 57.1% in 2013. It has been realized that the poverty head-count rate is higher

in rural areas than in urban areas, because of low production in agriculture which is the main source of income in rural areas. Unemployment rate is estimated at around 25%. The jobless age group is between 20–29 years and it is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. The retrenchment of migrant mine workers has further exacerbated the unemployment situation (UNDP, 2014).

Lesotho is said to be in low human development with a rating of 0.461 on the UN Development Program's Human Development Index in 2012. Life expectancy is 48.7 years and the average length of schooling is 5.9 years. However, Lesotho is one of the highest adult literacy rates in sub-Saharan Africa of about 87.4% males and 98.2% females. Pupil enrolment rates have been above 80% since 2004 at primary school. At secondary level, the enrolment rate has risen from 19.2% in 2000 to 36.5% in 2012. Lesotho allocates 36.4% of education expenditures to tertiary level studies, 36% for secondary, 20.5% for primary and about 1% for early childhood care. The education sector receives approximately 16% of the annual government budget, and it is said that this is more than other countries in the region (UNDP, 2014).

1.2.3 Socio cultural context

The people living in Lesotho are called Basotho in plural form and Mosotho in singular form. A considerable number of Basotho, about 80%, live in the lowlands while the remaining 20% is in the mountain area of Lesotho. Lesotho is generally said to be a homogenous nation, both in terms of the ethnic composition of its population as well as religion and culture. There are minority Zulu and Xhosa who still speak their own languages but do not consider themselves or considered by the Basotho as separate ethnic groups from the Basotho. Ethnicity ratio in Lesotho is estimated at 99.7% Basotho to 0.3% none Basotho – comprising Europeans, Asians and other ethnic groupings (World Fact Book, 2008).

However, statistics may not be reliable when it comes to the ethnic distribution. It has been argued that the number of none Basotho may be much higher than the estimated 0.3%. For example, at the Conference on South-South Migration and Development, the then Lesotho Minister of Home Affairs, Joang Molapo indicated that in the late 2012, the Immigration Department, a directorate of the Home Affairs Ministry, embarked on a

program of a headcount to register all non-citizens resident in the country – both legal and illegal. The statistical data on non-Basotho residents obtained through this process revealed relatively large numbers of migrants from Asia particularly the Indian sub-continent and China. Also Kettani (2010) argues that the total population of Muslims according to 2006 Lesotho census is 0.21%.

In relation to religious affiliation statistics, the Unites States Department of State (2013) explains that the 2006 census indicates that Lesotho has a total population of 1.88 million, from which 90% are Christians. There are an estimated 4 000 Muslim families, 150 Hindu families, and 800 Bahai's, which combine to make up approximately 1% of the population. The remaining 9% of the population belongs to indigenous religious groups. There is a small number of Jews with no synagogue for worship in the country as most of their services are held across the border in South Africa. A number of Muslims live primarily in the northern area of the country mostly in Butha-Buthe district. However, statistics may be unreliable since most of Basotho if not all practice syncretism of Christianity and African Indigenous Religion; therefore, it cannot be said that there is a total of 90% Basotho Christians and 9% of Basotho adhering to African Indigenous Religion. Even when it comes to other religions 1% may be too small to include all other religions. For example, there is a considerable number of Chinese who have recently sought citizenship in Lesotho. Number of both Chinese Lesotho citizens and Chinese migrant workers is estimated between 5 000 and 20 000 which suggest an increased number of Buddhist followers (Cobbe, 2012; Turner, 2013)

1.3 Background to the study problem

1.3.1 Christian status in Lesotho

Christianity has a great influence in Basotho society to the extent that Lesotho is generally considered a Christian country. Among the factors that qualify Lesotho to be declared a Christian country is that the Government observes and declares Christian holidays such as Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day and Christmas as Public Holidays even though outside government control, in the areas of business and private engagements, people are not forced by the law to observe such Christian holidays. The Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL), an organization that unites different

Christian denominations in Lesotho has been recognized by the government and has been given special role in Lesotho political, social and economic issues (Unites States Department of State, 2013).

The Government is in partnership with the Christian Churches in health and education sectors. In the health sector, the Christian denominations have organized themselves under the banner of CHAL (Christian Health Organization of Lesotho). According to Ministry of Health (2014), Lebina, Nchee and Erika (2009), CHAL was established in 1974, even though Christian-based health providers existed long before then. CHAL has a membership affiliation of six denominations, mainly the Anglican Church of Lesotho, Assemblies of God, the Bible Covenant, Lesotho Evangelical, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. CHAL provides 40% of health care and 57% of health care professional training institutions in the country.

1.3.2 Historical trends in Lesotho education system

The area in which the partnership between the Christian churches and the Government is stronger is in the education sector. Western formal education in Lesotho was introduced by the PEMS missionaries in the 1830s well before many African countries. They were later joined by the RCC and Anglican missionaries (Chirwa and Naidoo, 2014; Frankema, 2012; State University, 2014). The main reason for the missionaries to leave their homes abroad to come to Lesotho and other African countries was to convert Africans to Christian religion. However, they realized that conversion to Christianity was not possible among the Africans due to the fact that the prospective converts were illiterate, that is, they could neither read nor interpret the Bible. As a result, education became essential to serve the purpose of educating Africans a new Christian life attuned to the Western civilization which missionaries understood to be inseparable from Christian moral values. Therefore, the missionaries undertook the business of education not because they regarded education as good in itself, but because they realized that they could not do their own major work of converting Africans without giving them as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the Bible and for the performance of religious duties such as helping to spread the Christian message in the local vernacular to increase the number of converts. Christian education

was therefore essential to lead Basotho into the Christian faith and to increase the number of converts over time that would live in accordance with the teaching of the Bible (Ogunbado, 2012; Manala, 2013; Mgadla, 1997).

The missionary religious education was denominational, that is, it was based on the affirmation of a particular denomination faith creed. Hence, it acquired different names such as bible study, religious knowledge; religious studies and moral instructions for it differed in structure and scope aligning itself to the denominational dogmatic teaching. Missionaries used their own syllabuses and taught what they wanted to teach. The teaching of religious education was not a requirement of education as we know presently, but a strategy to indoctrinate people with a particular denominational beliefs and practices. The teachers were to be confessional members of each denomination school, and what counted most was faithfulness to the teaching of respective denomination than qualification. This denominational approach to the teaching of religious education continued even during the British colonial rule from 1868 and spanned into the post-colonial period. By 1912, the missionaries considered teaching profession and therefore established teacher training colleges. Because denominational religious education was the main focus of missionary education, teacher training had to be in line with Christian denominations operating in Lesotho. As a result, the Catholic Church had its own three colleges; one for male students, another for females, and one for both male and female students. The Evangelical Church also had one male college and one female college while the Anglican Church had only one female teacher training college. Three systems of education existed in Lesotho with more emphasis on religious education and denominational Christian character. The basic aim of these colleges was to train teachers who would be able to teach religious education from denomination confessional point of view (Jobo, Khiba, Liphoto, Mapuru, Moeti, Moorosi, Nenty, Qhobela, Sebatane and Sephelane, 2000; Mosisidi, 1981; Chirwa and Naidoo, 2014).

Even though the Basutoland colonial administration had decided to usurp control from the missionaries in education after the introduction of government grant-in-aid scheme for missionary schools, the Cape colonial rule considered such a move unnecessary. The recommendations by the Basutoland colonial administration to contest instruction

methods, set the limits for religious education, define useful instruction and set the methods of assessment, were overturned by the Cape Colonial rule. Instead, education continued to be controlled by mission schools still emphasizing the centrality of religious education with grant-in-aid scheme to meet the churches half way in the running of mission schools. Religious education continued to be the main focus up until it formed the basis for higher education in which the Roman Catholic Church founded Pius XII College in 1945, a Catholic university college (now the National University of Lesotho) with the aim of providing African Catholic students with post-matriculation education. The main achievement in education reforms by colonial government was the establishment of the department of education in 1927 which was responsible for the formation of a uniform syllabus in all subjects including religious education and a system of school inspection. There was also an introduction of standard examinations for both primary and post-primary schools. By 1953, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland developed their education system different from the one introduced by Cape Colony apartheid government that had passed the Bantu Education Act for Black South Africans. This move led to the development of syllabuses, including religious education syllabus for the junior secondary classes, while the curriculum for senior classes was developed in Cambridge overseas (Jobo, Khiba, Liphoto, Mapuru, Moeti, Moorosi, Nenty, Qhobela, Sebatane and Sephelane, 2000; Mosisili, 1981).

The period after Lesotho gained independence in 1966 was marked by a need for education reforms. At the initial stage, post-independence government was making use of external commissions and task forces to assess the performance of the Lesotho education system, in order to give direction for its future. These included UNESCO planning mission of 1967, British Overseas Development Administration which worked in Lesotho for a period of nine years (1968–76), British Overseas Development Administration that had been assigned to advise Lesotho since 1974 and a Lesotho/UNICEF Joint Evaluation Mission of 1976. Because a commission would generally consist of a group of educationists from abroad who came for a limited period of time to examine the whole or an aspect of the system, most of the reports and recommendations by educationists from abroad were not that much binding and the government could implement them in part or reject them totally. For example, most of

them recommended that the government should take a full control of education system. However, education continued to be in the hands of the churches which maintained uncompromising stance on the centrality of religious education in their schools. Nonetheless, one of the recommendations that Lesotho implemented was to amalgamate church denominational colleges into a single secular public college. The National Teacher Training College (NTTC) now called Lesotho College of Education (LCE) was then established in 1975 with representatives from church denominations to lecturer on religious education. The church thus continued to have influence in the teaching of religious education (Mosisili, 1981; Jobo, Khiba, Liphoto, Mapuru, Moeti, Moorosi, Nenty, Qhobela, Sebatane and Sephelane, 2000; Matooane, 1983).

The major development in the history of education sector in Lesotho was reached in 1978 with the holding of National Education Dialogue (Ministry of Education, 1978). For the first time, this forum brought together Lesotho citizens from across all social levels to deliberate on the issues pertinent to education system in the country. Even though church authorities withdrew from the forum, it still continued and led to the establishment of the Education Sector Survey Task Force in 1980 with the mandate to review the views from the Dialogue and to draw up policy recommendations (Ministry of Education, 1982; Matooane, 1983). Among recommendations made by the Task Force was that the education system is a tripartite partnership between the missions, the people and the government, even though it left their respective roles undefined. Education was referred to as a `three-legged pot', meaning that it was the responsibility of the missions, communities and the government, thus still allowing the church to exert its influence in education (Ministry of Education, 1982; Matooane, 1983). The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) was established in 1980 with specific mandate to regularly review the curricular and facilitate the development of curriculum that responds to Lesotho’s changing needs. The NCDC works together with the National Curriculum Committee (NCC) which is a mostly representative statutory body including representatives from the government, teacher associations, tertiary institutions and churches as the guardian of religious education (UNESCO, 2010).

1.3.3 The current Lesotho education system

The partnership between the Government and school proprietors (church groups) was ratified by the passing of the Education Act in 1995. The Act was a legal document affirming collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Training and the churches in the education service delivery even though such partnership had existed long before independence. More than 90% of primary and close to 80% of secondary schools are legally owned by Christian churches (The South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, 2010). About 90% of primary schools are operated by Christian churches, while the Government operates only 10%. The three largest proprietors are the Roman Catholic Mission which controls 36% of primary schools and the Lesotho Evangelical Church with 33% of primary schools under its control, while the Anglican Church owns 13% and other Christian churches 4%. The Government operates only 7% of secondary schools while the Roman Catholic Mission is operating 33% of secondary schools and the Lesotho Evangelical Church 30% (Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, 2012; Lerotholi, 2001).

Even though Lesotho schools have been always classified into four categories, namely, the church schools, government schools, community schools and private schools, the Lesotho Education Act, 2010, Section 12 classifies schools into only three categories which are:

a. *Public schools* that are characterized by the following:
    - Whose admission requirements comply with such public policy as determined by the Ministry and are bound by Government rules and regulations;
    - Which are funded by Government charge fees as approved by the Minister; and,
    - Whose teachers are in Teaching Service (a government branch for teachers' affairs)

b. *Independent schools* characterized by the following:
    - Whose admission policy is determined by its governing bodies;
    - Which are managed according to their own constitution approved by the Minister upon registration of the school or upon application to change the classification of such a school;

- Which are free to leverage fees determined by their school boards; and,
- May receive such conditional subvention or grants as the Minister may decide in consultation with the Minister responsible for finance.

c. *Special schools* which:

- May be either public or independent;
- Obtain services of licensed practitioners who provide non-educational that enhance the quality of life of special learners;
- Provide a specialized curriculum approved by the Minister to accommodate the needs of special learners; and are
- Entitled to receive such public funds as may be determined by the Minister responsible for finance (Government of Lesotho, 2010).

Accordingly, the schools described as church schools, community schools and government schools are legally classified as public schools since they have all legal characteristics of public schools. However, in practice, there is still a difference between the church owned schools and the government schools particularly when it comes to management and choice of subjects.

The structuring of the Lesotho education system begins with the lowest level that consists of three years of integrated early childhood care and development (IECCD) for children between the ages of 2 – 5. The other levels consist of a 7+3+2+4 structure covering four cycles of primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and tertiary. There are seven years of primary education, followed by five years of secondary education, of which the first three years make up junior secondary and the last two senior secondary. Upon completion of primary education (marked Primary School Leaving Education Certificate [PSLEC], students proceed to junior secondary education (marked by the Junior Certificate [JC], then to senior secondary education (marked by Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education [LGCSE], and finally they may proceed to a technical and vocational education and training institution or, where they have appropriate qualifications, university or teacher training college which make up the tertiary education sub-system (also referred to as post-LGSEC education) (Human Development Department, 2007). The Lesotho curriculum in both primary and

secondary education is divided into five broad learning areas, namely linguistic and literacy; numerical and mathematical; personal, spiritual and social; scientific and technological; and creativity and entrepreneurial. Religious education is one of core subjects under personal, spiritual and social learning area with other subjects including history, health, physical education and development studies. The compulsory subject in this area is life skills education meaning that schools are at liberty to take life skills and any other four from this learning area (UNESCO, 2011).

The curriculum is mainly developed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) through its unit – the NCDC. However, the NCDC works in collaboration with the NCC in which there is a representation from proprietors. All curriculum materials that have been developed by the NCDC have to be approved by the NCC before they could be adopted in schools, and this means that the Christian churches as represented in the committee have a say in curriculum, and more importantly, in religious education (UNESCO, 2010).

1.3.4 The current structure of religious education in Lesotho

Lesotho secondary Religious Education is among elective subjects. The syllabus is Christian-based as it emphasizes Biblical knowledge and Christian doctrinal teaching. At the first level of secondary education, students are taught 623 syllabus which is divided into three sections:

- Section A: Old Testament
- Section B: New Testament
- Section C: Doctrine (Optional)

The first two sections focus exclusively on the Bible reading and recalling key Biblical texts from both the Old and the New Testaments which are believed to teach the whole truth of Christian faith that could be applied to the context of the students. The third section of Christian doctrinal teaching has the following topics:

a. Faith in God
b. God our Father and creator
c. Jesus Christ
d. Holy Spirit and the Church

In this section, students are expected to learn the basic elements of Christian Faith, mainly the Trinity as the foundation of Christianity and the Church as the community of Christian believers (Wilson, 1998).

The other junior secondary syllabus is 634, called the Developing in Christ or Alternative syllabus. The syllabus has been developed in post-colonial Africa by Africans with the aim that it should be relevant to the needs of African Christians in an attempt to contextualize or Africanize the teaching of Christian faith. It covers the following topics:

a. Christ and my Personal Freedom
b. Christ and my Work and Relationships
c. Christ and Power to Live
d. Christ and my Responsibility in Community
e. Christ and my Search for Values
f. Christ and my Response to Values

The Developing in Christ was introduced in schools in 1984 and it has now been taught in a considerable number of schools even though at its inception it was optimized to be the replacement of 623. However, until now, it coexisted with 623 (Wilson, 1998).

At senior secondary level the COSC syllabuses that were taught included 2040 which is the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and 2041 which is the gospel of Luke and the Acts of Apostles. The synoptic gospels teaches about the life and teachings of Christ as presented in three gospels while Luke focuses on the life and teachings of Christ as well as the life and developments in the early church (Wilson, 1998). With the localization of senior secondary education, the new LGCSE syllabus 0186 covers the following topics:

a. Definition of Religion/Introduction to Religious Diversity
b. Jesus' Life and Teachings through the Study of Luke's Gospel
c. The Early Church through the Study of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1–21:15)
d. Religion in Society

LGCSE Religious Education Syllabus focuses on the teachings of the Christian religion as contained in Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles and introduces students to

the meaning of religion and differences in religious traditions. It also encourages students to address contemporary issues through the teachings of Jesus and the practices of the early church (NCDC, 2013).

1.4 Research problem

Researchers have indicated that inclusive education can result in improved social development and academic outcomes for all learners. It develops social skills and better social interactions because learners are exposed to real environment in which they have an opportunity to interact with other learners in a context in which each learner has unique characteristics, interests, beliefs, talents and abilities. Inclusive education is therefore a foundation towards an inclusive society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity (Subhrajit Sinha, Development Support, CRY, 2005). Inclusive education is defined by UNESCO as:

> a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centers of learning to cater for all children – including boys and girls, students from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those affected by HIV and AIDS, and those with disabilities and difficulties in learning and to provide learning opportunities for all youth and adults as well. Its aim is to eliminate exclusion that is a consequence of negative attitudes and a lack of response to diversity in race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability (UNESCO, 2009:5).

From this definition, it can be elucidated that inclusive education also involves inclusive religious education in the school context. However, inclusive religious education in the context of teaching and learning in Lesotho schools remains a challenge in predominantly Christian schools in which religious education remains exclusively Biblical and Christian doctrinal teaching regardless of the fact that there are minority religious groups as well as the considerable number of those adhering to indigenous religion attending Christian schools. The government is signatory to the series of international conventions, declarations and recommendations ascribing to the inclusive education (see Table 1).

Conventions	Relevance to inclusive education
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Right of *access* to education and to *quality* of education.
International Covenant on Civil	Elimination of discrimination to *race, color, sex,*

and Political Rights (1966)	*language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status*.
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)	Adoption of measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, to combat *prejudices* that lead to *racial discrimination*.
Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989)	Right to education that is *responsive* to *culture* and *needs* of *indigenous peoples*. Elimination of prejudices ensuring that *textbooks* and other *educational materials* provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples.
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity in Cultural Expressions (2005)	Equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of persons belonging to *linguistic minorities*.

Recommendations	Relevance to inclusive education
Recommendation Against Discrimination in Education (1960)	*Elimination of discrimination in Education*, and also the adoption of measures aimed at promoting *equality of opportunity* and *treatment* in this field.
Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974)	Need for *understanding* and *respect* for all peoples, their cultures, civilizations, values and ways of life.
Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976)	Norms and standards for wider *access* and *inclusive approaches* to education. Provision of *continuing education* and *learning opportunities* for youth and adults.

Declarations	Relevance to inclusive education
World Declaration on Education for All (1990)	Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.
The Delhi Declaration (1993)	Eliminate disparities of access to basic education arising from *gender, age, and income, family,* cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences, and geographic remoteness.
Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and democracy (1995)	Respect for the educational rights of persons belonging to *ethnic, religious* and *linguistic minorities*, as well as *indigenous people*, and this must also have implications in *curricula* and methods as well as in the way education I organized.
The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning (1997)	The *State* as essential vehicle for ensuring the right to education for all, particularly for the *most vulnerable groups* of society, such as minorities and indigenous people.
Beijing Declaration of the E-9 countries (2001)	Reinforce action-oriented programs to meeting the

	learning needs of disadvantaged groups such as children with special needs, migrants, minorities and the urban/rural poor.
Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2005)	Encouraging *linguistic diversity* – while respecting the mother tongue – at all levels of education; Incorporating, where appropriate, *traditional pedagogies* into the education process with a view to preserving and making full use of *culturally appropriate methods* of communication and transmission of knowledge.
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)	Recognizes the right of *indigenous* families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child; indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their education systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their *cultural methods of teaching and learning.*

Table 1: Inclusive education international conventions, declarations and recommendations

Source: UNESCO (2009)

Even though the government of Lesotho is a cosigner in these international declarations, recommendations and conventions it is difficult to introduce inclusive religious education in church owned schools. The constitution of Lesotho section 13 (2) stipulates that:

> Every religious community shall be entitled, at its own expense, to establish and maintain places of education and to manage any place of education which it wholly maintains; and no such community shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for persons of that community in the course of any education provided at any places of education which it wholly maintains or in the course of any education which it otherwise provides (Government of Lesotho, 2001).

This leaves much responsibility on Christian denominations to assist the government in the area of religious inclusion in the teaching and learning of religious education in schools. Inclusive education should be a desirable venture for all social sectors including the churches. Inclusive religious education can make a significant contribution to peace, openness to other religions, tolerance and respect for religious diversity as in many cases religion is a source of conflict and discrimination.

The contribution of the Christian communities towards inclusive education is the introduction of religious pluralism in the teaching and learning of religion. According to Augenstein (2009) and Riis (1999), religious pluralism has both descriptive and normative dimensions. At descriptive level, it refers to the situation in which there is recognition that a country has become religiously diverse. At normative level, it refers to the positive acknowledgement of religious diversity in which religious diversity is seen as something valuable, precious, inclusive and democratic. Therefore, the introduction of religious pluralism in schools would be recognition of the existence of different religious traditions in Basotho society as well as an appreciation of inclusive democratic education. Religious pluralism is contrasted from any form of monism such as the universalization of any religious tradition or the teaching of a single religious tradition in schools. Monism approach to the teaching of religious education is understood as undemocratic, discriminative, intolerant, alienating, exclusive and source of all religious conflicts and therefore undesirable.

The main problem is the Christian church schools' continuation in the monism religious education approach instead of religious pluralism despite the fact that the government of Lesotho is a cosigner of series of international declarations, conventions and recommendations on inclusive education which also imply inclusive teaching of religious education. Also, Christian church schools were reluctant to realize the fact of the existence of religious diversity in Lesotho and the desirability of religious pluralism as a response for inclusive education in a democratic, non-discriminative society like Lesotho.

1.5 Aim of the study

1.5.1 Research purpose

The purpose of the current study was in four folds:

a) To find out the reasons for the continuity of monistic approach to the teaching of religious education even though the government of Lesotho has signed international declaration, conventions and recommendations for inclusive education.

b) To find out the reasons for the continuity of the teaching of single religious tradition, mainly Christianity in the church-owned schools regardless of the existence of religious diversity in Lesotho society.

c) To find out why there is the continuation of mono-religious approach to the teaching of religious education in church-owned schools despite the fact that religious pluralism is desirable in a democratic inclusive society like Lesotho.

d) To explore if there is a possibility of introducing religious pluralism as a positive response to the teaching of religious education in a democratic, multi-religious Lesotho society.

1.5.2 Research questions

The overarching research question that the study seeks to answer is:

- Why do the Christian church schools continue to offer Christian-centered religious education rather than pluralistic religious education?

Sub-questions from the main question are:

- Why do Christian church schools not embrace religious pluralism for inclusive education?
- Why do the Christian church schools continue to teach single religious tradition in religiously diverse Lesotho society?
- Could it be possible for the Christian church schools to introduce religious pluralism?

1.6 Significance of the study

1.6.1 Significance for scholars

The current work is significant to research community, not only in Lesotho, but across the globe. The debate on the inclusive religious education/the teaching of religious pluralism in public schools is a crosscutting issue in the global research community. Whenever it appears, it remains ‘provocative’; it always triggers debates and research. Thus, the current work provokes further research in Lesotho to investigate the issues of religious education in public schools.

1.6.2 Significance for policy

This study is mostly about education policy in Lesotho. It evaluates inclusive education policy in relation to religious education. The Government is responsible for protecting the rights of the minority groups of society. It is also obliged to the accepted international education requirements. Therefore, the current work may influence Lesotho educational policy to be fully implemented in all public schools including church-owned schools.

1.6.3 Significance for practice

Significance for practice has the same meaning with significance for policy. They both emphasize the applicability of research results and findings to the educational issues of concern. Significance of practice means that the study has a potential to contribute in the field of its professional orientation to improve the quality of service for the practitioners of that particular field (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:36 – 37). Professional religious educators who are challenged to conform to the international education requirements by investigating non-discriminatory spiritual education that can replace the current Christian education would find this work helpful.

1.6.4 Significance for students and communities

The study is educational; it will potentially raise awareness in students and communities about the meaning of educational rights. It may also influence communities as taxpayers to consider their role in education policy. More importantly, parents and children will be able to realize that their choice in education has been undermined, where the churches' educational officials have decided on their behalf.

1.6.5 Significance for theory

The significance for theory is intended to highlight research potential contribution in fundamental knowledge by showing how research fits into theoretical traditions in educational field. This current work intends to expand the UNESCO's convention of inclusive education in relation to inclusive religious education in the context of Lesotho.

1.7 Foundations of the study

1.7.1 Research paradigm

The term paradigm refers to a set of assumptions and perceptual orientations that are shared by members of a particular research community. Paradigms are used to determine how members of research communities view the phenomena of study and the research methodology that should be employed to study those phenomena. A paradigm is a general worldview of a particular research community; it is a set of beliefs, values and techniques which are shared by members of a research community, and these beliefs and techniques within a paradigm act as a guide or map, dictating the kinds of problems scientists should address and the types of explanations that are acceptable to them. Paradigms include positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Tuli, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012).

Paradigms are distinguished through philosophical underpinnings also called meta-theoretical assumptions of research. Since the current study works within the boundaries of interpretivist paradigm, meta-theoretical assumptions of interpretivism and their role in this study will be explained.

1.7.2 Meta-theoretical assumptions underpinnings of the study

1. *Ontological assumption*: Ontology is related to the nature of reality and in relation to interpretivism, reality is a human construct. Interpretivist researchers understand reality and meaning making as socially constructed and they believe that people make their own sense of social realities (Tuli, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012). Ontologically therefore, the current work assumes that:
    a. The Christian church schools have their own constructed reality of the teaching of religious education and their own understanding of inclusive education and religious pluralism.
    b. Since reality is a human construct, there may be no single reality concerning the teaching of religious education in schools. The Christian church schools have their own understanding of inclusive education and religious pluralism that may call for a certain approach.

c. Reality construction is a process not a finished product; therefore, the researcher and participants are likely to construct a new reality in the process of research that may give inclusive education a new meaning in the context of teaching religious education.

2. *Epistemological assumption*: Epistemology is related to what constitutes an acceptable knowledge. Interpretivist researchers believe that knowledge is established through the meanings attached to the phenomena studied and as such, it is subjective. Knowledge is produced in the process of learning, so it is not independent from the one who is learning (Tuli, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012).

   Epistemologically the current study therefore assumes that:

   a. In order to gain insights on the issues of the understanding of the Christian church schools on inclusive education, the researcher had to establish the meanings attached to it.
   b. The researcher had to engage in the process of learning the experiences of the Christians church schools that gave rise to the meanings attached to inclusive education and its relation to religious pluralism.

3. *Methodological assumption*: Methodological assumption is related to the process of how knowledge is elucidated. Interpretivist researchers believe that through qualitative methods, they can gain insights into the phenomenon in a natural setting of the existence of the phenomenon (Tuli, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012).

   Methodologically, the current work therefore assumes that:

   a. Qualitative research enabled the researcher to adopt the stance of the Christian church schools in order to discover what they understand about inclusive education.
   b. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to have a direct interaction with the Christian churches representatives to gain their insights on inclusive education and religious pluralism as an insider through discussion.

4. *Axiological assumption*: Axiological assumption concerns the role of researcher values in the research process. Interpretivists maintain that the researcher's values and lived experience cannot be separated from the research process (Ponterotto, 2005).

The axiological stance of this current work therefore is that:

a. The researcher's values and experiences in relation to the inclusive education and religious pluralism were not eliminated but acknowledged, described and bracketed.

5. *Rhetorical assumption*: Rhetorical assumption refers to the language used to present the procedures and results of research to the researcher's intended audience. Interpretivists maintain a critical stance in which a subjective and interactive researcher role prevails, the rhetoric of the final research report is in the first person and is often personalized (Ponterotto, 2005).

The rhetorical position for this study is that:

The impact of the research process on the emotional and intellectual life of the researcher were reflected upon and discussed openly.

1.8 Research methods

1.8.1 Research design

This study used the qualitative research design. Draper (2004:642) defines qualitative research as a type of research that is concerned with the quality or nature of human experiences as well as what these experiences mean to the human individuals. According to Neil (2006:2), types of qualitative research include ethnography which is mainly used in studying socio-cultural phenomena. The grounded theory intends to develop a theory from a corpus data acquired by participant observer. The phenomenology describes and interprets the structures of experiences as they consciously presents themselves to the researcher. The historical research focuses on evaluating data derived from past occurrences in order to test how these occurrences can help to explain events taking place at or anticipate for future (Neil, 2006:2).

1.8.2 Research approach

The approach that the current work adopted is phenomenology. Groenewald (2004) defines phenomenological approach as:

i. A research approach that aims to interpret as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts.
ii. A research approach that is concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved in that particular experience.
iii. A research approach that is concerned with the lived experiences of the people.

The phenomenological approach is relevant to this current research as the researcher interpreted as accurately as possible the experience of the Christian church schools in relation to the inclusive education and religious education. The phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to uncover the understanding of the Christian church schools in relation to the issues of inclusive education and religious pluralism. Through phenomenological approach, the researcher was able to engage in intimate dialogue about the meaning attached to the experiences of religious education as Christian based without considering the option for pluralistic religious education in response to the demands of inclusive education.

1.8.3 Sampling selection

Selection of participants for the phenomenological approach depends mainly on experiences that need to be investigated. The main question to be asked is: “who has the experience that the researcher is looking for?” (Englander, 2012)? This means that research participants are selected beforehand. This kind of sampling in qualitative research is referred to as purposive sampling. Polkinghorne (2005) explains that the purposive selection of data sources involves choosing people or documents from which the researcher can substantially learn about the experience.

Principals and religious education teachers in church schools were selected as having lived the experiences of educational developments including an introduction of inclusive education and its implications for religious education.

1.8.4 Sampling size

Qualitative population size is relatively small to allow in-depth interviews, that is small number of participants with large data and in practice the number of required participants usually becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data (data saturation). However, in purposive sampling, the number of participants with specific information is predetermined (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson, 2002).

In this study, the researcher selected the predetermined sample of three Christian denominations owning schools. In each school, a principal and a religious education teacher were selected to make up the total of 12 participants to enhance maximum variation, data saturation and individual in-depth interview.

1.8.5 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews that are generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees were used.

1.8.6 Data analysis

The study employed the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) method which is mainly guided by preparedness for openness and a willingness to engage as honest as possible with data collected. The basic focus is to grasp how participants attempt to make sense of their lived experiences and the analysis moves from the particular to the shared meaning making. In interpretive phenomenological analysis method, the researcher completely gets immersed in the data in order to try as much as possible to step into the participants' shoes while at the same time documenting his/her sense making of the information obtained. This analytic phenomenological procedure is referred to as moving between the emic and etic perspectives (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014; Paré, 2015).

1.8.7 Research trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in this work was enhanced through the following:

a. *Credibility* refers to the degree to which findings are credible. Credibility is enhanced mostly through triangulation and member checking (Hoepfl, 1997). Data triangulation from different Christian denominations and schools officials of different roles in education were selected to ensure credibility. Research results were discussed with participants prior to report.

b. *Transferability* refers to the degree to which similarity between the original situation and the situation to which it is transferred can be maintained. It is not possible for interpretivist researcher to specify the transferability of findings because he or she is ignorant of the specific context in which the subsequent study is taking place. The researcher can only provide sufficient information that can then be used by the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situations (Hoepfl, 1997). Therefore, explicit methods of data collection are provided to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situations.

c. *Dependability* refers to the degree to which the findings may be accepted as authentic. Interpretivist researcher can only maintain dependability if there is an auditor who examines both the dependability of the process and of the product (Hoepfl, 1997). Since the current study is an academic work, every step was audited by the supervisor.

d. *Confirmability* refers to the degree to which the researcher can demonstrate the neutrality of the research interpretations. An interpretivist researcher enhances confirmability through confirmability audit (Hoepfl, 1997). As an academic work, the current research is liable for audit trail consisting of; 1) raw data; 2) analysis notes; 3) process notes and 4) personal notes.

1.9 Ethical considerations

1.9.1 Protecting the rights of the participants

a) *The principle of informed consent and voluntary participation*

Participants were consulted through letters giving details of the research procedure and its aim as an academic research before they could be interviewed. Permission from church schools official and principals were asked before junior staff could be interviewed. Principals and teachers' consent was required so that they could not feel coerced.

b) *The principle of confidentiality and anonymity*

Confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed through assigning numbers for names and letters for classifications. For example, informant SP2 is used to denote the second school principal interviewed and RET1 is used for the first religious education interviewed.

c) *The question of anxiety and distress*

Since the researcher had asked for individual consent before interviews, readiness and preparedness for discussions were established beforehand to avoid participants distress and anxiety.

d) *The question of exploitation*

Rapport was established with research participants as a principle to avoid unequal relationship between the researcher and the informants.

e) *Identification and the participant by self or other*

Participants were allowed to review research presentation and interpretations before publication and so that they might indicate areas where they felt their right to anonymity had been bridged.

1.9.2 Scientific integrity of the research

i) The question of intellectual property

Other people's views have been cited accurately as much as possible.

ii) Data misrepresentation and deception

Interviews transcripts and notes with interpretations were examined by supervisors. Research participants were allowed to review both transcripts and interpretations before publication.

ii) The question of communitarianism

The researcher in this current work had to build a rapport and be relative to each denomination culture of each church.

iii) *The question of care theory*

The current research is conversant with what is happening in society; it is for social caring. Although it is for academic purpose, the solution is to benefit society.

iv) The question of inclusive language

The research used inclusive language that does not discriminate against church denominations, participants and between different religious traditions.

1.10 Scope and limitation of the study

a) *Telling the researcher what they think the researcher would like to know.*

Since phenomenology approach uses semi-structured interviews, there was a high probability that informants wanted to tell the researcher what they think the researcher would like to know. This attitude probably affected the researcher's attempt for accurate interpretations of data. However, Nurani (2008:446) advises that this limitation occurs at initial stage of research interviews. Therefore, the researchers should not be quick to accept the validity of initial information until she/he is convinced that the interviews have progressed to the level of no pretence. Another way to overcome this limitation is to avoid treating informants like subjects, and interacting with them in a natural, non-threatening environment (Nurani, 2008:446). In accordance with Nurani's (2008:446) guide, the researcher was not quick to accept the validity of initial information until he was convinced that the interviews had progressed to the level of no pretence. Furthermore, the researcher tried as much as possible to avoid treating informants like subjects. He interacted with them in a natural, non-threatening environment.

b) *The research procedure that occurs in natural setting*

The phenomenological approach takes place in a natural setting environment of the participants. The limitation of natural setting is that it particularises the findings and restricts the possibility of extending the scope of findings to other settings. According to Nurani (2008:446), this limitation can be surmounted by multiple study settings and

variation of informants. Therefore, the purpose of researching different denominations, different schools, principals of different schools and religious education teachers for different schools was to enhance multiple study settings variation of informants.

c) *History and maturation of participants*

Field and Morse (1990:118) observed that phenomenological research is conducted in naturalistic settings which cannot be held constant. There can be both historical changes and maturation changes. Historical changes refer to the developments that occur in the social setting itself. Maturation changes refer to the individual development. For example, one may be interviewed before marriage but at the time of publication be married. Or, one may be interviewed as a student but at time of publication she/he can already be working. These changes have potential to challenge research accuracy. Field and Morse (1990:118) suggest that these limitations could be counteracted by verifying whether the natural settings are still the same at the end of research before publication. Therefore, verification that the natural setting was still the same was done.

d) *Participant mortality*

Participant mortality refers to the changes of natural setting through mortality and attrition. Field and Morse (1990:118) recognised that phenomenological research accuracy can be affected by mortality and attrition particularly in the process of verifying research interpretations with the research participants. However, Field and Morse (1990:118) suggest that this limitation should be taken as part of research process and it permits inter-changeability of participants as well as allowing the researcher for examining effects of attrition. In this regard, participant mortality was not experienced.

1.11 Conclusion

The current study was an endeavour to examine the factors or the reasons underlying the Christian church schools' continuation of teaching Christian religious education even under the conditions that are unfavourable for such approach, as well as exploring the possibilities of introducing religious pluralism in church-owned schools. The study was underpinned by interpretive phenomenological approach in qualitative research. This study adhered to principles or protocols of phenomenological research. The subsequent

chapter in methodology provides elaborative information on such rules and how the current research worked within their limits.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the concepts that form the core of this current study which are religion, religious education and pluralism. The literature relating to these concepts is intended for the following:

a. To critically analyze the relevant available research and non-research documentation on the pluralistic teaching of religious education.

b. To update the topic "Religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho secondary schools" with the current literature. That is to position the research topic within current discourses.

c. To convey the kind of knowledge and ideas that has been established on the topic under research and their strengths and weaknesses.

d. To identify theories underpinning religious pluralism for inclusive education which may in turn set boundaries for the research.

e. To identify any gaps in the literature relating to the problem of the Christian church schools' continuation in the monism religious education approach instead of religious pluralism despite the fact that the government of Lesotho is a cosigner of series of international declarations, conventions and recommendations on inclusive education which also imply inclusive teaching of religious education and to suggest how those gaps might be filled (Cronin, Ryan and Coughlan, 2008; Coughlan, Cronin and Ryan, 2007).

In order to achieve these different aims, this literature review is divided into the following sections:

a. Definition of religious education and different approaches to the teaching of religious education;

b. The definition of religious pluralism and inclusive education as well as how the two come together;

c. The implementation of inclusive education that has neglected cultural inclusion in which religious pluralism finds its place;

d. The theory underpinning both religious pluralism and inclusive education;

e. The current discussion on the need of religious pluralism for inclusive education;

f. The discussion on the need for religious pluralism and inclusive education in Lesotho schools with the purpose of highlighting the gaps that need to be filled up; and

g. The summing-up of the ideas on the literature review and setting a stage for empirical research.

2.2 Definition of religious education

2.2.1 Defining religion

Religious education refers to the teaching of religion in a formal education system. Religious education concerns itself with a contested phenomenon of human nature '*religion'* which to this end has not been able to find an explicit universal definition. The debate on the definition of religion has always been directed to the origin, development, definition, and importance of the term religion. The debate has been centered on two important questions: (1) whether an agreement on the definition of the term is important enough to warrant our usage of the single term, and if so, (2) whether there is a possibility of advancing a single definition that can be generally accepted? The answer to the second question is negative as such an attempt proved futile. However, failure for advancing universal definition of religion does not mean that attempts to define the term would necessarily mean a pointless effort; on the contrary, it is an endeavor that serves to stimulate critical understanding of any topic under religious inspection (Harrison, 2006).

Three broad categories have been employed to define the term '*religion.'* The first is ***etymology definitions*** of the word where attempts have been made to trace the origin of the term. For example, in its usage in Roman times, the word 'religio' denotes ritual precision. To be religious or having religion did not necessarily mean to believe or to have faith but to perform acts such as sacrifice or oracles (sacra et auspicia). It also

meant the worship of gods – (religio, id est cultus deorum). However, the etymology from the Romans use gives the function rather than the meaning. The other etymology that has been used for the term is traceable to the Latin root ‘leig’, meaning ‘to bind’ or ‘tie fast’, or to religãre, which could be rendered ‘to reconnect’ – from the Latin re (again) and ‘ligare’ (to connect). Also, the term still refers to the function of religion even though some scholars have preferred to use this definition mainly for the purpose of religious function in society as a coercive force (Taylor, 2007).

Another is **substantive definitions** in which the meaning of the word ‘religion’ is given in terms of the supposed content or “substance” or religious thought and values. The classics in this category are Edward B Tylor – “religion is the belief in supernatural or superhuman being” and James George Frazer – “By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.” Substantive definitions have been objected on the basis that they are too narrow to exclude atheistic and non-theistic religions (Harrison, 2006).

The main alternative to a substantive definition of religion is a ***functional definition*** which focuses on the consequences or functions of religion within (1) the human psyche (psychological definition), (2) human society (sociological definition), and (3) human culture in general (anthropological definition). Functional definition has an advantage over substantive definition for the following reasons:

a. It is inclusive and can be applied equally well to both theistic and non-theistic belief-systems, that is, it include religious traditions that recognize a supernatural being, as well as those that do not subscribe to the supernatural order;

b. It is time specific as it can account for historical change and discontinuity.

c. It can be investigated through empirical research so that it can be theoretically proven true or false.

Classics of function definition include; William James – "Religion is the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine, Émile Durkeim

– (a) ”A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.” (b) [Religion is] “the self-validation of a society by means of myth and ritual”, Paul Tillich – [Religion is] “the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary, and a concern that in itself provides the answer to the question of the meaning of our existence,” and Clifford Geertz – “Religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long lasting moods and motivations by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (Yinger, 1970).

Nonetheless, functional perspective has been objected on the basis that it tends to lead to ***reductionism***. Functionalistic perspective of religion does not explain religion beyond the social, psychological and cultural functions which it performs. Therefore that explanation essentially reduces religion to a social, psychological or cultural phenomenon. It does make sense to assume that by analyzing the psyche of a religious person and the social influence on, and effects of, his words and acts, one would have exhausted that person’s religion. There is something abstract and subjective which is essential to the existence of religion. Even though such a subjective element which is a “religious quality" of human life cannot be empirically analyzed, this does not necessarily mean that the “religious quality” does not in fact exist to the extent that it could be reduced to its cultural, psychological and social function. Religion exits just like other phenomena such as love but which cannot be empirically analyzed. Reductionist is fallacious to assume that in studying only the functions of religion, it could be concluded that religion consists solely of said functions (Streng, 1969).

According to Taylor (2007), failure to have universal definition of religion should not be regarded as a deficiency in the study of ‘*religion’* and ‘*religious’*, but should be understood positively. Firstly, it provides studies in religion with an opportunity for ongoing debates in which religion scholars may continue to generate alternative hypotheses that would produce more different perspectives. Even though these diverse

perspectives are likely to cause confusion and chaos and even disallow consensus, they would broaden the scope of the field of the study of religion. Therefore, the diversity and debate over definitions is to be viewed as a resource for our inquiry rather than a distraction from it. Secondly, avoidance of the imposition of a universal, governing definition of religion allows a continually refining and revising an understanding of the term in each context it is being used. Taylor (2007) argues that "explicit definitions are explicit heuristics: they guide or impel us in certain directions. By doing so they tend to divert our attention from information beyond the channels they cleave, and so choke off possibilities." Therefore, while there are dangers of explicit definitions they are as well valuable to focus on analytic attention.

In pursuit of exploring the concept 'religion', Taylor (2007), Harrison (2006) and Alatas (1977) propose to explore different set of beliefs, behaviors and functions which have been associated with the notion of religion and which can be referred to as 'family resemblances' of beliefs and practices that are related to the religious dimension of human life and culture. Family resemblances provide analytic tools to what characterizes religion. Characterization of religion can be mapped as follows:

1. Beliefs in or concern about (and regarding) supernatural beings or spirits, or dramatically extra-ordinary forces, which are sometimes explicitly understood as divine or holy or conceptualized with a similar cognate.

2. Division of the world into sacred and profane objects or domains or spaces.

3. Ritual acts and forms, often focused on sacred objects or spaces, but sometimes also having to do with seemingly mundane matters, such as birth, food preparation and consumption, and death. Beliefs and practices about and believed to be related to earthly and/or otherworldly destruction, and/or redemption/salvation/healing (where healing may alternatively be physical, emotional, spiritual, or all three).

4. Practices and techniques including trance and other extraordinary states of consciousness.

5. Processes and pressures that seek to get individuals or groups to alternate or retain religious allegiances and belief systems–conversion experiences and the failure or reversal of such experiences.

6. Affective feelings and experiences of awe, mystery, shame, love, empathy, devotion, hatred, or rage, which tend to be evoked through ritualizing or other routinized practices, and are generally believed to be conducted in the presence of sacred beings, places or things, or in concert with their wishes.

7. Beliefs in and practices (often, if not usually, with strong anthropomorphic dimensions) related to communicating or communing with supernatural or divine or extraordinary powers, or ultimately meaningful beings, or spirits, or forces.

8. Understandings of the cosmos and the place of the earth and people and other living things in it, often understood as having ultimate meaning or as being some kind of holy order; such understandings may provide a sense of well-being, belonging, and/or connection between individuals and the wider spiritual/ethical communities with whom people feel associated. Such religious understandings help people to cope with life's inherent difficulties and find meaning, especially in the face of anomic realities such as suffering and death.

9. Ethical understandings of the proper place for people and other living things in the world; these may promote or hinder social solidarity (i.e. identify morally considerable kin groups) and/or function to serve the economic, prestige, and power interests of some individuals and groups more than, or at the expense of, others.

10. Beliefs and practices which divide humans (and/or other living things) into hierarchical classifications and reinforce the same distinctions, which often involve the labeling of some people as divine (or at least as having special lines of communication with divine beings or places), others as ordinary (or human), and others as evil (or subhuman), thereby legitimating the repression of the latter. Beliefs, including narrative cosmogonies and cosmologies, which are not

empirically demonstrable but are strongly reinforced through education, reinforcement/reward, penalties for deviance, and other social means.

11. Sacred narratives (written or oral), which are often understood to have been given to people in some special/holy way, from some special/sacred place, for some special/holy purpose.

12. Spiritual leadership, religious specialists, and physical/spiritual healers, who teach and assist seekers and devotees, and sometimes resist or fight (directly or by example, exhortation, and administration) perceived, spiritual and adversaries.

13. Beliefs and practices that govern (and sometimes consecrate) the ways people use and transform their various habitats, and that sometimes tend strongly to reinforce or work against certain forms of socio-economic organization (namely, beliefs and practices that shape and influence their environments).

14. Beliefs and practices that draw directly and indirectly on natural symbols and events for various characteristics of the lifeways and practices related to some or many of the above characteristics (namely, beliefs and practices shaped or influenced by their environments) (Taylor, 2007:15-17).

Family resemblances of religion recognize that religion is a diverse phenomenon and encourages that the real differences that exist between religious traditions should be taken seriously. It cannot in any way suppose that “religion” can be one thing, while it is admitted that Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism and even atheistic religions are not homogeneous entity. Each of these religious traditions can itself be analyzed using the family resemblance approach. This approach proposes an analytic process which is sensitive to the diversity of religious belief and practice commonly found in different religious traditions, while at the same time provides a framework for appreciating such diversity in religious traditions (Harrison, 2006).

2.2.2 Defining religious education

The problem of defining “religion” as the subject matter of religious education has led to the problem of defining “religious education”. There are those definitions that are geared towards explaining religious education in terms of particular religious traditions which

correspond with substantive definition of religion. There are also those that employ functionalistic definition of religious education where it is explained on the basis of the functional perspective of religion. There are still those that recognize family resemblances of religion where the content of religious is pluralistic without negating each religious tradition beliefs and practices.

In Lesotho, and many other countries where Christianity has been dominant, the substantive definition has been employed to describe religious education in relation to the beliefs and practices of Christian tradition. Thus, religious education is synonymous to Christian education. The definition of religious education is the definition of Christian education. Christian religious education refers to "*education into Christianity"*, which translates into education that involves teaching and learning of Christian beliefs, values, practices, and convictions, as well as assisting learners to adopt, hold and deepen these beliefs and values, and to embrace and engage in Christian practices (Astley, 2014). Religious education in this sense takes "*religious"* into serious consideration in which a learner is initiated into a religious being in a particular religious tradition.

The summary of Christian religious education is that:

a) Christian religious education is a Bible-based teaching and learning process that seeks to guide individuals to all levels of growth through contemporary teaching means.

b) Christian religious education is a process of developing a person's mind, in which the Christian religious teachings are incorporated into all other aspects of knowledge or skills acquired in a particular setting.

c) Christian religious education is the systematic, critical examination and reconstruction of relations between persons, guided by Jesus' assumption that persons are of very valuable, and by the hypothesis of the existence of God, who identifies himself with the people.

d) Christian religious education is that systematic and planned approach to make religion meaningful and operative in the creative process of growth that involves one's life, more particularly in an awareness of the presence, power and love of

God as the ultimate condition and supreme motive of human life and God's revelation to man, Jesus Christ, yet taking into full account of man's relationships with other men (Astley, 2014).

The other definition of religious education is geared towards functional perspective of religion. In this viewpoint, religious education is explained as provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, belief systems, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. Religious education is not learning religion but learning about and from religions and worldviews to ask questions in religious beliefs, practices and ideologies and engage in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. Religious education is broader in focus than religious instruction as it concerns itself with social, civic and moral education and is not confined to particular denominational religious instruction or particular religious tradition. It recognizes the plurality of Christian religious faiths as well as encompassing other faiths and belief systems of a non-theistic kind. Religious education implies, in effect, education about religion as distinct from nurture in a religion. Religious education does not conflict with denominational religious instruction, but complements and enhances moral and religious development (Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2013). In this perspective, religious education can be summarized as follows:

a. Religious education is any conscious process to impart into young people knowledge of different religious beliefs and appreciate values of the people in a living community or nation.

b. Religious education is that part of identity or personal development of children and youngsters that focuses on the more or less systematic intentional as well as non-intentional religious meaning making processes, religious relationships and religious practices.

c. Religious education is the guided process of helping young people to achieve at each stage of their growth such habits, skills, attitudes, appreciations, knowledge, ideas, ideals, and intentions that will enable them at each stage to achieve an ever more integrated personality, competent and satisfying living in their social

environment, and increasing co-operation with the ultimate reality and man in the reconstruction of society into a fellowship of persons (Strhan, 2009).

2.2.3 Different approaches to the teaching of religious education

2.2.3.1 Conventional approach

Historically, there have been different approaches to the teaching and learning of religious education. The most common and which is still the one approach in Lesotho is what is referred to as conventional approach, confessional approach, mono-religious approach, evangelistic approach, doctrinal approach and 'learning religion'. 'Learning religion' describes the situation where a single religious tradition is taught as the religious education curriculum. Conventional approach is characterized by the following:

a. It is taught from insider perspective, that is, the teachers and students are expected to be believers in the religion themselves.

b. The main objective of the instruction is to convert the students (if there are some who do not belong to religion or to their parents' religion) and to strengthen the commitment of student believers into their religion.

c. In this type of religious education, there is a specific religious group that controls the curriculum and the methods of teaching rather than those being controlled by the state education system which is often perceived as being dominated by humanist norms and values.

d. In predominantly Christian tradition such a Lesotho, the Bible is accepted as the inspired vehicle of Revelation, and that the aim of religious instruction is for students to comprehend Biblical teachings and values.

Conventional approach has some advantages which may be summed as thus:

a. It is a reaction against strong anti-religious secular movements and protects religion against secularization of religious beliefs.

b. When religion is learnt within a 'confessional' context, students share a common worldview and the knowledge and insights that have been gained from learning

about their faith tradition will have a direct connection to their own personal beliefs and values, and spiritual development.

c. It is more practical as students are able to practice what learnt in the classroom through participation in religious matters and expression of their beliefs.

d. It allows different social groups to be involved in the teaching and learning process such as church leaders, church organizations, peers, families and communities.

e. The principles of religious freedom, and the rights of the parents and religious communities in relation to religious education, are no doubt respected in this approach.

f. This type of religious education acknowledges parents' responsibilities rather than rights in relation to their children in which they are responsible to protect them and to support the full development of their potential in terms of their beliefs and moral values.

g. Religion is a component of culture and religious education that is culturally based respects cultural identity of learners (Englund, 2010; Jensen, 1999; Hull, 2001).

However, this type of religious education is challenged in different ways.

a. Mono-religious instruction is based on religious absolutism which denies other religious traditions truths, whereas there is no religion or philosophy which can exhaust the whole truth. Therefore this type of religious education limits the scope of students' religious knowledge.

b. It is also argued that this model has ethnocentric roots, and does not teach students to associate with people of different religious beliefs; as a result, this creates a society of mutual hatred between religious traditions.

c. While it recognizes the freedom, the rights and responsibilities of parents, it violates the child's own freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

d. This kind of religious education does not expand the cognitive horizons of the student who is left with only one choice of responding to the transmitted religion or not.

e. Mono-religious education does not respect cultural identities of the minority religious groups, yet all have equal rights to public education.

f. It does not comply with the principles of civic education. According to civic education, any educational system that denies the exposure of children to the most advanced form of knowledge and inquiry available to humankind is unjustifiable. This implies that students have to be taught moral teachings, life-forms, and religious traditions of their own communities alongside other forms of knowledge including other beliefs and non-belief systems of knowledge.

g. It does not also comply with the principle of democratic schooling and education which "An individual must not be automatically assigned to a cultural, religious, or linguistic group by virtue of his or her birth. An individual's group membership must permit the most extensive forms of self-ascription and self-identification possible" (Englund, 2010:245 – 248; Jensen, 1999; Hull, 2001).

2.2.3.2 Particularistic approach

Particularistic approach in religious education refers to the schooling education where students are offered a system of parallel instruction in religious education. Children from each faith are educated in separate classrooms and receive instruction from a representative of their faith, or where each religious tradition controls its own schools that would allow the teaching of that particular religion. The particularistic approach to the teaching of religious education suggests that the role of religious beliefs, convictions and practices cannot be separated from the cultural background of believers. It mainly occurs when there is an appearance of more than one religion in a country (Spickard, 1999). This approach is currently found in Lesotho where there are Buddhist, Islamic and Christian schools.

Particularistic approach is characterized by the following:

a. Religious education is taught on the assumption that each religious tradition has its own “standards” of understanding and judging which cannot be imposed on other religions, as such, each group should learn their own religious convictions that are uniquely relevant and meaningful to their particular group.

b. It is an education that is informed by the conviction that each religion occupies its own universe of meaning and value of what is true, important, good, moral, normal and sacred which cannot be shared by other religions.

c. It is an educational response by those who feel threatened by the invasion of other values and lifestyles, and the disintegration of their religious tradition and the seeming chaos and meaninglessness resulting from all this. It is in itself a “reactionary emotional movement” among those who are experiencing rapid disintegration of their religious beliefs and moral values.

d. It is mainly an intentional re-education or indoctrination of the members of the group, a strong intolerance of or enmity towards others outside the religious group or even disbelief against those who are seen as different from the group.

e. It exalts the group above humanity, the membership above the transcendent, the particular above the universal and do not regard those whom they oppose on religious group grounds as equal (Spickard, 1999).

f. Particularistic religious education is an educational strategy that combines instruction to fit in to the expectations and religious patterns of a given religious group. The cultural meaning-making and its worldview are incorporated into the national curriculum.

g. It is grounded on imparting values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, and language that are the foundations of a particular religion.

h. It is based on the idea that the particular religious standards promotes a firm grounding in the religious milieu of particular religious group and are fundamental prerequisite for the development of religiously-healthy students and communities within that particular religious group (Singh, 2011).

The particularistic approach has some advantages that could be summarized as follows:

a. It allows different faith communities in a given country to provide religious instruction for their own children.

b. It avoids the discriminatory privilege given to the Christians in the predominantly Christian countries like Lesotho and the marginalization of the minority religious groups.

c. Particularistic religious education is recommended with the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, and easier to be put into practice.

d. It takes into consideration the content, values and knowledge of a particular religious group in such a way that religious beliefs and practices become important pedagogical resources (Gay, 2002).

Generally, particularistic approach shares the same advantages with conventional approach.

However, it also has some disadvantages:

a. It creates divisions among learners and promotes religious conflicts and violence.

b. In countries like Lesotho, it undermines the authority of the Christian churches that have a large share in the ownership of schools.

c. Instead of promoting personal responsibility and accountability where students can develop such moral values as self-criticism, self-denial, self-discipline, self-control, self-effacement, self-mastery, self-reproach, and self-sacrifice, they are being led into the development of negative values such as self-assertion, self-indulgence, self-approval, self-love, self-praise and self-centeredness.

d. This religious education approach limits critical thinking and freedom of thought and expression through forced conformity to the standards of certain religious doctrines (Peariso, 2010).

In general it shares all disadvantages of mono-religious approach.

2.2.3.3 Phenomenological approach (also called learning about religion)

In the phenomenological approach, religious education seeks to uncover the meaning and the truth about religion as a phenomenon. The intention is to examine what is false or right in the fundamental questions raised by different religions. The main concern is on the nature of religion and its general function. The phenomenological approach to religious education is rooted in the discipline of the phenomenon of religion based on the assumption that even though it is impossible to suppress one's beliefs and feelings in relation to the object of study, it is possible to put them into parentheses, or at suspension, without being unfaithful to them, so that there is a possibility of getting into others thoughts without approving all of them. In that way, truth can be separated from meaning. What is essential for study is the meaning attached to religion and its different forms (Jackson, 2006).

The phenomenological approach is characterized by the following:

a. To teach the phenomenon of religion in order to promote knowledge and understanding, and not to promote a certain religious tradition or non-religious views.

b. To avoid the imposition of one's own views, attitudes and way of life upon others religious beliefs.

c. To empathize with others from different religious traditions as far as possible.

d. To try and understand religion as a concept rather than judging or evaluating religious traditions.

e. It is committed to a search for religious meaning, purpose and value which is open to all men.

The following are the advantages of the phenomenological approach:

a. The school's approach to religion is academic rather than devotional.

b. The school strives for student awareness and understanding of religion, but does not advocate for student acceptance of any religion.

c. It is based mainly on studying about religion, rather than practicing religion.

d. Religion as a diverse phenomenon is exposed to students without imposing any particular view.

e. To educate students on religion is basically for understanding rather than promoting or denigrating religion.

f. Religious education is taught in the educational form that is not open to the criticism of indoctrinating or giving an unfair advantage to any particular religion.

g. The role of religious education is to prevent religious intolerance because it empowers the student with critical skills for interpreting religious phenomena.

h. Religious education tends to release students from unrealistic beliefs and helps them to break down the stereotypes of other religious traditions.

However, like other approaches it has some disadvantages:

a. This approach tends to focus on the content of religion as social or cultural phenomenon; therefore, the students are often not motivated to study it.

b. It basically investigates the logical relationship between faith and reason in order to explain human beliefs with reasonable arguments and its relevance to young children is questioned.

c. It is philosophically (phenomenology) oriented and seeks to establish the laws or theories which may be used to determine what can be described as religion and as not religion. In a sense it may escalate religious differences.

d. Religious education of this type tends not to tackle the life-world of the students, and often makes little or no explicit contribution to the students' search for moral and spiritual values.

e. The phenomenological approach fails to get inside a religion (Hull, 2001; Tomalin, 2007).

2.2.3.4 Pluralism or multi-faith approach (also comparative study of religion or learning from religion)

In this approach, religion is learnt from the inside and outside. The concern is not about understanding religion itself, but what religions can offer in the general human life, socially, economically, politically and morally. Students are not learning the content of their religion (catechism, theology) or the structure of religious traditions (philosophy of religion), but the elements of religions (comparative study of religion). They investigate scientifically the similarities and differences between various religions or religious phenomena, in order to not only arrive at a comprehensive understanding of its object but also to determine the various interactions of religions; that is how they relate and influence each other (Hull, 2001; Tomalin, 2007).

The pluralist approach to religious education is characterized by the following:

a. It is the branch of the non-normative study of religions that investigates scientifically the similarities and differences between various religions or religious phenomena. The purpose of the study is not only to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of its object but as well as determining the various interactions of religions in order to discover how religions relate and influence each other.

b. It provides a detailed and objective presentation of world religions where students are required to define, analyze and reflect on the major or the principal beliefs, doctrines, practices, rites, found in the major religions and non-religious views.

c. It promotes understanding and appreciation rather than judgment. Students are encouraged to be open to the actual data of various religions' practices as well as ideas which may lead to the realization that one or more religions cannot be superior to others. The pluralistic study of religions is basically an attempt to understand and appreciate various themes in religions and non-religious movements.

d. Pluralist religious education is a non-normative approach to the study religion because it does not provide a set of rules which could be used to make a judgment on the truthfulness of each religion or each religious phenomenon.

e. Its basic task is to analyse religious phenomena just as they are, situate them in their contexts, identify the importance of each theme in a given religion and then compare or contrast it with similar themes found in other religions. In this way, similarities and differences will be discovered.

f. Pluralist religious education considers religion as an integral part of the society rather than a private enterprise. Religion has become not only a divisive force and a decisive source of political legitimacy, but also a tool for mass appeal and mobilization. This necessitates a greater urgency to the on-going discussions and understanding of each other among world religions.

g. Pluralist religious education develops an attitude required for different kinds of options in order to develop one's own point of view of other religions. An attitude could be defined as the manner in which an individual acts or thinks; it is one's disposition, opinion or mental set.

This approach is currently being perceived as advantageous over all approaches to religious education. It is the approach that is being proposed by this study.

The advantages of this approach can be summarized as follows:

a. It cultivates moral principles including tolerance, justice, respect which may extend beyond religion to other spheres of life such as politics, gender, sexual orientation and race.

b. As people take part in the world of a multitude of religions, there is a need to know religious differences and interconnectivity so that the relatedness and the difference may help them to know that religions need each.

c. Religious education works as a problem-solver for conflicts in society, to contribute to a peaceful living together of people with different cultural and religious background.

d. Religious education empowers young people to deal with challenges to identity, manage conflict and develop sensitivity in interacting with difference.

e. Students study other religions and belief systems with the aim of learning to respect people who carry different convictions and coexist with them in a multicultural society and develop an ethically responsible attitude to life in order to be able to choose their own values, take responsibility for the future, and influence decisions made in society.

f. Pluralism religious education creates the possibility of an encounter of people of different religions and faiths in an atmosphere of freedom and openness for each partner to listen and understand self and the other. It is the sharing of the truth found in different religions and faiths. It allows students to work and walk together in search of what is good and right with the desire of living together and in communion. It advocates for living together in spite of differences. Differences make sense when they are well understood.

g. Pluralism religious education provides students with a platform to participate in multitude of religions in order to know the substance as well as the functions of each religion as to know what each religion offers to their life. This could prepare them to participate with sincerity to the on-going interfaith or interreligious discussions (Hull, 2001; Tomalin, 2007; Strhan, 2009).

Since it is the core of this study, pluralistic approach is discussed further in more details in the following topics.

2.3 Definitions and the linking of religious pluralism and inclusive education

2.3.1 Definition of religious pluralism

Pluralism refers to the interaction of different values or other human traits in a society in order to necessitate happiness for all individual members of society. According to pluralist view, coexistence of difference in values is real, inevitable, and unavoidable and has a potential to create interconnectedness that is desirable for societal benefits. According to Wollenberg, Anderson and López (2005), pluralism has a long history but only emerged as a coherent and documented doctrine in the 20th century. The doctrine

holds that there is no single set of values that can make all people happy at all times, all situations and all spaces. People are by nature, inherently different from each other, and even those who might appear to be the same in social traits; they may have different desires at different situations, times and places. Allowing these differences to coexist and counteract affords individual members of society to have choices that would eventually enrich people's lives. In principle, pluralism advocates that people should help one another to pursue happiness by making different choice of values available to all and organizing society to make those choices possible (Wollenberg, Anderson and López, 2005).

Despite its advocacy for different choices, pluralism does not grant people to do as they please. It restricts people's choices according to what may benefit all for greater happiness of all. Therefore, it cannot be said that all values are equally right, good or true, but others may be right while others are wrong. In order to determine whether values are right or wrong, pluralists ask a key question: "does this value harm anyone or reduce their choices for leading a good life?" Even though it does set some limits, its chief aim is to avoid as much as possible the extreme attitude of creating only one set of values for all different people (Wollenberg, Anderson and López, 2005).

Pluralism has become a dominant current discourse in which it has been debated in different intellectual circles. As a result, it acquired different meanings according to different disciples. Hence, there are different types of pluralism such as political pluralism, social pluralism, cultural pluralism and religious pluralism. It has also been conceptualized and theorized in different ways to construct its meaningful scientific and philosophical abstractions in order to analyze and evaluate the possibility of its application in different human interactions. Since religious pluralism owes its sentiments from political, social and more particularly cultural pluralism, it is worthwhile to briefly explain each of them to set a platform for the meaning of religious pluralism.

Political pluralism is multidimensional in the sense that it refers to different political arrangements. It may denote a democratic state that allows the existence of a multiplicity, diversity or plurality of opinions. In this democratic state, different groups are free to express themselves in relation to political issues. Accordingly, people with

different political ideologies, opinions and values have freedom to participate in political decisions. Ideally, there is no single group entitled to dominate and silence others (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2010). The other form of political pluralism refers to a situation where local provinces or local communities have autonomy to manage their own affairs within a given state or where autonomous states agree to join with one another to form a federation for mutual benefits to all the states involved (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2010). Therefore, at the heart of political pluralism is the coming together of different political ideas and perspectives, as well as different political groupings for good governance.

Social pluralism on the other hand, is the view that recognizes the pluralistic character of the society comprising social organizations, social groupings and social movements. Social pluralism asserts that in a given society, there are different groups that occupy different locations in the social structure. These groups do things together such as speaking with the same accent, eating the same food, pursuing the same goals, and subscribing to the same values, but may also maintain different social organizational systems such as different churches, clubs, schools, and neighborhoods (Baker, 1997). The reality of these differences is a starting point for pluralism. The purpose of pluralism is not to eradicate or remove the differences, nor to cover them under a universalizing canopy. Instead, it attempts to find ways of how people with social differences can live, connect, relate, argue, and disagree for the purpose of understanding each other for the betterment of all (Eck, 2006).

The other type of pluralism is cultural pluralism that refers to an interaction of different cultures which may lead to situation where there is no cultural isolation and cultural antagonism resulting in the coming together of multicultural perspective where all came to form a part of a wider context. Cultural pluralism is characterized by coming together of different cultural traits including ethnic, religious, linguistic, geographic, sexual differences or on any other form of particularity in ways of living or thinking (UNESCO, 2000). Cultural pluralism is conditioned by cultural diversity or plurality of cultures but moves beyond plurality to create the interconnections and bonds between and across

cultures to pluralism where it is becomes possible that cultures which exist side by side cannot remain ignorant of one another.

Religious pluralism which owes its gushes from political, social and cultural pluralism and which is the focus of this study is defined by Patel and Meyer (2010) as an active engagement of religious diversity for constructive culmination. While religious diversity or plurality is a mere descriptive fact, pluralism is an achievement of commitment to religious diversity. Religious pluralism involves three important principles which include:

a. Respect for individual religious or non-religious identity.

b. Mutually inspiring relationships.

c. Common action for the common good.

Respect for individual religious or non-religious identity means the acknowledgement that others' religious or non-religious perspectives are as precious to them as one's own religious or non-religious is to him/her. Religious pluralism allows people to stick to their religious beliefs and practices, while at the same time allowing themselves to learn from others' religions as well as sharing their beliefs with others. The principle of religious pluralism is to 'disagree to agree'. There is always disagreement when different religions and non-religious convictions are coming face-to-face and that disagreement usually results in eagerness to learn more about others convictions. Such eagerness to understand more about others leads to the establishment of 'mutually inspiring relationships'. Mutually inspiring relationships pave a way for challenges and changes. Challenges on what is good for all lead to change, which is a common action for the achievement of a common goal for common good (Patel and Meyer (2010). Therefore, religious pluralism is more than a conviction, but a process towards religious acceptance which is desirable for society's common good. As explained by Riis (2011), religious pluralism is both descriptive and evaluative. It describes its meaning and evaluates its achievement.

According to Riis (2011), religious pluralism is a positive attitude towards the existence of different religions in a society. Religious pluralism may refer to a situation where the state establishes regulation for a formal toleration of religious diversity. It may also

occur when religious communities are open for dialogue and collaboration. It may as well refer to an individual's acceptance of religious diversity. At the heart of religious pluralism is an acceptance that all religions address the ultimate questions of human existence in a meaningful manner that have to be appreciated by society as human resources (Riis, 2011). The aim of religious pluralism is mutual respect between different religious for the purpose of peaceful coexistence of the various religions.

2.3.2 Definition of inclusive education

Inclusive education is defined differently in different contexts. The popular definition which dominated much of the literature in the 19th and 20th centuries is that which means the inclusion or allowing participation of the disabled or those with special educational needs in mainstream schools. In this sense, inclusion is understood to be the same as integration. From this misconception, inclusive education have been exclusively regarded as a responsibility of special education and thereby restricting the analysis of all the common forms of exclusion and discrimination that take place within education systems (Acedo et al, 2008). More recently, the concept of inclusion has been expanded to embrace all who are educationally marginalized or excluded for different reasons. It can be an education approach that seeks to address all barriers to learning and participation and create a situation where all are provided with resources to support their learning and participation in education system. The support systems include the school curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as school infrastructure and facilities. The areas identified in the inclusive education approach comprise ability, gender, race, ethnicity, language, culture, care status, socioeconomic status, disability, sexuality and religion. In this understanding, state policies on inclusion are no longer restricted only to the education of pupils identified as having special educational needs but equal opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, religion or cultural background (Acedo et al, 2008; National Council for Special Education, 2010). In the same way as religious pluralism, inclusive education is descriptive and evaluative.

The scope of the current research is within this latter definition of inclusive education with broad perspective of all forms of marginalization such as religious exclusion in school system.

2.3.3 Inclusive education policy in Lesotho

The scope of inclusive education in Lesotho has been understood as synonymous to education for all (EFA) and in an attempt to include all children in formal public education, the focus has been of two dimensions; to include disabled children in the mainstream education (Urwick and Elliott, 2010; Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs, 1995) and to introduce free primary education (FPE) in order to give education opportunity to orphans, vulnerable, neglected, disadvantaged and children from poor families (Yates, 2007). Concern for inclusive education in Lesotho with special focus to disabled children began in the late 1980s. Before then, few disabled children were receiving education in churches, NGOs and individual special schools.

The period from 1983 to 1992 came to be characterized as an international decade of disabled people. It was during this time that organizations of disabled people were formed and together with their parents began to demand national educational provision for disabled children. At the same time, there was a spread on information on universal human rights, social justice, solidarity and individual dignity from the international circles which had a great influence on the Lesotho education system. It was realized that vulnerable and marginalized groups of society should be offered an opportunity to participate in change and to become empowered to promote their own development. Therefore, education was identified as one of key elements for empowerment and enabling participation of disabled people in the country's development (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs, 1995).

Lesotho received funding from USAID to employ a consultant for disabled children special education. The Lesotho Ministry of Education commissioned a Canadian consultant by the name of Marg Csapo who undertook a study and devise guidelines on special education. The 1987 Csapo report highlighted the following in relation to private institutions offering special care and education for disabled children:

a. They were in violation of Basotho traditional care-taking practices.

b. They were more costly to be afforded by majority of poor families with disabled children.

c. They were unable to meet more than a minority of needs.

d. They were even detrimental to the child's emotional and psychological wellbeing.

The report made the following recommendations:

a. Special education should be building on traditional care-taking practices.

b. There should be a policy for integration of disabled children into mainstream schools.

c. Specialist services should be used in a more targeted way ensuring that they support mainstream education.

d. For sustainability, programs should be self-supporting.

e. Special education teams should move around schools to support mainstream teachers.

f. There should be an inclusion of special education in both in-service and pre-service curricula (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs, 1995; Urwick and Elliott, 2010).

Following Csapo's report in the period between 1988 and 1990, there were initiatives by the Lesotho Ministry of Education to introduce special education for children with special needs. The initiatives were prompted by the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education for all. The Ministry of Education committed itself to the promotion of the integration of children with special educational needs at all levels of the regular school system (Rieser, 2008; Urwick and Elliott, 2010).

In an attempt to implement this policy, the Unit of Special Education was developed and it identified the following strategies as necessary for reaching out to the children with special needs and their parents, as well as to the whole community:

a. Provision of special education for all children with special educational needs.

b. Awareness campaign to sensitize Basotho society about children with special needs and the services available for them.

c. Developing in-service teacher training materials as well as conducting in-service teacher training (Rieser, 2008).

By 1992, there was a total of 371 950 pupils with disabilities enrolled in 1 201 primary schools with a pupil teacher ratio of 1:54. For sustainability and monitoring of special education for children with special educational needs, a multi-sector committee was established prior to the development of a national inclusive education program. The committee was build-up of representatives from the Ministries of Education and Health and Social Welfare, the National Disabled People's Association, parents of non-disabled children, and later the National Organisation of Parents of Disabled Children. The committee discussed the implementation of the new program, and contributed to the development of a new in-service teacher training curriculum. This is still supporting inclusive education (Rieser, 2008). In other words, inclusion of disabled or special educational needs became a success in Lesotho.

Another area of inclusive education was the promotion of free primary education (FPE). Introduction of free primary education saw a great revolution in the education system of Lesotho. Free Primary Education in Lesotho was introduced in 2000 when the government started the abolishment of school fees for grade one. Even though FPE was formalized in 2000, the idea of introducing universal primary education dates back to the National Education Dialogue of 1978. The main hindrance had been the affordability, however, as a member of the United Nations, Lesotho subscribes to the objectives of Education for All as espoused at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 (World Bank, 2005; Morojele, 2012). Lesotho also endorsed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, where it pledged to make primary education compulsory and free to all children. Section 28 (b) of the Constitution of Lesotho (1993) affirms the Lesotho's intention to adopt free primary education in stating that "primary education is compulsory and available to all."

The Education for All Assessment study of 1999 had revealed radical decline in the pupil enrollment due to increased poverty. As a result, the prime minister of Lesotho was compelled to announce on April 24th, 1999 that the government intended to introduce Free Primary Education beginning in January 2000. In preparations for its

implementation a group of government officials visited Malawi and Uganda, which had already introduced similar programs. From the visits study, FPE was introduced in 2000 with the abolishment of fees, the introduction of a program in which the Lesotho government helps schools pay for textbooks, paper supplies, meals, and maintenance. The Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training planned that through free primary education the government would not pay any money directly to schools, instead, textbooks and other supplies began to be procured centrally and distributed to schools. Food began to be provided either through existing program like the World Food Program or through a catering system in which schools contract with local caterers that are paid directly by the ministry at about M2 per student per day. School maintenance is also managed and paid centrally at a minimal of M5 per student which is paid directly to contractors (World Bank, 2005; Lerotholi, 2001).

Since its introduction, FPE increased primary school enrolment from 35 000 in 1990 to 429 729 in 2003, and then declined slightly between 2004 and 2005 with the total of 422 278 enrolments in 2005 before it rose again to reach 428 855 in 2006. The increased enrolment influenced other changes in the Lesotho education system:

a. There was an increase in the number of orphaned children in schools from 128 257 in 2006 to 136 943 in 2007, with more than 50% having lost their male parents, 19% lost their female parents and 22% both parents.

b. The increased enrolments led to the increased primary and secondary schools infrastructure in which the total number of primary schools increased from 1 488 in 2007 and 1 495 in 2008. About 8 000 new classrooms were anticipated in 2008 through the assistance from Japanese and Chinese governments, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and African Development Bank.

c. There was also rationalization of fees in secondary schools to allow primary leavers access to secondary education. All public secondary schools (church schools included) were required to reduce their fees and get a proportional grant to their enrolments. The main idea is to subsidize school fees to affordability of parents while at same not depriving schools the revenue they need. There was also an introduction of government sponsored bursary scheme for vulnerable and

orphaned children for junior secondary school while senior secondary education is catered for by the Global Fund.

d. The results of FPE enrolments also increased teacher recruitment. Teacher supply increased from 8 225 in 1999 to 11 050 in 2007. As a result, pupil teacher ratio (PTR) decreased from 42 in 2005 to 39 in 2007 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2008; Yates, 2008).

The other area for the coverage of EFA was the promotion of open distance and flexible learning (ODFL). The main policy document for ODFL in Lesotho was drafted in 2001 which emphasizes non-formal education (NFE) as a response for out of school children. NFE policy is understood to be necessary for a number of reasons including:

a. To coordinate activities related to inefficiency of NFE programs and ineffective response to the growing number of out of school and at risk children.

b. In part, the policy addresses the shortcomings of the mainstream education sector which result in the increased number of drop-outs. It was also prompted by a need for lifelong continuing education.

c. It aimed at prioritizing and effectively responding to those in ‘most need’.

Institutions which pioneered ODFL include Lesotho Association for Non-formal Education (LANFE), the Lesotho Distance Teaching College (LDTC), the Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS) at the National University of Lesotho and the NFE Inspectorate which was established in 1993 in the Ministry of Education and Training (MOE) (Yates, 2008).

This indicates the attempts and success in the promotion of inclusive education in Lesotho. However, in the area of cultural inclusion in which religious education finds its place there has been no efforts. In 2001, UNESCO adopted Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity as an important element of inclusive education. Declaration affirms “that the wide diffusion of culture and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfill in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern”. It further affirms that

“culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”. Article 2 states that it is essential that member states ensure “harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace”. Thus cultural/religious pluralism is understood as conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.

Article 3 states that cultural pluralism is a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

Article 5 emphasizes that “all persons should be entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity; and all persons have the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UNESCO, 2001).

Specifically on religious education, the 2004 UNESCO Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Dialogue Program highlighted the following as the two aims that:

a. Religious education should increase an understanding and respect between people of different religions or world views and foster knowledge about and respect for freedom of religion or belief as a human right.

b. Religious education should contribute to combating discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief and prevents violations of the human right to freedom of religion or belief (UNESCO, 2004).

Religious pluralism is an important aspect of inclusive education which has been neglected in the context of inclusive education policies and programs and which the current study identifies as a gap which needs to be explored.

2.3.4 The link between religious pluralism and inclusive education

There is a link between religious pluralism and inclusive education. Inclusive education is a way of thinking and acting that seeks to ensure that every individual feels accepted, valued, and safe within an education system. An inclusive education consciously develops mechanisms to meet the needs of learners. In pursuit of inclusive education, the school system has to create an environments, structures, and programs where all educators, learners, and their families feel that they belong and are welcomed. Inclusive education proposes different educational approaches; as a result, a series of educational approaches including special education designed to address students with disabilities and multicultural education designed to include students with different cultural background have been recommended. It is within multicultural education where religious pluralism finds its place.

The primary goal of multicultural education is to transform schools so that all students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in a socially diverse nation. It addresses all forms of discrimination in schools and society and proposes the pluralism of ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender among students and their communities (Hopkins-Gillispie, 2011).

Multicultural education proposes inclusion of cultural elements including religion in formal education system. This proposed strategy has both educational and social values. Educationally, it is important for students to participate fully in school and learning if they are expected to have good performance and be prepared for a confident and valuable contribution in their society. It is argued that if students experience conflict between their school and their religious identities they normally feel alienated; as a result, their self-esteem suffers, and ultimately they become underachievers or disengage from learning altogether. This is the basic argument of multicultural education in general. It is argued that there is a link between school recognition of students' religious identity and academic if students experience religious exclusion in the school system. Both the content of the curriculum and the skill with which it is delivered provide key resources to engaging children and young people in learning. This can be particularly important for children and young people from minority ethnic groups

who may not see their culture, history and values reflected in their school experience. Teachers need the confidence, competence and materials to use the existing flexibility within the curriculum to make subjects more relevant to pupils' own experience and to reflect their cultural heritage (Ipgrave, 2011).

Multicultural education, in the first place proposes a school curriculum that aims to cultivate human capacities such as critical reflection, self-criticism, critical thinking, ability to assess evidence and form an independent judgment. It is hoped that as a result of acquiring these and other related capacities, students will one day become capable of self-determination and live a free life, that is a life free from ignorance, prejudices, superstitions and dogmas and one in which s/he freely chooses her/his beliefs and plans her/his pattern of life. Secondly, it aims to foster intellectual and moral qualities such as the love of truth, openness to conflicting views, objectivity, intellectual curiosity, humility and ability to be skeptical about claims of absolutes and respect and concern for others. Thirdly, it aims to acquaint students with religious and moral values, beliefs and other human spiritual needs. The concern is not to familiarize students with the cultural capital of his/her own community but of all peoples as far as this is possible and thereby achieve humanization of an individual rather than merely socializing her/him (Rhodes and Roux, 2004).

Owing from multicultural education, pluralism religious education that aims to include students of different religious background, is underpinned by the following convictions:

a. That religion is a "cultural fact" that has a direct contribution to social and individual life;

b. Information on knowledge of different religions is essential to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust;

c. Religious conceptions of the world and beliefs should be developed on the basis of individual learning and experience, and should not be entirely predefined by one's family or community; and

d. An integrated approach to religious values should be encouraged as an essential precondition for the development of tolerance and a culture of “living together” in a multi-religious society.

Pluralist religious education as a component of inclusive education aims at eliminating discrimination and exclusion of others on the basis of religion. It envisions education that contributes to build up societies where men and women of different religious beliefs are brought together, where citizens of all religions as well as those without religion can work together to resolve problems facing their society. It proposes the development of defenders of religious pluralism in their common society and respect for religious identities of others (Eck, 2004).

2.4 Theory of religious pluralism for inclusive education

Religious pluralism is reinforced by value pluralism which is moral theory that has been used widely in politics, economics, ethics, law and religion. ‘Value pluralism’ claims that there are many values that cannot be ‘reduced’ to a single super value and therefore any theory that relies on value monism is flawed. Value monism is a philosophical theory asserting that all moral principles are based on a single, objective moral value. Monism provides a straight answer to the question; ‘what to do?’ to which the answer is; ‘choose the best option.’ Monism suggests that good ordering of available options ensure the possibility of the best option to be chosen. Ordering of different options leads to one value, which all options are evaluated against. If the ordering of options leads to more values, then the best option is not possible, and some arbitraries are inevitable, and morality loses its function of action-guiding principle. One value has to be assumed and this value is considered central to morality. Several central values have been suggested such as welfare, happiness, pleasure and social utility, which are regarded as having “absolute” and “objective” worth, while others such as friendship, honor, and knowledge are mere instrumental goods aimed to achieve the basic goods (Westall, 2009; Alexander, 2011).

Value monism is an attempt to reduce all moral goods to some single reducible evaluative position, such as pleasure or desire. In the context where there are multiple, competing goods, like equality and autonomy, monists suggest the weighing of the

competing goods against each other. Through such weighing, it is assumed that the nature of the difference between the competing goods can be solved through rational solution of weighing competing goods by a common scale or metric, which, it is assumed that it is readily available. Value monist argues that in the situation where *F* is considered the sole basic good, then something to be basically good has to be an *F*. Where *F* and *G* are the only two basic goods, then for something to be basically good is just for it to be either an *F* or a *G* (Alexander, 2011).

Value pluralism is against this reductionist approach of monism to moral values. Value pluralists believe that monism is the source of extremism, fundamentalism and exclusivism. Value pluralists argue that there is existence of a multiplicity of heterogeneous values that cannot be reduced to a single principle or a universal, permanent combination of values applicable to all individuals and practical cases. Fundamental to value pluralism are three basic claims:

a. The *irreducibility* of goods and values. Goods and values for human life are basically diverse that it is highly impossible to reduce some values to others or to develop some values from others, or to combine them all into a single higher value or a permanent combination of values.

b. *Incompatibility* of goods and values. Diverse goods and values are often mutually incompatible. Therefore, it is not possible to harmonize them into single meaningful whole. The incompatibility of values does not exist between good and evil but between good and good.

c. The *incommensurability* of goods and values. Interpersonal reasonability is incapable of resolving conflicts between different goods and values. There are no universal super values or set of principles shared by all humans to solve these conflicts (Crowder, 2005; Requejo, 2014; Thorsen, 2004).

The most important element of value pluralism is incommensurability. This element refers in particular to the values between cultures or religions as well as cultures or religions themselves. However, to say that values are culture bound does not imply

relativistic position in the moral sphere. Value pluralism is against two extremist moral values, *universalism* and *relativism*. Universalism which basically bears monism claims insists on the idea that:

a. Reason and reasoning are “inherently universal” and could be absolutely followed by any reasonable human being anywhere.

b. There exists a common human nature that is shared cross-culturally and trans-historically.

c. Since all human beings have equal moral concern there should be universal moral convictions that cross-cultural judgments (Danchin, 2008)

Anti-universalism or cultural relativism is the view that it is impossible to make judgments across cultural boundaries. According to relativism, reasoning is less important in judging values and goods, what matters most is an appeal to subjective judgments conditioned by cultural claims or the authority of conventions and traditions. Cultural relativism declares that all cultures are morally equal and that each culture has its own autonomous and unquestionable perspective on what is right and wrong. For relativists, cultures are morally incommensurable, with each culture having its own incomparable moral judgement (Galston, 1999; Thorsen, 2004).

Value pluralism, on the other hand, in opposition to relativism, maintains that, values are objective and that reasoning is central to conflicting values. Without subscribing to monism, it proposes that values are basically context dependent. In a situation of conflicting values, there will be always no single truth, nor is there one correct moral position. Reasoning is employed to prioritize and interpret conflicting values in a given situation or between individuals. Incommensurability is based on how individuals deal with practical contexts. Even though, cultures are different, there is partly human nature that is shared commonly by all human races. However, human race differed with regard to how they deal with shared needs, and how to deal with not shared needs. While there are common universal evils such as slavery, torture, genocide, human trafficking, and others which may justify a certain universalism with regard to what should be avoided but there can be no moral conception that can be claimed to have a universal truth of

human good. Reasoned choice among incommensurable values is possible within a particular context in which judgment is made (Requejo, 2009).

Value pluralism has a claim on liberalism in which some have referred to it as liberal pluralism. Galston (1999), Galston (2002), Crowder (2005) and Pavel (2007) argue that value pluralism is more appropriate as a foundation for liberalism compared to other moral or non-moral justificatory theories offered in the past. Liberalism advocated by value pluralism seeks to minimalize public values in order to give individuals with different goals, virtues, and moral visions a legitimately hospitable space for their aspirations.

Pavel (2007) provides four distinguishable components forming the argument that link value pluralism with liberalism:

1. *The argument from autonomy*: Autonomy requires the creation of an environment where individuals make their choices according to their own conception of well-being. It involves creating conditions for self-chosen goals and relationships which are facilitated through mental ability, different options available and independence. Autonomy advocates for a choice which is made possible by the availability of different options to choose from. As such, autonomy presupposes a series of different, even conflicting, reasons, and values which means that individual autonomy requires plural values. Choosing from plural and incommensurable values demands the active construction of a conception of the good life through the exercise of personal autonomy. Rational choice among incommensurable values is guided by self-determination and self-direction. Since autonomy is characterized by liberal value there is a strong link between pluralism and liberalism.

2. *The argument from negative liberty*: Moral pluralism is understood to be a facilitation of the value of liberty. Liberty is in fact a direct consequence of the diversity of values in which a moral agent is at liberty to make choices. Individuals negotiate their choices of goods, values, and virtues that are incommensurable. Liberty provides a space for choice among incommensurable values for each individual person to negotiate choices. Since liberty is the basic element of

liberalism, there is therefore a link between pluralism and liberalism which is intermediated by liberty.

3. *The argument from diversity*: Another argument for the strong relationship between pluralism and liberalism is the recognition of diversity of values in a society as a good in itself. A liberal society is the one that harbors multiplicity of genuine values. Availability of many and competing genuine values enables a society to reach a high level of political order. The possibility of multiple combinations of value for any individual or community of belief bears the mark of a higher form of political life in a respective community (Pavel, 2007).

Religious pluralism for inclusive education is pinned by value pluralism or liberal pluralism. Liberal pluralism is the virtue of awareness of diversity and its liberal components which espouses broad-mindedness as crucial to living successfully in a multicultural society. The greatest good is when citizens have moral imagination to see the value of, and have respect for ways of life that they do not, and have no wishes to share. In liberal pluralism citizens have to accept that choosing values involves loss as well as gain, a stance that urges them for moderation and tolerance position which denies the situation in which values are regarded as absolutes (Burtonwood, 2006).

In the context of inclusive education, pluralism means that the role of education system in a democratic state should shift from one that supplies protection from harm, to one that is a provider. When the education system has assumed the role of a protector, it relies mostly on logic of fear and distrust of others and thereby develops educational content that excludes the distrusted and feared. Such role is paternalism, in which civic education assumes the responsibility of providing what is needed or best for students who are not able to choose what is best for them. This is mainly a position of power that allows those who control public education to judge what is lacking or deficit in people's lives and determine how to rectify that deficit (Thayer-Bacon, 2010).

Pluralism in inclusive education maintains that children should be provided with the knowledge that while they share much in common with others, they also have much that is different, and that this difference is not only necessary, but the greatest good. It is only through those differences that students are able to become more aware of their

own limitations and therefore begin to open up possibilities for more solutions to their problems (Thayer-Bacon, 2010).

Thus, the aim of pluralistic religious education for inclusive education in a pluralist society according to Thayer-Bacon (2010) is hoping for students who would become citizens that:

a. are able to make decisions and not act solely on the basis of their own needs, but take the needs of others into account as well;

b. value others and treat others with respect and dignity;

c. are caring of others and able to attend to others with generosity and feel empathy for others who are different and strange from themselves;

d. are patient and generous, able to share with others, wait their turns, and are willing to offer a helping hand;

e. are self-reflective and seek to learn from their mistakes;

f. seek to continually improve their abilities to communicate and relate to others different from themselves;

g. are able to take responsibility for their own limitations and fragilities and apologize and try to correct their mistakes and fix the harm they do;

h. are intellectually curious and continually develop their inquiry skills and improve their abilities to research, problem solve, and think constructively;

i. are willing to work hard, expect much from themselves, and encourage others to work hard too;

j. are persevering and resilient, able to keep trying and not give up easily when they run into problems; and

k. are brave and courageous, and are able to take action against wrongs and help to right them (Thayer-Bacon, 2010)

In this sense, pluralistic religious education conforms to educationally universally acceptable principles. It gives religious education an equal status with all other school subjects.

2.5 The need of religious pluralism for inclusive education

Religious pluralism for inclusive education is advocated by two main educational philosophies:

a. *Moral education*

Moral education is defined differently depending in the context in which it is employed. In relation to religious pluralism for inclusive education, moral education could be defined as a planned educational action aimed at development of socially acceptable values (Eddy, Bibeau, and Duff, 1986). According to Temitayo, Audu and Lukman (2014), the core values that could be thought of in the context of diversity, include social responsibility, caring for others are other dominant values that can contribute towards the promotion of a just and peaceful society. As Dill (2007) argues, school is a social institution where social morals are created and sustained for social good. School has a moral responsibility for society.

However, Jacobson (2010) maintains that moral education provided by schools should not involve a list of rights and wrongs that are intended to be communicated by teachers and memorized by students. Moral development in socially diverse community should be developed through allowing moral agents to participate in a context of moral dilemmas, where there are conflicting moral claims. Through common participation individuals can be brought into “like-mindedness” within a community in which attitudes and perceptions are formed and re-formed, allowing moral growth for living in multicultural or multi-religious society. According to Jacobson (2010), people are morally made, formed and re-formed, through their associations with others. Moral behavior of an individual is a reflection of association with others. Teaching multiple religions in the same classroom creates proper relations and thereby helps students to grow in and attend to such proper relations and as a result attain true moral formation.

b. *Citizenship education*

Citizenship education, also called civic education, political socialization or democratic education is defined as the development of citizenship or civic competence inculcating an understanding and a virtue of citizenship in a particular society and the acquisition of moral values relevant to that particular society. Civil education is taught mainly to pursue democratic principles for peaceful and fulfilling citizens' life. It therefore develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that children are expected to learn to be virtuous and civically productive members of democratic society (Levinson, 2014).

The meaning of a citizen is important to understand civil or citizenship education. Kidwell (2013) explains that in the context of education for democracy, citizen is used in broader terms than a legal status of a citizen in a particular country. It is a purposeful developed general character aimed at guiding relationships among persons and instills in individuals the commitment to the fundamental principles of democracy. In a democratic country, citizens must enjoy a right to an education that prepares them to participate in the democratic processes. These processes includes freedom of religion, the right to movement or residence within each nation-state, the right to nationality, the right to own property, peaceful assembly, the right to participate in government and adequate standards of living to maintain health. As a result, teaching students the skills, critical thinking, thoughtful deliberation, investigative minds, and appreciation of multiple perspectives is necessary to enable meaningful participation in a diverse society (Kidwell, 2014).

Civil education seeks to help students learn to understand multiple perspectives. Pluralistic religious education for civil education facilitates an understanding that the way a particular religious group sees the world is only one of many possible ways that contribute to human religiosity. The awareness that belief systems can be constituted very differently in different religious groups is very important in the context of multi-religious, multicultural and interconnected social groups. It teaches respect for diverse worldviews and encourages co-existent citizenships of people of many cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic origins and identities. Respecting and accepting differences, is important for preventing divisive stereotypes (Center for Multicultural Education, 2005).

2.6 The need for religious pluralism for the context of Lesotho

Presently, the teaching of religious education is exclusively Christian based in which the Bible is taught in both junior and senior secondary schools of the church-owned schools. However, the government of Lesotho is a signatory to the series of international conventions, declarations and recommendations including Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989), Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity in Cultural Expressions (2005), Recommendation Against Discrimination in Education (1960), Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976), World Declaration on Education for All (1990), The Delhi Declaration (1993), Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and democracy (1995), The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning (1997), Beijing Declaration of the E-9 countries (2001), Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2005) and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) (UNESCO, 2009). These conventions, declarations and recommendations object to the exclusive and discriminative religion in all its forms. Persistence in the teaching of Christianity that excludes other religions and cultures violates these declarations.

Furthermore, church-owned schools are legally defined as public schools which suggest every subject taught should comply with national education requirements. The 2010 Education Act defines public schools as those schools:

a. Whose admission requirements comply with such public policy as determined by the Minister and are bound by Government rules and regulations;

b. Which are funded by the Government and charge such fees as approved by the Ministry; and

c. Whose teachers are in the Teaching Service.

Public schools are differentiated from the independent schools which are:

a. Those whose admission policy is determined by their governing bodies;

b. Which are managed in terms of their own constitution approved by the Ministry upon registration of the school or upon application to change the classification of such schools;

c. Which are free to charge fees determined by their school boards; and

d. May receive such conditional subvention or grants as the Minister may decide in consultation with Ministry responsible for finance (Lesotho Government Gazette: Extraordinary, 2010).

However, the teaching of single religious tradition does not meet the educational requirements of a public school. Public schools operate as a vehicle of civic education to promote democratic ideals, in which open discussion for diverse views are voiced and collectively evaluated, make, apply, and revise the norms by which their community lives. Public education should encourage the development of rational and moral autonomy which embrace an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all citizens are committed.

It is when a nation-state is unified around a set of democratic values including human rights, justice, and equality that every individual could enjoy freedom of culture, ethnicity, language, and religion. The main purpose of a public school is to help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make reflective decisions and to take action that would always promote more democratic and just social relations. Its chief aim is to facilitate the development of students' civic consciousness and it is framed in such that it enables students to open themselves to communicative challenge and reflexive agency, to imagine the historical and cultural context of their own opinions, to understand the consequences of those opinions for others, so as to begin thinking anew and differently (Ameen and Hassan, 2013; Center for Multicultural Education, 2005; Marginson, 2006).

Instead of complying with educationally acceptable standards, teaching mono-religious tradition ascribes to indoctrination which is a form of educational strategy that is being rejected in all education circles. Indoctrination involves mind control or brainwashing which counteracts open-mindedness and tolerance. It is capable of arresting thinking and moral development. Indoctrination, as Merry (2005) argues, it occurs on different levels including:

a. *Content* – The content of indoctrination is always beliefs that virtually avoid practically testable grounds and have to be accepted regardless of whether they happen to be true or false. This means that indoctrination occurs in a situation where specific knowledge is confidently instilled in individuals without available evidence or when it is based on gathering information from reading a certain document as the source of evidence with which others may reasonably disagree with, such as Bible or Qur'an.

b. *Method* – The method employed in indoctrination is that in which various claims are provided without critically examining those claims. The main method used is inculcation, by which certain doctrines/beliefs about reality that are hold to be true in an ultimate sense are being inculcated with the aim of suppressing critical disposition necessary to evaluate these truth claims. The main tool is coercion because the beliefs are reinforced by the presumption of intellectual authority.

c. *Intention* – The intention to indoctrinate occurs when an authority figure intends to implant a set of non-verifiable beliefs so that those who are indoctrinated hold firm on them. This happens at a psychological level of control that discourages or overrides another's critical thinking. In this sense, indoctrination requires taking over another's consciousness.

d. *Outcome* – The results of indoctrination are imminent when the indoctrinated uncritically hold a set of beliefs and presumably continue to do so for unspecified period of time. In this situation, the indoctrinated individuals are under the impression that they have accepted beliefs freely and rationally when in fact they have not. These individuals have had their reasoning capacity soothed to sleep

through coercion or through psychological intimidation by means of unquestioned authority (Merry, 2005).

Christian religious education in Lesotho qualifies to be described as indoctrination since it has all these characteristics.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature here discussed sets the tune for empirical research by defining the topic understudy in which religious pluralism and inclusive education have been explained. The literature further positioned the study topic within current theoretical debates, where value pluralism has been elaborately discussed as the philosophy underpinning both religious pluralism and inclusive education. Moral education and civic education have been explained as the basic educational principles reinforcing religious pluralism and inclusive education. Contextualization of the study was done through highlighting why the current religious education in Lesotho needs to be geared towards responding to the international conventions, declarations and recommendations in education in which Lesotho is the cosigner, as well as meeting the educational standards or acceptable education requirements rather than indoctrination which does not feature well in education circles, particularly in democratic education.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains phenomenological methodology and its theoretical assumptions underpinnings as briefly discussed in Chapter 1 (sections 1.6; 1.7). Phenomenology is congruent to the research paradigm, research questions and research purpose of the current research. The chapter provides insights on the meaning, the nature, and the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological method. It explains how phenomenology as a research method was used to solicit information for the current study research questions, the purpose of the study, as well as how data was collected and be analyzed.

3.1.1 Definition of phenomenology

Phenomenology is not a rigid school or uniform philosophical tradition but encapsulates different phenomenological thoughts that are compressed within the 'phenomenological movement'. According to Molla (2010), the philosophy of phenomenology was first developed by Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), whose formative works were later extended and further developed by Alfred Schutz (1899 – 1959), then existential phenomenologists such as Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908 – 1961) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905 – 1980). According to Wilcke (2002), the concept phenomenology derived from the Greek word '*phainomenon*' which its roots words are '*phainein*' that means 'appears', and '*logia'* that basically mean 'science' or 'study'. Therefore, phenomenology can be defined as the scientific study of observable events.

Moran (2002) states that phenomenology has to be understood as a radical, philosophical claim, which puts more emphasis on how to get to the truth about what matters, as well as describing the phenomena as they appear and the manner in which they appear as they manifest themselves to the consciousness of the experiencer. Phenomenology therefore seeks to avoid all misconstructions and impositions that could be placed on experience in advance, whether being drawn from religious or cultural traditions. Accordingly, there are no explanations that can be imposed on phenomena before that phenomena have been understood from within.

3.1.2 Phenomenology as a philosophical preposition

The philosophical preposition of phenomenology is basically a reaction against the positivistic paradigm. According to phenomenologists, positivism is unsuitable for studying phenomena because it does not account for the essential phenomena of the human world. These essential phenomena include values, meanings, intentions, morals, feelings, and the life experiences of human beings. Phenomenologists posit that in order to study these phenomena, human '*consciousness'* should be prioritized as an element for understanding human life. The domain of understanding human life for phenomenologists is '*consciousness',* which refers to the intentionality toward something or someone, that is, how something or someone is experienced by the experiencer (McPhil, 1995). Phenomenologists reject positivistic scientific paradigm in the study of human beings and their lives because they argue that it fails to consider human consciousness as the principal '*meaning-making'* capacity. At the heart of phenomenological philosophy is the belief that the word 'reality' has its derivation from the verb 'to think'. Therefore 'reality' can be understood to mean that 'what is thought about things in general' (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006).

3.1.2.1 Schools of phenomenology

There are mainly three schools of phenomenological tradition:

a. *Transcendental phenomenology*

The transcendental phenomenology postulates that an attempt to discover reality should transcend experience. The transcendental phenomenology centers on the idea of reductionism which means the suspension of personal prejudices in attempting to reach to the core or essence of phenomenon through a state of pure consciousness (Kafle, 2011). Transcendental perspective means the adoption of consciousness that transcends preoccupations from experiences. It means to adopt two basic stances that is performing the *epoché* or "bracketing" and the reduction, which is the position of putting aside all knowledge pertaining to the reality about the phenomenon in order to arrive to at realism (Giorgi, 2007).

b. Hermeneutic phenomenology

The hermeneutic phenomenology is a departure from transcendental position because it rejects the idea of suspending personal opinions in order to arrive at the reality about the phenomenon. It is based on the premise that reductionism is impossible as it puts more emphasis on the effort of getting beneath the subjective experience and finding the genuine objective nature of the things as realized by an individual. Hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology focuses mainly on subjective experience of individuals and groups. It attempts to understand the world as experienced by the subject through their life world stories. This school believes that interpretations are all we have and it can be achieved through the use hermeneutic cycle (Kafle, 2011).

b. *Existential phenomenology*

The existential phenomenology is primarily concerned with what people are and not what they can do or what they know. Existential phenomenologists are mainly concerned with the existential foundations of what it means to be a man. It incorporates questions of self-identity and own-ness. Self-identity, which is central to existential phenomenology deals with the problem of what it means to be a human person and how does an individual person understand his being. According to existential phenomenologists, the nature or the being of a man is what man makes about him, that is, to be a person is to be in a position to answer who one is. However, this does not relate to the knowledge about oneself, but to the question of how one decides and acts upon his or her decision. What makes man who he/she depends on what s/he decides to be and the question “Who one is?” is the same as whatever one makes himself to be through the choices or decisions he makes (Moran, 2002).

3.1.3 Phenomenology as a qualitative research methodology

Phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology inspired by the branch of philosophy which concerns the phenomenon of human consciousness and life-world experiences. It is recommended when the study is aimed at understanding the meanings of human experiences. Its aim is to reveal the “essence of things” and provides insights into social phenomena (Lin, 2013). Phenomenology as a research methodology has overlaps with other qualitative approaches such as ethnography, grounded theory and symbolic interactionism. Like other qualitative methodologies it

seeks to describe and interpret the phenomenon rather than to explain it, and it starts the process of interpretation from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions. As a qualitative research, phenomenology is underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm; hence the hermeneutical phenomenology which is also translated as interpretive phenomenology is appropriately qualitative (Lester, 1999).

3.1.3.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions of Interpretivism

The interpretivist paradigm is underpinned by the following meta-theoretical assumptions:

a. *Ontological assumption*

Ontology is the study of the being of objects. Ontological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality, in other words, what is reality? That is, how things really are and how things really work (Scotland, 2012).

The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism. According to relativism, reality is subjective and differs from person to person. What is reality is what is mediated by human senses. Without consciousness therefore, the world is meaningless. Reality emerges when consciousness engages with objects and gives meanings to those objects which already have meaning. Since reality is individually constructed, there are as many realities as individuals (Scotland, 2012).

b. *Epistemology*

Epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge. Epistemological assumptions are concerned with the process of knowing, that is, how knowledge is created, acquired and communicated. It is basically concerned with what it means to know. The central question that is asked by epistemology is – what is the nature of the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known (Scotland, 2012)?

The epistemological position of interprevitism is subjectivism. Subjectivism claims that knowledge is not discovered but constructed though the interaction between consciousness and the world. To experience a world is to participate in it and different people may construct knowledge in different ways but truth is a consensus formed by

co-constructors. Therefore knowledge is culturally and historically situated (Scotland, 2012).

c. *Methodology*

Methodology is concerned with the process of how knowledge is elucidated. Methodology is concerned with why, what, from where, when and how can knowledge be illuminated. Methodology asks the question: how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever they believe can be known (Scotland, 2012)?

The methodological position of interprevitism is concerned with understanding phenomenon from an individual's perspective in his/her historical and cultural contexts. Interpretivism as a qualitative research espouses methodologies such as case studies which aim at in-depth study of events or processes over a prolonged period, phenomenology which aims at studying direct experiences without allowing the interference of existing preconceptions and ethnography which is adopted in the study of cultural groups over a prolonged period. However, there is an overlap between all these qualitative methodologies in terms of research procedures such as data collection, instrumentation and data analysis (Scotland, 2012).

d. *Axiology*

Axiology is concerned with values. It attempts to explain the role of values in research process. It asks the question "What are the researcher's values and how those values influence research process?" Additionally, it includes considering the values of participants and the research setting. It asks whether a research can be value-free or it is not possible to eliminate values or values are not only inevitable but desirable aspects of the research process (Manson, 2006; Fard, 2011; Ponterotto, 2005).

Axiological position of interpretivism is that values have always influenced social science research and therefore researchers should admit and deliberately include their cultural orientation as well as that of research participants in the research process. The interpretivist researcher admits the value-laden nature of the study and positively reports his or her values and biases, as well as the value nature of information gathered in the field. The interpretivists emphasize the important effects of values of research

participants in research findings and they believe in the integration of the values of researcher and participants in the research process (Manson, 2006; Fard, 2011; Ponterotto, 2005).

e. *Rhetoric*

Rhetoric refers to the language used to present the procedures and results of research to one's intended audience. How the researcher presents data involves decisions about the use of voice such as first, second and third person of the researcher and participants, terminology used to present data collection and analytic methods, and the degree to which narratives, thematic categories, and/or numbers are presented as findings. It asks the question of whether data should be presented in narratives or numbers, or both (Hays & Singh, 2012; Ponterotto, 2005; Fard, 2011).

Rhetorical position of interpretivism is generally narrative and allows qualitative inquiry the more "voice" from participants in a report. Interpretivists researchers generally value participant voice in data presentation and provide participant quotes and narratives and attempt to represent data from participants' perspectives. Again, the impact of the research process on the emotional and intellectual life of the researcher is reflected upon and discussed openly (Hays & Singh, 2012; Ponterotto, 2005; Fard, 2011).

3.2 Phenomenological data collection methods

The phenomenological methodology employs the following qualitative design data collection methods:

a. *Observation*

The observation method is employed when the purpose of research is a description of settings, activities, people, and the meanings of what is observed from the perspective of the participants. Observation has a potential for a deeper understanding because it provides knowledge of the context in which events occur and it enables the researcher to observe things that participants themselves are not aware of, or seek meaning on what participants are unwilling to discuss (Hoepfl, 1997).

There are different observation methods including:

i. *Participant observation*

Participant observation has a long tradition in qualitative research employed mainly in ethnographic study by anthropologists. Participant observation requires that the observer becomes “part” of the environment, or the cultural context of the study participants. In principle, the method involves the researcher’s spending considerable time “in the field” of study in order to understand the culture in depth. The hallmark of participant observation is interaction among the researcher and the participants. Phenomenologists also adopted this method for in depth study of lived experiences (Draper, 2003)

ii. *Nonparticipant Observation*

Nonparticipant observation is considered relatively unobtrusive data collection method. In nonparticipant observation, the researcher does not interact to a great degree with the research participants. The researcher as an observer is nonparticipant and records only that which has been observed without injecting much from him/her as not part of the information collected. However, the observer is “in” the scene and, thus, affects it in some way and this also has to be taken into account (Draper, 2003; Hoepfl, 1997). The phenomenologists’ use of nonparticipant observation is intended for bracketing which is a researcher’s attempt to achieve the state of transcendental subjectivity (neutrality) by pushing aside prior understanding or preconceptions about the phenomenon under investigation (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

b. *Interviews*

An interview is a commonly qualitative data collection method used mainly to access people’s experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality. The interview is an important data gathering technique that involves verbal communication between the researcher and research participants (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 1998).

There are different interviews methods including:

i. *Structured or standardized interviews*

In structured interviews, the interviewer develops the same questions that would be asked to each respondent. A tightly structured schedule of questions that is very much like a questionnaire is used. The questions that are contained in the questionnaire

would have been planned in advance, in other times with the help of a pilot study to enable refining of the questions. This standardization of questions is aimed at minimization of the effects of the instrument and the interviewer on the research results. Structured interviews are similar to survey studies, except that they are administered orally rather than in writing (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 1998). Phenomenologists use structured interviews for specific experiences related to specific behavior such gay experiences. Structured interviews may be used at the beginning of the interviews to set the stage for less structured interviews or after the interviewer has used less structured interviews to determine areas that need specific information which can only be obtained through structured interviews (Aspers, 2009; Englander, 2012).

ii. *Semi-structured interviews*

In the semi-structured interviews, series of open-ended questions are used that are based on the topic areas which the researcher intends to cover. The purpose of the open-ended question is to define the topic under investigation as well as providing opportunities for both the interviewer and the interviewee to discuss related information to the topic of investigation in more detail. In the situation where the interviewer realizes that the interviewee has a difficulty in answering questions or only providing brief responses, the interviewer uses cues or prompts to encourage the interviewee to consider the question further and provide elaborative information in relation to the question. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer also uses probes for further information (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 1998). A phenomenological semi-structured interview is the main technique to get descriptions of lived experiences. They enable the researcher to reach deeper to the participants lived experiences and to get the essences of the structure of their experiences and enable the researcher to grasp the conditions of the experiences, and meanings the participants attribute to their experiences (Molla (2010).

iii. *Unstructured interviews*

Unstructured interviews which are also referred to as “depth” or “in depth” interviews are not structured at all. The interviewer facilitates an interview process with the aim of discussing few topics of research. Questions are framed successively according to the

interviewee's previous response to the main research question. Even though there are few topics to be discussed, they have to be covered in great detail. Unstructured interviews explain the interview process in which the interviewer intends to find enough information about a specific topic but with no structure or preconceived plan or expectation on how the interview will proceed (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 1998). Phenomenologists use unstructured interviews in a literal meaning of the word *inter-view* which suggests an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest where a researcher intends to understand the lived experiences from the participants' point of view in order to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences. The basic intent is to understand the phenomena in participants own terms and to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the informants and allowing the essence to emerge as the participants describe their lived experience in a language free from the researcher's constructs (Groenewald, 2004).

3.3 Phenomenological sampling selection

The phenomenological methodology uses the following qualitative design sampling selection methods:

a. *Convenience Sampling*

Convenience sampling selection also called *opportunistic sampling* technique consists of participants who are readily available and accessible. In other times, it is used with what is referred to as *snowball sampling*, in which the researcher may start with a small sample of readily available and easy to contact participants and then expands the sample by asking each participant to recommend other potential participants. Even though convenience has some limitation such as studying the population which is likely to be familiar to the researcher and too narrow in terms of its scope, though close relationship between the researcher and research site and familiarity with the sample, convenience sampling may provide a rich data that could not be attained if the sample was less familiar, and therefore less convenient, to the researcher (Koerber and McMichael, 2008).

Doing phenomenology means the intention to capture rich descriptions of phenomena in their natural settings. Therefore, phenomenologists use convenience sampling method

to select readily available and accessible participants who report to have had experiences of the phenomenon under study. In the process the researcher suspend pre-understandings in order to discover the meaning of the phenomenon from the participants' point of view (Englander, 2012).

b. *Purposeful Sampling*

Purposeful sampling also called *judgment sampling* refers to the process in which the researcher selects participants who possess certain traits or qualities. In this sampling method, participants' selection is based on the aims of the research. The important guiding principles of purposeful sampling include:

- *Maximum variation* or the inclusion of people who represent the widest variety of perspectives possible within the range specified purpose;
- *Critical case sample* or participants who have specific experiences; and
- *Key informants sample* or participants with special expertise (Koerber and McMichael, 2008; Marshall, 1996).

The goal of phenomenological research is to develop a rich or thick description of the phenomenon that is being investigated within a specific particular context. Therefore, purposeful selection method is suitable for this type of research, in order to select information-rich cases for detailed study. This method of sampling is also consistent with the interpretive paradigm research. When using purposive sampling, the selection of participants is based on their particular knowledge of a phenomenon for the purpose of sharing that knowledge. The basic aim is to understand and interpret a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Penner and McClement, 2008; Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007).

3.4 Phenomenological sampling size

According to Oppong (2013), the phenomenological study as well as other qualitative approaches is generally guided by theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation presupposes a situation where data collection process can only be terminated when new data collection provides no additional insights to the research problem being addressed. Data saturation can be addressed through maximum variation approach in which the researcher identifies different characteristics of the target population and then

selects a sample of subjects that matched the identified characteristics. In other cases, data saturation may be enhanced through snowball sampling in which the selected individuals are given an opportunity to select other individuals that might be relevant to be included in the investigation. In this sense, it is therefore difficult for a phenomenological researcher to give a precise sample size before the study commences.

However, as Marshall, Cardon, Poddar and Fontenot (2013) as well as Mason (2010) realized that it is imperative to state sample size prior to research process for every qualitative research without ignoring data saturation. One guiding principle for sample size that enhances data saturation is to follow a suggested number that has been proven to have achieved data saturation in previous qualitative research approaches. The suggested size based on previous qualitative researches is between 20 and 60 interviewees for grounded theory studies and ethnography, between five and thirty-five interviewees for phenomenological studies and between three and five interviewees for case studies. Therefore, phenomenological studies select a sample size of approximately five to thirty-five interviewees that is hoped to have a potential for maximum variation and data saturation.

3.5 Phenomenological sample frame

The sample frame in all qualitative research designs including phenomenology refers to a list of all elements in a population. A population is the entire set of individuals or other entities to which study findings are to be considered referring to it even though the entire population has not been studied, but only a sample of that population. Therefore, a sample would mean a subset of a population that is used to study the population as a whole. The elements of the population are the individual members of the population whose characteristics are to be studied. There are two broad categories of sample frame that include:

a. *Existing frame*: This refers to existing sources of information such as administration records, published list and artifacts.

b. *Generated frame*: This generally refers to individuals within a certain group of study such as first year students in a university (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003).

3.6 Phenomenological data analysis

The phenomenological methodology shares different qualitative analysis methods. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) and Leech, Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2012) discussed different qualitative data analysis methods which are:

a. *Constant comparison analysis*

Constant comparison analysis is the mostly used qualitative data analysis methods which aim at the following:

i. Building theory rather than testing it;

ii. Providing researchers with data analytic tools;

iii. Promoting researchers' understanding of multiple meanings from data;

iv. Providing researchers with a systematic and creative process of data analysis; and

v. Providing researchers with insights to identify, create, and see the relationships among components of the data when constructing a theme.

Constant comparison is used mainly to develop themes from chunk of data through coding. Coding could be done deductively in which case the codes are identified prior to analysis and then developed from the collected data or could be inductively in which case the codes emerge from the data (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Leech, Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2012).

b. *Domain analysis*

Domain analysis is proposed when analysis seeks to uncover cultural knowledge assigned to phenomenon. According to this method of analysis, symbols are important in communicating cultural meaning. Symbol refers to an act, idea or an object which has cultural significance and the capacity to stimulate or influence a response. According to its founder, Spradley, all symbols have three elements which are:

i. The symbol itself or a cover term;

ii. Referents or to what the symbol refers; and

iii. A relationship between the symbol and the referent or what is referred to as semantic relationship.

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) and Leech, Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2012) argue that even though some researchers believe that domain analysis should only be used in ethnographic studies as was suggested by the founder of domain analysis, it can be also used in any qualitative research including phenomenology where experiences are also culturally bound.

c. *Taxonomic analysis*

The taxonomic analysis can be conducted after a domain analysis, when a researcher wants or needs further analysis or it can be conducted independently. The taxonomic analysis is employed for an understanding of how specific words have been used by the research participants. The taxonomic analysis is based on the idea that words can have different meanings and distinct connotations for each person. A taxonomy is defined as a *classification system* which aims at sorting the domains through a flowchart in order to present the relationships among the terms in the domain (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Leech, Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2012).

d. *Componential analysis*

The componential analysis can be used to further domain analysis or as independent analysis method. It is basically a methodical search for attributes or components of meaning attached to cultural symbols. It is mainly used when the intention of a researcher is to uncover relationships between words. It is used to discover the differences between the subcomponents of domains or cultural symbols, with the aim to accurately interpreting the reality of experiences of informant's cultural knowledge or to find the reason behind differing ideas. Componential analysis has two dimensions which are:

i. *the contrast set*; and

ii. *dimensions of contrast*

The contrast set refers to a set of attributes or components of meaning for any term, whereas the dimensions of contrast refer to the questions developed by the researcher

in order to establish differences in the contrast set (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Leech, Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2012).

e) *Interpretive/descriptive phenomenological analysis method*

There are two main data analysis specific to phenomenological study. The first is *descriptive phenomenological analysis* which is concerned with unpacking the essence or crucial structure of the phenomenon under investigation, that is, those features that reveals what exactly it is. The descriptive phenomenological analysis is defined as "the science of essence of consciousness" where the purpose is to describe the concept of *intentionality* and the meaning of lived experience, from the point of view of research participants. The meaning of lived experiences as viewed by participants can only be described through employing the process of bracketing, which is the process of consciously and actively seeking to strip away researchers' prior experiential knowledge and personal bias in order to escape influencing the description of phenomenon at hand (Edward and Welch, 2011; Wojnar and Swanson, 2007). Another phenomenological data analysis method is the *interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenological analysis* that goes beyond bracketing as it is grounded in the belief that the researcher and the participants come to the investigation with prior understanding that is shaped by their respective backgrounds, and in the process of interaction and interpretation are able to bring together their different understanding of the phenomenon in order to give a meaningful interpretation of phenomenon (Wojnar and Swanson, 2007). The fundamental difference between the two phenomenological analysis methods is highlighted in the table below:

Descriptive Approach	Interpretive Approach
a) The emphasis is on describing universal essences	a) The emphasis is on understanding the phenomena in context
b) Viewing a person as one representative of the world in which s/he lives	b) Viewing a person as a self-interpretive being
c) A belief that the consciousness is what humans shares	c) A belief that the contexts of culture, practice, and language are what humans share
d) Self-reflection and conscious "stripping" of previous knowledge help	d) As prereflexive beings, researchers actively co-create interpretations of

to present an investigator-free description of the phenomenon	phenomenon
e) Adherence to established scientific rigor ensures description of universal essences or eidetic structures	e) One needs to establish contextual criteria for trustworthiness of co-created interpretations
f) Bracketing ensures that interpretation is free of bias	f) Understanding and co-creation by the researcher and the participants are what makes interpretations meaningful

Table 2: The key distinctions between the descriptive and interpretive approach

Source: Wojnar and Swanson (2007)

3.7 Application of phenomenological research method

The type of phenomenological method that the current study utilized is hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology (1.7.1, 3.1.2.1b) which focuses mainly on subjective experience of individuals and groups. Hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology was relevant to the current study for the following:

a. To understand the world as experienced by the participants through their life world stories.

b. To describe as accurately as possible the experience of the Christian church schools in relation to the inclusive education and religious education.

c. To uncover the understanding of the Christian church schools in relation to the issues of inclusive education and religious pluralism.

d. To enter into intimate dialogue about the meaning attached to the experiences of religious education as it is basically Christian based without considering the option for pluralistic religious education in response to the demands of inclusive education.

3.7.1 Selection of participants

Following the sampling selection on phenomenological research suggested in Chapter 1 (1.7.3) and above (3.3i), the current study used purposive sampling selection which enables the researcher to:

a. Select participants beforehand.

b. Choose people or documents from which the researcher can substantially learn about the experience.

c. Choose participants with the aim of developing a rich or thick description of the phenomenon that is being investigated within a specific context.

d. Use sampling selection that is consistent with interpretive paradigm research.

e. Select participants on the basis of their particular knowledge of a phenomenon for the purpose of sharing that knowledge.

f. Choose participants in order to understand and interpret a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those who have experienced it.

g. Choose participants that are accessible and context bound.

In this case therefore, church school principals and religious education teachers in those schools were selected as having lived the experiences of educational developments including an introduction of inclusive education and its implications for religious education.

3.7.2 Population frame

The population frame or sampling frame (3.5) will be generated from different groups that are involved in the church education system. Participants that suit this criterion are school principals and religious education teachers.

3.7.3 Site sampling selection

The convenience sampling selection (3.3b) that is congruent with interpretive phenomenology and which allows the researcher to select readily available and accessible site was used. This was applied particularly for the principals and teachers where the researcher selected participants from the schools that are closer to the researcher's places of work and residence in which the place of residence is in the rural areas and that of work in the urban areas. There were six schools altogether, representing three denominations owning schools in Lesotho. Two schools were selected from each denomination.

3.7.4 Population size selection

As recommended in Chapter 1 (1.7.4) and in this chapter (3.4), the study selects a sampling size that is:

a. Relatively small to allow in-depth interviews

b. Small number of participants with large data

c. Maximum variation from different characteristics of the target population

d. Maximum variation determined by previous research from phenomenological studies

e. Data saturation from maximum variation

The size of six educationists from each of the three Christian denomination owning schools was selected to make up the total of 12 with the intention of achieving maximum variation, data saturation and individual in-depth interview proposed by purposive sampling. There were two teachers of religious education and two principals from each of three denominations. This would make up the sub-total of six participants of each church denomination and the sum total of 12 participants.

Church denomination	Description of participants	No of participants
Roman Catholic church	Religious education teachers	2
	Principals	2
Sub Total		**4**
Lesotho Evangelical church	Religious education teachers	2
	Principals	2
Sub Total		**4**
Anglican Church of Lesotho	Religious education teachers	2
	Principals	2
Sub Total		**4**
Sum Total		**12**

Table 3: Summary of size sampling selection

3.7.6 Interviews schedule

According to Hoepfl (1997), Bernard (2006) and Ryan, Coughlan and Cronin (2007), interviews schedule refers to a list of qualitative semi-structured interviews that are based on research questions or general research topics. They are basically aimed at:

a. Obtaining equivalent information from each participant. However, there are no predetermined responses and interviewer is free to probe and explore within these predetermined inquiry areas.

b. Ensuring good use of limited interview time.

c. Interviewing multiple participants more systematic and comprehensive.

d. Helping to keep interactions focused.

Semi-structured interviews schedule in this current study has been constructed from the research questions which will be transformed into topics for the purpose of data presentation and analysis.

3.7.5 Instrumentation

Semi-structured interviews (3.2bii) that are generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees were used.

In semi-structured interview the researcher attempted the following:

a. To reach deeper to the participants lived experiences and to get the essences of the structure of their experience.

b. To grasp the conditions of the experiences, and meanings the participants attribute to their experiences.

c. To use cues or prompts in order to encourage the interviewee to consider the question further and provide elaborative information in relation to the question.

d. To use probes for further information.

To enhance triangulation and saturation, same semi-structured questions was used for different groups of research participants including religious education teachers and principals.

3.7.7 Interviews preparation

Interviews were prepared following Boyce and Neale (2007) and Turner (2010) guidelines in which the following were effectuated:

a. Choosing a setting with the least distraction
b. Explaining the purpose of the interview, and the reason why the participants have been chosen
c. Setting a time which is not more than 40 minutes unless participants feel like explaining further on a certain question or questions
d. Seeking informed consent of the interviewee both in written and explanation
e. Explaining how the information will be kept confidential, and why there is note taking and tape recording
f. Allowing participants to ask questions in relation to interviews before the interviews get started
g. Providing participants with contact information may they need any clarification or provide additional information recalled later

3.7.8 Data analysis methods

The study employed interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). The assumption of interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenology is that:

a. Human nature is characterized by social dialogical being.
b. Understanding is acquired through shared background practices from different human communities, within societies and cultures, in the languages, in the skills and activities, and in the intersubjective and common meanings.
c. Interpretation assumes a shared understanding between the researcher and the participants.
d. Interpretation involves the interpreter and the interpreted in a dialogical relationship (Edward and Welch, 2011; Wojnar and Swanson, 2007).

The study followed an IPA procedure outlined by Jeong and Othman (2016), Charlick, Pincombe, McKellar and Fielder (2016) and Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) summarized in six stages in the following table:

Stages of IPA	
a. Reading and re-reading transcripts	Reading transcripts and listening to audio recording repeatedly to immerse in data.
b. Initial note taking	Reflections about the interview experience or any other thoughts and comments of potential significance.
c. Developing emergent themes d. Searching for connections across emerging themes	Notes are transformed in to themes. Formulating a concise phrase that are slightly of higher level.
e. Looking for patterns across cases	Grouping themes together according to their conceptual similarities.
f. Writing up	Verbatim participants experiences with interpretive comments.

Table 4: Six stages in IPA data analysis

3.8 Ensuring rigor

Unlike in quantitative positivist paradigm where research rigor is maintained through reliability and validity, in qualitative interpretivist paradigm, research rigor is ensured through trustworthiness explained in Chapter 1 (1.7.7). Research trustworthiness is guaranteed through the following:

a. Credibility (in preference to quantitative internal validity)
b. Transferability (in preference to quantitative external validity/generalisability)
c. Dependability (in preference to quantitative reliability)
d. Confirmability (in preference to quantitative objectivity) (Shenton, 2004)

The table below provides a summary of how trustworthiness was enhanced in this research articulating credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The detailed information is in Chapter 1 (1.7.7).

Rigor criteria	Provision	Current research
Credibility	Triangulation	Christian denominations

		Different church officials Research results discussed with participants
Transferability	Transfer of research findings	Research procedures to be explicit
Dependability	Authenticity of findings	Research steps audited by supervisor
Confirmability	Neutrality of the research interpretations	Providing raw data Providing analysis notes Providing process transcripts

Table 5: Trustworthiness

3.9 Conclusion

Empirical phenomenological qualitative research on the topic under investigation highlights the rigorous procedures followed in the cause of this current study. These research processes that have been discussed and outlined in this chapter are sustained by the theories and opinions on inclusive education and religious pluralism from the reviewed literature in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter provides information on participants, how data was obtained, processed and analyzed. Divided into three sections, the first section of the chapter explains research participants as the main sources of data. The second section defines interviews questions used to solicit information. The third section illustrates the steps in data analysis.

4.2 Participants' characteristics

Participants were selected through qualitative purposive sampling that allows the researcher to select participants on the basis of their characteristics that were relevant to the information required. The table below provides religious education teachers' participants characteristics.

Date of Interviews	Interviews Duration	Label	Age	Sex	Qualification	Specialization	Teaching Experience
03/05/2016	30 min	REDT1	49	M	PGDE	Religious Education	34 years
03/05/2016	34 min	REDT2	50	M	PGDE+MAED	Religious Education	25 years
16/05/2016	34 min	REDT3	54	M	COSC	Teaching Religious Education	24 years
26/05/2016	30 min	REDT4	51	F	BED	Religious Education & Sesotho	29 years
26/05/2016	46 min	RED5	34	M	DIP.ED	Religious Education & Sesotho	34 years
26/05/2016	45 min	RED6	37	F	DIP.ED	Religious Education & Sesotho	10 years

Table 6: Religious Education teachers' characteristics

Interviews for religious education teachers (abbreviated REDT and assigned numbers from 1 to 6 in order of interviews) were conducted from the 3rd of May, 2016 to 26th May, 2016. There was a total of six religious education teachers interviewed. Duration for interviews ranges from 30 minutes to 45 minutes depending on informants' willingness as well as the level of interest in the interviews. Interviewees comprised four males and

two females, aged between 34 and 54. Their educational qualifications range from Diploma to Master of Arts in education, with teaching experience ranging between 10 and 34 years. Some participants teach religious education as a single major while others combine it with Sesotho. Only one is an unqualified religious education teacher. Characteristics of schools' principals are summarized in the table below.

Date of Interviews	Interviews Duration	Label	Age	Sex	Qualification	Specialization	Leadership Experience
03/05/2016	25 min	SP1	58	M	BED	English Language & Sesotho	11 years
03/05/2016	28 min	SP2	64	F	BED	English Language & Sesotho	11 years
16/05/2016	50 min	SP3	44	M	BED	Religious Education & Sesotho	20 years
26/05/2016	50 min	SP4	55	F	MED	English Language & Sesotho	9 years
26/05/2016	15 min	SP5	54	F	BED	Business Education	1 years
26/05/2016	60 min	SP6	49	M	BED. Hon	Religious Education & Sesotho	14 years

Table 7: School principal's characteristics

Interviews for school principals (abbreviated SP and assigned numbers from 1 to 6 in order of interviews) were conducted from the 3rd of May, 2016 to 26th May, 2016. The total of 6 school principals was interviewed. Duration for interviews ranges from 15 minutes to 60 minutes. Time difference was determined by willingness, interest in topic and knowledge about the research topic. Interviewees comprised a gender balance of three males and three females even though this had not been predetermined. Participants ranged between 44 and 64 years of age. Their educational qualifications vary from Bachelor degree in Education to Master of Arts in education, with leadership experience ranging between one and 20 years. Subject specializations for principals interviewed include business education, English Language, Sesotho and Religious Education.

4.3 Data solicitation

Information was collected through research questions which were rephrased to form interview questions.

The overarching research question was:

Why do the Christian churches continue to offer Christian centered religious education in church owned schools rather than religious pluralism?

Sub-questions from the main question are:

- Why do the Christian church schools disregard the ratification of the international inclusive education by the Lesotho government as they continue to teach exclusive religious education in their schools?
- Why is it that Christian churches do not embrace religious pluralism in church-owned schools?
- Why do the Christian churches continue to teach single religious tradition in religiously diverse Lesotho society?
- Could it be possible for the Christian churches to introduce religious pluralism in church-owned schools?

Reconstruction of research questions to form interviews questions were:

- Can you explain your understanding of government initiative on inclusive education?
- How can church-owned schools assist the government in the implementation of inclusive education?
- Can you explain your understanding of religious pluralism in relation to religious education?
- Can you explain the reasons for church owned schools to teach Christian religion and no other religious traditions?
- Is it possible to embrace religious pluralism in church owned schools as one strategy for inclusive education?

4.4 Exploratory comments

Following the first step of IPA which involves close reading of the transcripts for a number of times as well as listening to audio recording for several times, the second step was the writing of specific comments on the interview process for each interviewee. Comments are based on what had been observed and reflected upon from the interview experience. The comments were made on the following:

- The content of our discussion
- Language used by interviewee
- Influence of interviewee's characteristics

An example of comments on interview process is provided in the summary below. The example is derived from the sixth school principal – SP6 informant. The preferred sample is based on the fact that the participant was more willing and looking very interested and even took more time in interviews than other interviewees.

Original transcript
• Can you explain your understanding of government initiative on inclusive education?
E-e-e, inclusive education may mean different things such as giving education opportunities to all Basotho or to include people with physical and learning disabilities in to the mainstream education system. Hmm…yes, it can even be achieved through equipping teachers with special education program and improving school infrastructure and environment to accommodate all.
• Prompt: Can you explain further on the issue of environment?
By improving environment I mean that every learner should experience a welcoming atmosphere from the school administration, classroom setting and peers.
Comments
• Showing confidence in the meaning of inclusive education • Inclusion of people with disabilities and creation of inclusive atmosphere • Being an administrator wants his staff to be equipped with special education skills • Identification of improved infrastructure

Original transcript

- How can church owned schools assist the government in the implementation of inclusive education?

I can say that church schools cherished inclusive education long before the government could popularize it. Church schools are found all over the country even in the most rural areas of Lesotho. Yes, I can even say that in our school for example, most teachers and most pupils are from different denominations. A gain, if you can recall, the churches had established different schools for pupils with different disabilities.

- Prompt: Are you saying church schools include pupils of different denominations?

Yes, and now of late we admit even those from initiation school and those pregnant are allowed to return to school after delivery.

Comments

- Influenced by his religious education specialization and administration position
- Overcoming exclusion on cultural and behavioral issues

Original transcript

- Can you explain your understanding of religious pluralism in relation to religious education?

Well! My understanding of religious pluralism in relation to the religious education is that it refers to the inclusion of different religions in the teaching of religious education…It means the teaching of different religions.

- Prompt: Can you say the current religious education is exclusive for not including other religious traditions?

Hmm! Although it does not incorporate other religious traditions, it cannot be concluded that it is exclusive. It is inclusive. Religious education is taught to every pupil regardless of their religious background. All students from different denominations are taught religious education. Indeed for some of them the school is a special place where they began for the first time to acquire knowledge about God. Furthermore, we can say religious education is inclusive because it teaches students to be concerned about the marginalized groups of society. It cultivates inclusive moral values.

Comments

- Understanding of religious pluralism
- Defending Christian religious education
- Changing the voice tone to be more reflective

Original transcript

- Can you explain the reasons for church-owned schools to teach Christian religion and no other religious traditions?

I can say that unlike professional teachers who have been exposed to an understanding on multi-faith traditions, church leaders have not been given that opportunity and as a result will continue to resist it.

- Prompt: Can you explain more on what you mean by resistance from church leaders?

I am sure that there has been an attempt by the government in 2000 in which multi-faith religious education was piloted in certain selected schools. Church leaders stopped such approach to the teaching of religious education abruptly. I would say the reason was lack of exposure to multi-faith approach on the part of church leaders.

Comments

- Not blaming church leaders but expressing his observation
- Knowledge on national education activities

Original transcript

- Can you say there is a possible to embrace religious pluralism in church owned schools as one strategy for inclusive education?

Yes, it is possible but not easy…It is possible because it can gain support from religious education teachers. As a professional religious education teacher, the teaching of single religious education violates my understanding of education which should provide a broad knowledge to students. I said that it is not easy because it should as well find the support from church leaders. I remember that an attempt was made by the government in 2000 to pilot multi-faith religious education in some selected schools, but the process was frustrated by church leaders.

- Prompt: If an attempt was made and got frustrated can we say there is still a possibility of the teaching of pluralistic religious education?

Yes, I believe there it is still possible. The problem with the previous attempt was that it was imposed on church schools by the government. There should be a gradual-step-by-step approach. For example, the current LGSCE Religious Education Syllabus has a portion that introduces students to the concept 'religion'. From that point, it would lead to the knowledge about multi-facets of religion as diverse concept…that cannot be explained by a single religious tradition.

Comments

- Moving the chair forward and backwards to show interest for a change
- Cautious of teacher professional ethics
- Understanding of the philosophy of change
- Religious pluralism should not be imposed on schools
- Selection of words to refer to church leaders – respect

Figure 3: Exploratory comments

4.5 Transforming notes in to emerging themes

Interviews questions were used as a starting point for discussion with series of prompts for further elaboration and clarification. This step represents the third stage of data presentation and analysis in IPA. An example of participants' responses to the interviews questions and emerging themes is provided in the following table. The example is derived from the sixth school principal – SP6 participant.

Original transcript

- Can you explain your understanding of government initiative on inclusive education?

E-e-e, inclusive education may mean different things such as giving education opportunities to all Basotho or to include people with physical and learning disabilities in to the mainstream education system. Hmm…yes, it can even be achieved through equipping teachers with special education program and improving school infrastructure and environment to accommodate all.

- Prompt: Can you explain further on the issue of environment?

By improving environment I mean that every learner should experience a welcoming atmosphere from the school administration, classroom setting and peers.

Emerging themes

- Inclusion of all people in education provision
- Inclusion of people with physical and learning disabilities
- Improvement of school facilities to accommodate all learners
- Improvement of school environment to provide conducive learning atmosphere for all learners

Original transcript

- How can church owned schools assist the government in the implementation of inclusive education?

I can say that church schools cherished inclusive education long before the government could popularize it. Church schools are found all over the country even in the most rural areas of Lesotho. Yes, I can even say that in our school for example, most teachers and most pupils are from different denominations. A gain if you can recall, the churches had established different schools for pupils with different disabilities.

- Prompt: Are you saying church schools include pupils of different denominations?

Yes, and now of late we admit even those from initiation school and those pregnant are allowed to return to school after delivery.

Emerging themes

- Church schools cherish inclusive education through coverage
- Inclusion of staff and pupils from different denominations
- Establishment of schools for disabled pupils
- Inclusion of pregnant girls

Original transcript

- Can you explain your understanding of religious pluralism in relation to religious education?

Well! My understanding of religious pluralism in relation to the religious education is that it refers to the inclusion of different religions in the teaching of religious education…It means the teaching of different religions.

- Prompt: Can you say the current religious education is exclusive for not including other religious traditions?

Hmm! Although it does not incorporate other religious traditions, it cannot be concluded that it is exclusive. It is inclusive. Religious education is taught to every pupil regardless of their religious background. All students from different denominations are taught religious education. Indeed for some of them the school is a special place where they began for the first time to acquire knowledge about God. Furthermore, we can say religious education is inclusive because it teaches students to be concerned about the marginalized groups of society. It cultivates inclusive moral values.

Emerging themes

- Inclusion of different religions in teaching and leaning
- It means the teaching of different religions
- Christian religious education is inclusive
- Providing opportunity all pupils to acquire knowledge about God

Original transcript

- Can you explain the reasons for church owned schools to teach Christian religion and no other religious traditions?

I can say that unlike professional teachers who have been exposed to an understanding on multi-faith traditions, church leaders have not been given that opportunity and as a result will continue to resist it.

- Prompt: Can you explain more on what you mean by resistance from church leaders?

I am not sure whether that there has been an attempt by the government in 2000 in which multi-faith religious education was piloted in certain selected schools. Church leaders stopped such approach to the teaching of religious education abruptly. I would say the reason was lack of exposure to multi-faith approach on the part of church leaders.

Emerging themes

- Church leaders' lack of exposure to the teaching of religious pluralism

Original transcript

- Can you say there is a possible to embrace religious pluralism in church owned schools as one strategy for inclusive education?

Yes, it is possible but not easy…It is possible because it can gain support from religious education teachers. As a professional religious education teacher, the teaching of single religious education violates my understanding of education which should provide a broad knowledge to students. I said that it is not easy because it should as well find the support from church leaders. I remember that an attempt was

made by the government in 2000 to pilot multi-faith religious education in some selected schools, but the process was frustrated by church leaders.

- Prompt: If an attempt was made and got frustrated can we say there is still a possibility of the teaching of pluralistic religious education?

Yes, I believe there it is still possible. The problem with the previous attempt was that it was imposed on church schools by the government. There should be a gradual-step-by-step approach. For example, the current LGSCE Religious Education Syllabus has a portion that introduces students to the concept 'religion'. From that point, it would lead to the knowledge about multi-facets of religion as diverse concept…that cannot be explained by a single religious tradition.

Emergent themes
• Religious education teachers can introduce religious pluralism • Professional ethical principle of teachers • It has to be introduced step-by-step • Religious pluralism should not be imposed on schools • Church leaders have to be exposed to the principles of pluralism

Figure 4: Emerging themes

4.6 Connections across themes

In the fourth stage of data presentation and analysis, connections across emergent themes were established. The first step in this stage was to divide emerging themes under interviews questions and interviews prompts. Then the themes were also grouped into different super-ordinate themes. Under each super-ordinate theme, subordinate themes were arranged according to interviewees' characteristics mainly religious education teachers (REDT's) and school principals (SP's) with numbers representing interviews chronology, for example, REDT1 or SP1 so that it could be traced from which interview each theme came from. The grouping of subordinate themes under super-ordinate themes represents the fifth stage of data analysis in IPA. The table below provides the connections across themes with the construction of super and subordinate themes:

Meaning of inclusive education
Education opportunity for every child (REDT1, REDT3, REDT4, SP1, SP3)
Literacy for all (REDT5)
Including students with physical and learning disabilities (REDT2, REDT5, REDT6, SP4, SP6)
Including all students from different socio, economic, cultural and religious background (SP2, SP4)
Improvement of school environment for favorable learning atmosphere for all learners (SP6)

The role of church owned schools in inclusive education
Inclusion through admission (REDT1, REDT5, SP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6) Inclusion through establishment of special schools for disabled students (REDT2, SP6) Inclusion through persuading its members to send children to school (REDT3) Inclusion through coverage (REDT6, SP6)

Meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education
Teaching for awareness of the existence of different religions (REDT1, REDT2) Teaching multiple religious traditions (SP3, SP6) Knowledge on different dimensions of religion (REDT2) **NB:** Majority claimed to have no idea about religious pluralism. The researcher had to explain what it means for further discussion (REDT3, REDT4, REDT6, SP1, SP2, SP4)

Christian religious education and inclusive education
A compulsory subject (REDT1, REDT5, SP2, SP4) Teaches equality, caring for the vulnerable and the needy ((REDT3, SP6) Holistic approach to human development (REDT4, REDT6, SP3) Addresses social issues that affect all human beings (REDT5, REDT6)

Continuation of mono Christian religion teaching in Lesotho Church owned schools
Christian knowledge (REDT1, REDT2, REDT3) Too much content to be covered (REDT4) All knowledge should be completed with Christian teaching (REDT1) Lesotho is a Christian country (SP1)

The possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho Church owned Schools
Encourage abandonment of Christianity (REDT1, REDT2, SP4) Cause of religious conflicts and violence (REDT3) Undermining the church prime aim of education (SP3) Cause of confusion (SP2) Maintenance of Christian dominance (REDT2) Lack of knowledge on religious pluralism (REDT3, REDT4, REDT6, SP1, SP2, SP6) Step by step through negotiations (SP6)

Figure 5: Connections across themes

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter discusses how data was presented and analyzed through IPA frames. The second step after reading, and re-reading the transcripts as well as listening and re-listening to audio recorder was to give general comments on participants' behavior as the first towards analysis. Exploratory comments were essential in providing additional tool to analyze data since they locate data within its context, that is, how uttered words confirmed the individual feelings and therefore enabling the identification of emerging themes. Connections of emerging themes were established through interviews questions to form both super-ordinates and sub-ordinates themes. The developed

super-ordinates and subordinates set the basis for interpretation of data in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DATA INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

The chapter interprets the results from the analyzed data. Results from data are developed from five super-ordinate themes constructed from interviews questions which were created from research questions. The five super-ordinate themes are meaning of inclusive education, the role of church-owned schools in inclusive education, meaning religious pluralism in relation to religious education, Christian religious education and inclusive education, reasons for church-owned schools for the continued mono Christian religion teaching and the possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education. Under each super-ordinate theme there is a set of sub-ordinate themes for discussion. As Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) explain, themes are interpreted in relation to the existing literature. This means that this section includes both participants' account of their experiences in their own words, and interpretative commentary of the researcher supported by the literature. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) highlight further that the inclusion of participants' verbatim expressions serve two functions. In the first place, it gives the reader an opportunity to follow what has been interpreted. Secondly, it serves the purpose of retaining the voice of the participants' personal experiences and ensures emic perspective.

The five super-ordinate themes forms the major sections of the chapter, while subordinate themes forms the sub sections of the chapter. For example, the major section constructed from the first super-ordinate theme is meaning of inclusive education while subordinate themes are education opportunity for every child, literacy coverage, including students with physical and learning disabilities, equipping teachers with special education skills, improvement of school facilities to accommodate all learners, including all students from different socio, economic, cultural and religious background and Improvement of school environment for favorable learning atmosphere for all learners.

5.2 Meaning of inclusive education

Inclusive education is defined differently from participants' perspectives. The meanings given to inclusive education include education opportunity for every child, literacy coverage, including students with physical and learning disabilities, equipping teachers with special education skills, improvement of school facilities to accommodate all learners, including all students from different socio, economic, cultural and religious background and Improvement of school environment for favorable learning atmosphere for all learners.

5.2.1 Education opportunity for every child

One of the meanings provided by participants for inclusive education is that it means that every child should be provided with education opportunity. Verbatim the participants expressed the following:

> To my understanding, inclusive education means that every Mosotho child must be provided with education and it should be free and compulsory (REDT1)…It means that every child should be provided with basic education…I mean every child should be given opportunity for basic education…Education is a fundamental human right, therefore it has to include everybody (REDT3)…Every child should be given opportunity in education processes (REDT4)…It basically means that every child should be provided with education regardless of age or primary pass grade (SP1)…It means that all should have a right and chance for education…All should be given an opportunity to acquire basic education (SP3).

The idea of linking inclusive education to education opportunity for every child can be understood within "EFA – Education for All" framework. Torres (1999), Miles and Singal (2008) explain that Education for All can be traced back to Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Its Article stated that everyone has the right to education. It further mentioned that education shall be free and compulsory, at least at primary level. UNESCO followed that declaration forty years later by launching the global framework of Education for All. The first global conference for the framework was held in Jomtien (Thailand), in 1990 and was adopted ten years later, in 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, where the participating countries agreed to put of the framework of EFA into action.

Among policies developed in Lesotho within the framework of 'Education for All' were the following as stated by Ministry of Education and Training (2005):

a) The Government shall pursue the achievement of universal and equitable access and completion to ten years of basic education. In this regard, the Government shall provide free and compulsory primary education of a good quality to all Basotho people.
b) Access to secondary education shall be improved through the construction of additional schools, focusing more on remote areas and the densely populated districts.
c) Enrolment and completion at all levels of education shall be expanded and the minimum quality standards shall be raised while enhancing equity particularly for children from disadvantaged groups.
d) Provision of and facilities such as teaching and learning materials as well as adequate school infrastructure, including classrooms, administrative facilities, libraries and laboratories.

Participants' experiences for inclusive education should have therefore been influenced by their knowledge of government adoption of global framework for EFA; hence they emphasize education as a fundamental human right and that basic education should be free and compulsory.

Even though EFA is a broad framework in which inclusive education should have been enshrined, the focus of EFA has always been misunderstood as "schooling for all" that is equated with Universal Primary Education (UPE). Torres (1999) realized that Education for All has been selective. It was mostly geared towards increasing primary school enrollments and reducing gender disparities while exclusive curriculum has been totally ignored. The meanings provided by the participants from their experiences are basically based on this understanding of selective EFA framework which has been the main focus of the government.

5.2.2 Literacy for all

The second meaning of inclusive education provided by only one participant is that it means literacy for all. Verbatim one participant said:

> Inclusive education says that every child should be able to read and write…All should be literate…no illiterate persons at all (REDT5).

Literacy is also enshrined in Education for All. Among the EFA goals espoused in 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, were:

a) Achieving a 50-percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
b) Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2005).

However, literacy for all was basically aimed at illiterate adults, out-of-school youth and drop-outs. In Lesotho, the Ministry of Education and Training (2005) highlights programs and target groups for literacy for all or literacy for life as technically referred to. The main program adopted in Lesotho to achieve literacy for all is NFE – non-formal education and target groups include disadvantaged groups such as herd boys, out-of-school youths, adults who missed on formal education, and retrenched miners. Sub-programs which are an integral part of NFE include Lifelong Learning and Life skills that focus on adult literacy. Other programs of NFE include courses through Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC), The Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS), which is part of the National University of Lesotho, that offer adult education. The other main NFE providers in Lesotho are the NGO's including the Lesotho Association of Non-Formal Education - LANFE, comprising community initiatives, private individuals and some church organizations (Ministry of Education and Training, 2005).

One participant's referring to literacy for all as the meaning of inclusive education is from the experience of literacy for all as an integral part of EFA initiatives. However, literacy for all does not mean inclusive education in inclusive educational programs and setting but education coverage to the educationally disadvantaged groups.

5.2.3 Including students with physical and learning disabilities

Participants further stated that inclusive education means the inclusion of students with physical and learning disabilities. In their words, they said the following:

> Inclusive education means to include students with disabilities (REDT2)… …There should be no school for people with special needs. Students with special needs should be included into mainstream school system…All teachers should be equipped with skills for inclusive education (REDT5). It means that every child and in particular those with disabilities should be included in the mainstream education system (REDT6)…Inclusive education means inclusion of all people regardless of…disability. It addresses issues of …and advocates that school infrastructure should accommodate those with physical disability. They should be incorporated into mainstream education system (SP4)… E-e-e, inclusive education may mean different things such as giving education opportunities to all Basotho or to include people with physical and learning disabilities in to the mainstream education system. Hmm…yes, it can even be achieved through equipping teachers with special education program and improving school infrastructure and environment to accommodate all… Every learner should experience a welcoming atmosphere from the school administration, classroom setting and peers (SP6).

The meaning of inclusive education as referring to the inclusion of students with physical and learning disabilities has always been central. The focus on educating all children in the mainstream education system got impetus at the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, held in Spain in 1994. The conference called for all states to develop policies that would enable all schools in the regular school system to become inclusive schools and serve all children and more particularly those with special educational needs. It emphasized that special needs education for children with physical and learning disabilities cannot be approached in isolation but through major changes in the regular school system such as teaching and learning reforms, schools' infrastructure and teacher training reforms (UNESCO Bangkok, 2009).

Following the international conference on special needs education, Lesotho developed two important policies. The first is the national disability policy – the National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy of 2011. The policy envisages the inclusion and full integration of all citizens of Lesotho with disabilities into all aspects of societal life. The policy has different priority areas for attention. Priority Policy Area 4 has an objective on capacity building which can be achieved through the inclusion of people with disabilities in

education and training programs. The objective states that the inclusion of disabled people in education and training programs can be attained through:

a. Training of specialist educators and ensuring that their training certificates are recognized in terms of remuneration
b. Incorporating special needs education into the teacher-training curriculum
c. Establishing accessible and well equipped specialist education resource centers throughout the country with multi-disciplinary assessment teams which includes health workers and physiotherapists (Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2012).

The second policy is educational policy contained in the legal framework of the Education Act of 2010 in which the Act indicates that the government will strive to:

a. Ensure, as soon as circumstances permit, that a learner who is physically, mentally or otherwise handicapped is given the special treatment, education and care required by his or her condition;
b. Ensure that the learner is free from any form of discrimination in accessing education (Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2012).

The Ministry has the following general policy statement: Ministry of Education will promote the integration of children with special educational needs into regular school system at all levels. In an attempt to implement this policy, the Unit of Special Education developed the following strategies to reach out to children with special needs, their parents, as well as the whole community:

- Providing special education to all children who need it;
- Creating awareness to the whole society about children with special needs and the services available;
- Conducting a study to determine the feasibility of integration as well as to identify children with special educational needs in the regular primary schools;
- Developing in-service teacher training materials to be used by regular school teachers;
- Conducting in-service teacher training; and
- Developing and conducting parent training programs (Mariga & Phachaka, 1993).

Inclusion of disabled children has been at participants experiences through government initiatives. They even explain what has to be done in order to include disabled children into regular school system such as equipping teachers with special education skills and the improvement of school infrastructure to accommodate children with disabilities. This is affirmed by Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka, and Stubbs (1995) that the government conducted awareness-raising activities on how to include disabled students through integration into regular school system. The culmination of awareness-raising was the running of specific workshops for the Special Education Curriculum Committee, District Education Officers, school managers, local chiefs, district administrators and parents of children with and without disabilities.

However, UNICEF (2011) warns that even though inclusive education debate has made a significance contribution in raising awareness about disabled children internationally, it is important to understand that inclusive education is not a philosophy or educational approach exclusively for children with disabilities, but an approach that seeks to include children from all marginalized groups and combat all exclusive practices in the education system. It is recommended that disability should be acknowledged as one of many issues of difference and discrimination, rather than an isolated form of exclusion, and inclusion as a strategy should address all forms of exclusion and discrimination including religious discrimination and exclusion.

5.2.4 Including all students from different socio, economic, cultural and religious background

The other meaning of inclusive education provided by just only two participants is that it means the inclusion of all students from different social, economic, cultural and religious background. In their own words they stated that:

> I would say inclusive education means that all Basotho should be provided with education regardless of their age, religion and pass grade from primary…yes, all differences (SP2)…Inclusive education means inclusion of all people regardless of their social status such as poverty, vulnerability…It addresses the issues of child labor and rejection…(SP4).

This is the comprehensive meaning of inclusive education that does not only focus on a certain area for inclusion but all differences which students may have. The meaning was

adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, held in Salamanca, Spain, June 1994 where the conference proclaimed that inclusive education means overcoming discriminatory education practices and creating welcoming and user-friendly regular schools. The meaning was reaffirmed by the World Education Forum meeting in Dakar, April 2000. The forum explained that inclusive education must include diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through changes in curriculum content, approaches, structures and strategies (UNESCO, 2009). In this sense, inclusive education is therefore a powerful tool for transcending cultural, religious, gender and other differences. It espouses such educational approaches as multicultural, multi-religious, multilingual approaches.

Although participants indicate experience in a comprehensive meaning of inclusive education there is no evidence on awareness raising or implementation of multicultural education in Lesotho.

5.2.5 Improvement of school environment for favourable learning atmosphere for all learners

One participant defines inclusive education as involving improvement of school environment for favorable learning atmosphere for all learners. In the language of the participant:

> ..Hmm…yes…and improving school infrastructure and environment to accommodate all…By improving environment I mean that every learner should experience a welcoming atmosphere from the school administration, classroom setting and peers (SP6).

This explanation also provides a broad definition of inclusive education in which school buildings may not necessarily be patched with a certain religion symbols, or administration in which a certain group of students is considered better than others, or a curriculum content that does not exclude other students and or even the peers that do not discriminate others in terms of their differences. In relation to inclusive curriculum UNESCO (2007) suggests that the curriculum, textbooks and learning materials should be geared towards respecting diversity. School curriculum should strive for eliminating discrimination or prejudice whether explicitly or implicitly in the area of gender, ethnicity, class, caste, language, culture or religion.

In the area of school environment, UNESCO (2007) recommends that school area should provide child-friendly learning environments that do not only seek to equip children with basic learning skills but also to enable them to take control of their lives and to promote justice, democracy, peace and tolerance. The child-friendly learning concept promotes child-seeking, child-centered, gender-sensitive, cultural-sensitive and community-involved pedagogy. Both learners and community members as different as they are feel a sense of belonging and freedom to choose and participate. Inclusive school environment ensures that all students are welcome and seen as contributing and valued members of the school community.

This is the most neglected area in Lesotho, hence one participant shared experience about it. The participant experienced this type of inclusion in 2000 when the government was taking a step to combat discrimination in the area of religion in which his school was one of the selected schools to pilot multi-religious approach, however, that initiative was frustrated by church leaders.

5.2.6 Summary of meanings attached to inclusive education

Meanings attached to inclusive education from participants' point of view can be grouped into two broad categories. The first is the narrow explanation of inclusive education comprising meanings such as *education opportunity for every child* which equates inclusive to the expansion of education infrastructure to accommodate, provide access and encourage the increased number of students as well as reducing educational expenses to encourage increased students enrolment; *literacy for all* which its chief aim is to provide literacy to certain groups of society such as illiterate adults, out-of-school youth and drop-outs. Literacy for all does not mean inclusive education in its broadest term which is inclusive educational programs, practices and settings but education coverage to the educationally disadvantaged groups; *including students with physical and learning disabilities* that particularly aims at including disabled children into regular school system through different strategies such as equipping teachers with special education skills and the improvement of school infrastructure to accommodate children with disabilities. Inclusion of disabled children in the mainstream education system has been popularized and appreciated worldwide, but inclusive education is

more than inclusion of disabled children as it is an educational philosophy and approach that intends to include children from all marginalized groups and combat all exclusive practices in education system. Disability is one of many issues of difference and discrimination, rather than an isolated form of exclusion, and inclusion as a strategy should address all forms of exclusion and discrimination including religious discrimination and exclusion.

Another category of meaning attached has broader perspective. In this category, inclusive education is explained in terms of *including all students from different socio, economic, cultural and religious background* which advocates for a total revolutionary approach to the education system where the meaning of inclusive education that does not only focus on a certain area for inclusion but all differences which students may have. Inclusive education in this sense is regarded a radical strategy in education that transcends cultural, religious, gender and other differences, adopting educational techniques such as multicultural, multi-religious, multilingual approaches. Inclusive education within this category is also understood to be aiming at *improvement of school environment for favorable learning atmosphere for all learners* through transforming school area to be a child-user-friendly learning environment in which the focus is not only to equip children with basic learning skills but also to enable them to take control of their lives and to promote justice, democracy, peace and tolerance. The child-user-friendly learning environment is characterized by school programs that are child-seeking, child-centered, gender-sensitive, cultural-sensitive and community-involved. The school environment allows both learners and community members as different as they may feel develop a sense of belongingness and freedom to choose and participate. Inclusive school environment ensures that all students are welcome and seen as contributing and valued members of the school community.

5.3 The role of church owned schools in inclusive education

The role of the church-owned school in inclusive education according to participants can be measured in the areas of inclusion through admission, inclusion through establishment of special schools for disabled students and inclusion through the church persuading its members to send children.

5.3.1 Inclusion through admission

Participants support inclusiveness of church-owned schools through nondiscriminatory admission policy. To admit students from different denominations, religious traditions and even nonreligious background is understood by participants as an inclusive course of action. Verbatim, they said:

> Church owned schools play a major role in inclusive education in the sense that church schools admit all students regardless of their denominational background or their primary pass grade (REDT1)…Church schools are inclusive because they accommodate every child regardless of primary pass grade…Furthermore, church schools admit all students in spite of their religious background (REDT5)…Church schools admit every person irrespective of age, religion or previous pass grade (SP2)…The aim of the church in establishing schools was to admit all learners irrespective of their social background…Meaning whether they are religious or not religious (SP3)…Church schools have been always aimed at the inclusion of all students and particularly those from disadvantaged families (SP4)…All students including those from initiation, men, women and even pregnant girls are admitted in church schools (SP5).

Participants justify the inclusiveness through admissions that do not discriminate on the basis of denomination, religion, primary pass grade, religion, initiation, age, marital status and pregnancy. Indeed, it could be sustained that from participants' point of view, there is an element of inclusion, looking at church schools change of admission policy. UN (2001) reported that in many church schools of Lesotho, children were admitted on the basis of denominational criterion. Children from other denominations or faiths were often told that the school was full even when there was space. Children who had attended initiation schools while still at school could not be readmitted as the initiation cultural schools were considered incompatible with school/church teachings. Girls who fell pregnant while still in school were expelled from school. Refusing a space in school for children from other faiths is also confirmed by a court case (Case No: CIV/APN/124/99, Media Neutral Citation: [1999] LSCA 72 Judgment Date: 26 July, 1999) in which Matumane and Others v Makhalong LEC (Lesotho Evangelical Church) Primary School. The church school had refused to admit more than 16 children on the basis that their parents had deserted the LEC and joined the Jehova's Witnesses sect (The High Court of Lesotho, 1999).

In relation to age, State University (2016) affirms that the education system of Lesotho has always been divided into age groups. First grade has been for children aged 6 or 7

with the aim that at age of 18 or 19 they would have completed their higher secondary education. Therefore, age criterion had always been used, but not only in church schools but in all Lesotho schools. State University (2016) further indicates that following completion of the seventh year of primary level, an exam was prepared and administered by the Department of Education. The result of that exam became the most important criterion for admission into secondary education, or high school. However, because of the shortage of secondary school places, passing the Lesotho Primary School Leaving Certificate, did not guarantee admission into a high school. Only those with best pass grade could be admitted. However, this did not only explain admission criterion in church schools, but included government, community and privately owned schools.

If from their experiences such discriminations are no longer experienced in the church schools, participants are justified to view church schools as becoming more inclusive than before. However, this change of church schools' admission policy is far from being qualified in inclusive education initiative.

5.3.2 Inclusion through establishment of special schools for disabled students

Some participants explained that church schools have been inclusive even before the government popularized inclusive education since the churches had already considered the education for disabled. In their own words they say:

> I believe the church had implemented inclusive education long before the government could pick it up. Before the government could talk about inclusive education, the church had already established schools for people with disabilities (REDT2)…Again, if you can recall, the churches had established different schools for pupils with different disabilities (SP6).

Here, participants link inclusive education with the inclusion of people with disability and such inclusion is understood in terms of providing education for disabled children rather than including disabled children in regular, mainstream education system. Even though this could be argued as not necessarily meaning inclusion but separation, in participants' view, at least the church had something for people with disabilities. From their experience, they had seen church's initiatives for disabled education. Mkandawire, Maphale and Tseeke (2016) contend that prior to the 1980s, education and care for children with disabilities was provided by the churches. St. Bernadette Centre for the

Blind was the first school to be established in 1971 by the Roman Catholic Church in Maseru. Visually impaired children could be taught up to the Standard 7. From St Bernadette, they could be admitted at St Catharine High School, an Anglican church-owned school where they could enjoy the same curriculum as other students up to the junior secondary level. Those intending to proceed to the senior secondary level were exempted from other subject such as mathematics, science and geography due to lack of education facilities required in the teaching of these subjects.

For the deaf, Matlosa and Matobo (2005) mention that from the 1980s, the only schools established were St Paul School for the Deaf, which was owned by the Roman Catholic Church where the deaf could be taught up to Standard 3. From there, they could proceed to Mount Royal Primary School, also owned by the Roman Catholic Church where they had opportunity to be integrated into regular school system up to the completion of PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination) and be awarded with primary education certificates as their end of educational journey.

It is from these experiences where participants based their argument that the church schools adopted inclusive education long before the government could take strong inclusive education initiatives. Even though these attempts do not qualify to be explained as inclusive rather segregation and integration, according to the participants, at least the churches had done something to realize the need for education for children with special needs.

5.3.3 Inclusion through persuading its members to send children to school

One participant believes that the church contributed in inclusive education through persuading its members to send their children to school. In verbatim the participant said:

> Church plays a major role in inclusive education. It encourages its members to allow their children to attend school (REDT3).

For the participant, inclusive education means that all should be provided with education opportunity. Therefore through its persuasive role of encouraging its members to send their children to school, the church is responsive to inclusive education initiative.

The participant’s experience of the role of the church to persuade parents to send their children to school can be traced from the history of the missionary education which may

still have influence even today. Missionary education was persuasive for its objectives were:

a. To maintain the Christian order and tradition;
b. To convert the Basotho people to their religious beliefs and culture;
c. To challenge the old Sotho society with the aim of replacing it with the western Christian ones;
d. To create a new class of persons who form an aristocratic, privileged and loyal group to act as interpreters between them and the people at large; and,
e. To prepare young women for effective reading of the Bible and for home support services, as well as for clerical and interpreter support services for men (Ramokoena, 2013; Matśela, 2006).

The persuasive education strategy is resembled by modern free and compulsory education as one strategy for inclusive education. With the advent of EFA – Education For All and IE – Inclusive Education, the government of Lesotho through the Education Act of 2010 has made primary education free and compulsory. Parents who fail to send their children to school are liable for offence and could be found guilty and be sentenced by courts of law (Government of Lesotho, 2010).

Therefore, according to participant's experience, if the missionary church was persuading Christian children to attend school, and the government is persuading Basotho children to attend the school in the name of inclusive education, then the church promoted inclusive education. Nonetheless, in relation to government regulation, this does not fall under inclusive education principles, but within EFA.

5.3.4 Inclusion through coverage

Some participants believe that church schools are assisting the government in inclusive education programs through establishment of schools all over the country to make education accessible to all. Participants said:

> If you look around the country you will realize that many schools are church owned schools, therefore the church has always been sensitive of inclusive education (REDT6)…Church schools are found all over the country even in the most rural areas of Lesotho (SP6).

The participants' experience is based on the fact that one of the government strategies towards inclusive education was to increase the number of schools in Lesotho. According to Ministry of Education and Training (2005), since the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2000 as strategy for EFA, the government has been building additional schools, mainly in rural areas and by 2005 there were already 120 newly built government schools. There was a considerable number of newly built community schools. However, it is difficult to distinguish these community schools from government schools as the government takes full responsibility in their infrastructure, policies and financial running of the schools.

Even though there was such increase in the number of government schools, the church-owned schools continued to outnumber government combined with community schools. The 2010 Education Statistics indicates the church owns 81% of primary schools, while the government and community constituted 11% and 4% respectively, making the total number 15% (The Government of Lesotho, 2010).

Therefore, from the experience of increased number of schools in which inclusive education is equated to education accessibility for all, the participants concluded that inclusive education can be achieved through the increased number of schools in which case, the church seems to have assisted the government as it has more schools covering the entire area of Lesotho. However, inclusive education is about developing inclusive requirements in education, not expanding education coverage.

5.3.5 Summary of the role of church owned schools in inclusive education

The role of the church in the promotion of inclusive education is explained in a narrow literal meaning of inclusion. Inclusiveness of the church schools is in the first place viewed from *inclusion through admission.* Inclusion through admission simply explains the change of church owned schools' admission policy where children were admitted on the basis of denominational criterion. Children were forced to find a place in their denomination or face rejection from other denominations. Cultural practices which were condemned by the church such as initiation could also be used to deny a child a place in a church school. Behavior that was considered incompatible with church teaching as such girl pregnancy could be used to exclude children from church schools. Therefore,

the change of church's attitude in admitting those previously rejected is understood as inclusion. But this is a narrow inclusive perspective that simply means to accommodate those who were previously discriminated against.

The other point raised by participants in relation to the promotion of inclusive education in church owned schools *is inclusion through establishment of special schools for disabled students*. This also resembles a narrow meaning of inclusive education in which inclusion refers to realization and provision of educational needs to disabled children. Two strategies were employed, mainly to establish schools for the disabled and then integrating them into regular school system. This does not qualify for inclusive education, rather, segregation and integration. Students with disabilities were segregated from others to a particular level of study and then integrated into regular system and sometimes to a certain level of education or to do certain subjects different from their peers without disabilities.

The other point in which the church is believed to be contributing in inclusive education is *through persuading its members to send children to school*. The persuasive strategy is as well a narrow understanding of inclusive education. Persuasive tactics have been the characteristic of the church's education which traditionally has been used for different purposes such as maintaining Christian order and tradition, converting the Basotho people to Christian beliefs and culture, to replace Sotho societal values with western Christian values, to create a new class of persons who form an aristocratic, privileged and loyal group to act as interpreters between the missionaries and the people at large and to prepare young women for effective reading of the bible and for home support services, as well as for clerical ad interpreter support services for men. The persuasive attitude of the church has been revived through government initiatives for EFA in free and compulsory education. However, persuasive tactic does not qualify for principles of inclusive education, but just encourage school attendance.

The other narrow view of inclusive education initiated by the church identified by participants is *inclusion through coverage* in which the church owns a greater number of schools for greater students' enrolment. However, increased number may not

necessarily mean inclusion but increased exclusion if the principles of inclusive education are not met.

5.4 Meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education

The meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education according to research participants includes teaching for awareness of the existence of different religions and teaching multiple religious traditions. However, the majority claimed to have no idea about religious pluralism. The researcher had to explain what it means for further discussion.

5.4.1 Teaching for awareness of the existence of different religions

In the first place, the research participants define the meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education as the teaching for awareness of the existence of different religions. In their own words, participants said:

> Religious pluralism means different religions which people should be aware of their existence in order to promote toleration between different religions (REDT1)…Religious education has to introduce different religions. Students should know about the existence of different religions (REDT2).

The meaning of religious pluralism in the context of religious education as referring to the teaching of awareness of the existence of different religions emanates from the experience of the current LGCSE Religious Education syllabus. The syllabus begins with the information highlighting the existence of some major religions. The third topic of the syllabus is “Diversity in religion: Candidates should be aware of examples of different types of religions (Theistic and Non-theistic)” (NCDC, 2013). This topic intends to make students aware of the existence of other religions without learning those religions, about them or from them. Hence, this is the only portion deviating from the entire syllabus which is entirely Luke-Acts.

The view that awareness to the existence of other religions may promote religious tolerance has been supported by other religion philosophers. Quinn (2001) opines that many philosophers have recently begun to turn their attention on the relationship between religious diversity and religious tolerance. Their main focus is on whether awareness of religious diversity might lead to greater religious tolerance. Their argument is that the realization of the undeniable reality of the existence of religious

diversity will eventually weaken an individual's position that his/her religious perspective is superior to the perspectives of others and that weakened position will finally lead to greater religious tolerance. That is, such an individual will end up accepting others and lessen confrontational attitude toward others of different religious convictions.

However, this approach to religious diversity has been criticized by other religion philosophers who argue that awareness of the existence of religious diversity cannot weaken personal commitment to the superiority of his/her religious convictions. It only informs an individual of his/her difference without arming him/her with the necessary tools to critically reflect objectively on his/her superiority position. To be just made aware of reality of religious diversity may not reduce individual justified confidence in one's beliefs but makes one aware of one's difference which in turn will make one feel threatened and thus, in an attempt to "stand up for the truths" one still firmly believes in, may become even more intolerant of those with other perspectives (Hasker, 2008).

Therefore participants experience based on the current syllabus that awareness to the existence of religious diversity can be equated to religious pluralism that promotes religious tolerance is basically challenged.

5.4.2 Teaching multiple religious traditions

Some participants explain that religious pluralism in relation to religious education means the teaching of multiple religious traditions.

In their own words, they said:

> Religious pluralism is an approach for diversity in religion. In the teaching of religious education, it advocates for the teaching of multiple religions (SP3)…Religious pluralism means inclusion of different religions in the teaching of religious education…The teaching and learning of different religions (SP6).

Informants view about religious pluralism in the teaching of religious education corresponds with many proponents of pluralistic religious education. As Kunzman (2006) observed, many religious education educators agree that increasing student knowledge on diverse religious perspectives is likely to have positive social outcomes. It is often argued that, by developing students' abilities to comprehend diversity, including

religious diversity, prepares them to live in a peaceful, productive manner with those with differing cultural and/or religious values.

Wuthnow (2006) opines that the teaching of religious pluralism should adopt “reflective pluralism” approach. To engage in this approach is more than simply becoming aware of the existence of the other, or striving to tolerate or to live peacefully with those whom one is different from, or even to attempt to develop an empathetic understanding of diverse religions. Reflective pluralism means intentionally and purposefully engaging with people and groups whose religious beliefs and practices are fundamentally different from one's own. Such engagement should be guided by:

a. Willingness to learn from other;
b. recognition that since all of our religious beliefs, depend on a point of view shaped by the culture in which we live, as opposed to their inherently superior nature; and
c. Willingness to compromise in the sense that we must be willing to move out of our social and emotional comfort zones in order to meet with others at workable point of view (Wuthnow, 2005).

The results of engagement is not simply to minimize the likelihood of religious tensions, conflicts, and violence that have characterized human history, but engagement that allows different religious groups to focus on the shared concerns for basic human dignity which is found in the teachings of many of the world’s religions and which can furnish a basis for inter-religious cooperation to combat social ills and meet basic social needs (Wuthnow, 2005).

According to Wuthnow (2005), encouraging students in school setting to become reflective pluralists would enable them realize that:

a. The beliefs of many religions are equally valid expressions of faith for a particular religious group, and those upholding such expressions should be allowed or even encouraged to be maintained.
b. All religious believers of different faiths should focus and explore the commonality with their different religions in order to reduce violent religious conflicts and promote socially beneficial inter-religious cooperation.

c. These outcomes prepare students to live in a peaceful, productive manner in a religiously diverse social context.
d. The increased focus on the commonalities in diverse religions might well result in more peaceful, mutually beneficial interaction among followers of diverse religions.

Therefore, this justifies participants' experiences on the meaning of religious pluralism in the teaching and learning context. However, there are no signs of such understanding in the context of Lesotho's teaching and learning of religious education.

5.4.3 Summary of the meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education

The majority of participants claimed not to be enlightened in relation to religious pluralism. The concept religious pluralism was a new phenomenon altogether. Some of those who claimed to know it referred to it as *teaching for awareness of the existence of different religions*. Participants constructed the meaning of religious pluralism in the context of religious education to be referring to the teaching of awareness of the existence of different religions from the experience of the current LGCSE Religious Education syllabus. The syllabus begins the topic on "Diversity in religion" in which students are expected to be aware of different types of religions such as theistic and non-theistic and atheistic religions. This topic intends to make students aware of the existence of other religions without learning about or from those religions. However, to be made aware of the existence of religious diversity does not promote pluralism and may make one to be even more committed to his/her difference and thereby escalates exclusivism.

There are some participants who understand the meaning of religious pluralism in the teaching of religious education. They refer to it as *teaching multiple religious traditions*. Although pluralistic teaching of religious education has not been adopted in Lesotho, it is believed that it enhances religious tolerance in that students are taught that all religious faiths are equally valid and should be respected, and all religious believers of different faiths can engage in exploring the commonality within different religious traditions in order to reduce violent religious conflicts and promote socially beneficial

inter-religious cooperation. Pluralistic religious education prepares students to live in a peaceful, productive manner in a religiously diverse social context.

5.5 Christian religious education and inclusive education

Research informants believe that religious education taught in Lesotho schools which is Christian oriented aspires for inclusive education. They say it is inclusive because it is a compulsory subject; it teaches equality and caring for the vulnerable and the needy; it employs holistic approach to human development; it addresses social issues that affect all human beings; equal knowledge for all; and provides conversion opportunity for non-Christian students.

5.5.1 A compulsory subject

For some participants, particularly those in whose schools religious education is a compulsory subject, believe that the decision to enforce the subject for all students is the promotion of inclusiveness. That is, religious education includes every student since it is offered to all. They remarked:

> Religious education taught in Lesotho church schools is inclusive in the sense that it is compulsory and done by all students regardless of their religious or irreligious background. It is intended to develop values and virtues congruent to Basotho society as a Christian society (REDT1)…Religious education includes all because all are taught Christianity in one classroom (REDT5)…it is inclusive because all students are doing religious education to inculcate good moral behavior and social cohesion (SP2)…All students are required to study religious education regardless of their denominational or irreligious background (SP4).

The participants' experience of inclusive education emanating from the inclusion of all students within one classroom and same subject stems from the complexity of inclusive education program which may lead to some contradictions. Inclusive education encompasses catchwords such as:

a) "A school for all" – which means that all knowledge and experience about the development of children should take place in an environment where self-esteem and positive conception of oneself are promoted through school environment that allows active participation and fellowship in all school activities including curriculum content (UNESCO, 2009). Therefore, being in the same classroom of religious education means all are included.

b) “Equality” – which means all students, should be provided with equal educational opportunities including a common curriculum for all, based upon differentiated and/or individualized instruction, rather than an alternative curriculum being developed for a certain group of students (UNICEF, 2011). This means all students are provided with equal opportunity of learning religious education even though some are different in the sense of not being members of the religion being taught.

c) “Uniformity” – which means the teaching of particular values that build towards oneness or sameness of all students. The goal of inclusion is equated to homogeneity, and the purpose of schools is to impart a character of uniformity as the fundamental principle infusing the whole, in this context, the whole is based upon principles of Christianity. Inclusive education means the production of Christian homogeneity (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011). This is supported by participants’ views that the intention of Christian religion is to develop values and virtues congruent to Basotho society as a Christian society and all students are doing religious education to inculcate good moral behavior and social cohesion.

d) “Accommodation” – which means that some learners should be welcomed. Walton and Lloyd (2011) explain that the accommodation element of inclusive education means hospitality which has positive implications since it is associated with welcoming and being responsible in meeting the needs of those welcomed. However, to think of and practice inclusion as hospitality means that there are learners who are guests and who do not belong into the school by right. There are those who have to be welcomed, accommodated, served and catered for. In this context, it means that learners, who do not belong to the religion by right, have to be accommodated.

e) “Integration” – The term has been widely used within inclusive education to mean the process of bringing children with disabilities from special schools or out of school into mainstream schools (also called mainstreaming). That is, into teaching and learning experience to which they have not been exposed. Integration education process is generally based on the conviction that disabled child has to be changed, or rehabilitated, to fit into the regular school system and

society. In this process, the disabled are expected to change in order to fit into existing mainstream school system in order to cope within it. For example, a deaf child may wear a hearing-aid and be expected to learn to talk in order to fit in, while the teachers and other children are not expected to learn sign language, or other forms of communication. In order to progress to another level, a child with learning difficulties is expected to pass standardized tests offered to all children (Safe the Children, 2002; Stubbs, 2002). In the context of religious education, integration means the process of bringing children into learning Christian values. In religious terms it has same meaning as evangelism – making people to believe in good news of their salvation. Those who have not been converted or from other religions are expected to change or rehabilitated in order to fit into religion.

However, this view of inclusive education has been criticized. It has been argued that there has been misconception of a school for all, equality and uniformity which has been misrepresented by the simple strategy of "one-size-fits-all," which means sameness. Portelli (2011) recommends that inclusive education born out of democratic principles of education and as such, should be explained in democratic terms which objected to such practices as assimilation – or making everyone the same. Democratic values would include ethics of equity which is different from one-size-fits-all. While equality may be identical to sameness, equity means taking students differences of gender, race, culture religion and different forms of disabilities consideration and attempting to include them in their learning experiences. Inclusive education calls for critical and open discussions, rather than the silencing of people's views. It calls for social justice that aims to fulfill the needs of all, instead of addressing the needs of the few, as well as opening of possibilities, rather than fatalism attitude (Portelli, 2011).

Accommodation and integration are as well criticized for failing the principles of democratic inclusive education. They are based on simple liberal multiculturalism approach which seeks to impose particular values in order that those who are different could be assimilated into dominant school culture or religion. The goal of inclusive education within liberal multiculturalism is to produce homogeneity and schools are perceived to be imparting a character of wholeness based upon principles of

Christianity. True democratic inclusion embraces cultural production which views the difference as the central value to be encouraged and from which the production of culture begins (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011). Cultural production relates to what Stubbs (2002) refers to as mainstreaming which is opposed to accommodation and integration. Mainstreaming refers to a political process of bringing an issue from the margins into the mainstream so that it could find appreciation and acceptance from the majority. It means bringing an agenda from the sideline with the sole purpose of changing people's mindset about it so that instead of understanding it as a fringe issue, it becomes a core component in the debate. In this sense, getting different religious traditions through mainstreaming facilitates more open debate on religious issues that would lead towards acceptance.

5.5.2 Christian religious education teaches equality, caring for the vulnerable and the needy

Some participants define the inclusiveness of Christian religious education in terms of its content. They say that it is inclusive because it teaches about the inclusive principles of equality, caring for the vulnerable and the needy.

The participants expressed that:

> Religious education changes lives for all students. Its chief aim is to promote equality by encouraging those who have to share with those who don't have. The poor and the vulnerable students are assisted with education necessities by their peers from the knowledge acquired from learning religious education…Religious education teaches about oneness, therefore promote inclusion (REDT3)…Religious education is inclusive in the sense that it teaches students to be concerned about the marginalized groups of society…(SP6).

The participants' understanding that Christian religious education promotes inclusive education through teaching about equality, accepting and caring for others is based on their experience emanating through the convictions that inclusion is a philosophy that urges schools to create an atmosphere where everyone is valued and cared for, regardless of differences. At the center of this philosophy of inclusion are the beliefs that everyone belongs and all depend on each other. Inclusive process involves promoting the values and relations that enable people to respect for and value the dignity of each individual, diversity, pluralism, tolerance, non-discrimination, non-violence, equality of

opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons (Bui, Quirk, Almazan & Valenti, 2010).

Therefore, for participants, these values are cultivated through the teaching of Christian religious education and as a result, Christian religious education contributes in the promotion of inclusive education. However, this type of inclusion is referred to as prejudice in which one religion is believed to promote necessary values for all. As Camicia (2007) argues, prejudice is often perpetuated in school through official knowledge which is elevated to the status of being truth, normal, or natural and having necessary skills needed by all. Official knowledge, which in this case is Christian teaching, lulls students into a hegemonic sleep by holding itself beneficial to all. Because students of other religious traditions are not encouraged to question the source, perspective, or quality of knowledge claims, prejudice is strengthened, extended, legitimized, and reproduced throughout the school tenure into the society. This justifies that religious exclusion is so embedded in Basotho society that prejudicial attitudes remain largely unrecognized.

5.5.3 Holistic approach to human development

Some participants believe that Christian religious education promotes inclusive education through a holistic approach to human development. In this sense, inclusive education is synonymous to the holistic approach to human development. In their words, they said:

> Religious education contributes in inclusive education through holistic approach of promoting all human abilities (REDT4)…The knowledge and skills they (students) get from Christianity help them in their life context (REDT6)…Religious education is inclusive in the sense that it includes the wholeness of a person – socially, culturally, intellectually and emotionally (SP3).

The idea that inclusive education means a holistic approach to the teaching of Christian religious is a result of participants experience from the confusion caused by the initial emphasis on the link between inclusive education and special education. A considerable literature on inclusive education had constantly linked inclusive education with special education. In Lesotho for example, Matlosa and Matobo (2005) link inclusive education with special education for the deaf. In their study conducted in Lesotho, Khoaeane and Naong (2015), argue that the failure to implement inclusive

education in Lesotho is due to lack of special education resources. Mkandawire, Maphale and Tseeke (2016) argue for full implementation of special education for inclusive education in Lesotho. The focus of the research paper by Mosia (2014) on inclusive education in Lesotho is for learners with special educational needs. However, it was realized that there was a need to broaden the scope of inclusive education to adapt a more holistic approach.

The broadening of the scope of inclusive education according to Stubbs (2002) came with the realization that inclusive education related to special education assumes that there is a special group of children with special educational needs and who are often called 'special needs children'. However, this assumption could not be substantiated because:

a. It is possible that any child can experience difficulty in learning.
b. A number of disabled children can demonstrate normal learning abilities, except problems with access to learning facilities, but continued to be described as 'special needs children'.
c. Some of learners with intellectual impairment could learn very well in certain areas, or at certain stages in their life.

Generally, what is referred to as special education, does not conform to the term 'special' and in the last analysis, what is often called 'special' becomes ordinary learning needs (Stubbs, 2002).

The narrowly inclusive education emphasized with the need for special education proposes 'special methods', 'special teachers', 'special environments' and 'special equipment' which are needed in the teaching of 'special children'. These special education necessities according Stubbs (2002) seem to be treating children with disabilities as different. Whereas all children need special support, good child-focused methods, conducive learning, special education focuses on the disabled child as a problem that needs special attention.

The confusion was caused by a shift from inclusive education that was narrowly explained to a more holistic approach of inclusive education which for participants'

experience simply meant the education that addresses the broadest development of the whole person at the cognitive and affective levels. Whereas holistic inclusive education according to Stubbs (2002) includes in-formal and non-formal education, education at home and school, agricultural education in the fields, specific religious education in mosques, temples, churches and all forms of customary and traditional education.

5.5.4 Christian religious education addresses social issues that affect all human beings

Christian religious education is justified by some participants as being inclusive since it addresses social issues that affect all human beings. Verbatim they said:

> The current religious education even though it is Christian based, it addresses social issues and therefore inclusive (REDT5)…Religious education include all students because in the topic "religion and society" we apply Christian teaching to our context. All students apply it regardless of their religious background. The knowledge and skills they get from Christianity help them in their life context (REDT6).

In other words, the knowledge and skills for life issues acquired from Christian education qualifies Christian religious education to be inclusive. Participants might have experienced the link between inclusive education and skills for social issues from the fact that inclusive education has always been associated with life skills education. There is no consensus on the definition of 'life skills'. According to UNICEF:

> Life skills are psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. They are loosely grouped into three broad categories of skills: cognitive skills for analyzing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others (UNICEF, 2012:7-8).

The link between life skills education (LSE) and inclusive education can be established from Goal: 3 and Goal: 6 of Dakar Framework for Action on EFA. In April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to achieve Education for All, this time by 2015. The framework for action was specified in six goals with two of the six, mainly, 3 and 4 making reference to life skills as essential component in EFA.

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all, so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNICE, 2013:vii).

Since inclusive education has been bred from EFA and a program to ensure that education is indeed for all, life skills became one of the features of inclusive education. Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life context. Life skills knowledge and competence can be applied in the context of health and social events, including but not limited to prevention of drug use, sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS prevention and suicide prevention (Kolosoa & Makhakhane, 2008).

In Lesotho, life skills education was introduced in primary and secondary schools in 2008 with the chief aim of equipping learners with various life skills in order to promote acceptable attitudes and behaviors. In teacher training college (LCE) and the National University, it was introduced in 2006 (Kolosoa & Makhakhane, 2008).

It is generally agreed that moral values are prerequisite to inclusive education since learning together requires tolerance, acceptance, equality and caring for one another (Sinclair et al., 2008). It is also agreed that religious education continues to be a vehicle for transmitting values desired for inclusive education. However, the teaching of single religious tradition has been criticized as indoctrination, discriminative, intolerance and a source for religious conflicts (Women Educational Researchers of Kenya, 2015) and therefore could not be justified in anyway within inclusive education initiative.

5.5.5 Summary of Christian religious education and inclusive education

Participants believe that Christian religious education promotes inclusive education since it is *a compulsory subject.* The idea that compulsory school subject promotes inclusiveness might come from inclusivity catchwords such as “A school for all” – which may be translated into classroom for all and therefore means to be in same religious education classroom, “Equality” – which means equal education opportunity including a

common curriculum for all and therefore this commonness is enhanced through the same religious education curriculum, “Uniformity” – which means the teaching of particular values that build towards oneness or sameness of all student that can be achieved through teaching Christian values for all, “Accommodation” – which means that some learners who had experienced exclusion or not belonging should feel welcomed and this would mean students from outside Christianity should feel accommodated by learning about Christianity, and “Integration” – The term that has been widely used within inclusive education to mean the process of bringing children with disabilities from special schools or out of school into mainstream schools. That is, into teaching and learning experience which they have not been exposed to. Integration education process is generally based on the conviction that disabled child has to be changed, or rehabilitated in order to fit in to the regular school system and society. For example, a deaf child may wear a hearing aid and be expected to learn to talk in order to fit in, while the teachers and other children are not expected to learn sign language, or other forms of communication. In order to progress to another level, a child with learning difficulties is expected to pass standardized tests offered to all children. In the context of religious education, integration means the process of bringing children into learning Christian values. In religious terms, it has the same meaning as evangelism – making people to believe in to Good News of salvation. Those who have not been converted or are from other religions are expected to change or rehabilitated in order to fit into religion. In the context of religious education, the approach is to promote and elevate a certain religion against others.

Christian religious education is also believed to promote inclusive education since it *teaches equality, caring for the vulnerable and the needy*. Equality and caring for the vulnerable and the needy are believed to be the values that can only be cultivated through Christian religious education. However, rather than being inclusive, it is a prejudice approach in which Christian teaching is elevated to the status of being truth, normal, or natural and having necessary skills needed by all with the purpose of disqualifying other religious traditions.

Inclusiveness of Christian religious education is supported through *holistic approach to human development*. This conviction is based on individual growth in which personal development should address the broadest development at both cognitive and affective levels as though Christian religious education is the only perfect religious education capable of the entire human growth. This is a prejudice approach in which knowledge from one religion can be capable of holistic human development, whereas holistic religious approach within inclusive education means knowledgeable about all religious and non-religious traditions and their contribution to human life.

Christian religious education is as well assumed to promote inclusive education since it *addresses social issues that affect all human beings*. The assumption is based on the link between religious education and Life Skills. Life skills refer to abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life context. While agreeable the religious education imparts skills and values for inclusive education, single religious tradition has been criticized as indoctrination, discriminative, intolerance and a source for religious conflicts.

5.6 Continuation of mono Christian religion teaching in Lesotho church-owned schools

Participants suggest that the reasons for the continuation of the teaching of only Christian religious education in church-owned schools include the need for Christian knowledge, the fact that all knowledge is incomplete without Christian teaching, the importance of knowledge about God the creator, the centrality of Biblical teaching and avoidance of confusion that may be caused by the teaching of other religions beside Christianity.

5.6.1 Christian knowledge

Some participants ascribe to the acquiring of Christian knowledge as the basis for the continuation of the teaching of single Christian tradition in Lesotho schools. They say that the sole purpose of the establishment of schools was to impart Christian knowledge.

They claim:

> It is not possible to teach multi-religious education that treats all religions as equal because Christian schools have been established with the sole purpose of teaching Christianity…Yes, they can know about other religions just to make them aware of their existence, but not teaching about their beliefs and practices which would be to deprive of Christianity and the church their sole purpose of schooling (REDT1)…Less than quarter information about different religions has already been introduced which in my view enough to allow the domination of Christian doctrine in church owned schools (REDT2)…The (church) schools themselves are divided into denominations e.g. Anglican schools, Evangelical schools and Roman Catholic schools. This means each denomination promotes its own doctrine….The schools were established with the purpose of promoting knowledge on its doctrine (REDT3).

The idea that church schools have been established to propagate Christianity has always dominated discussion in the Lesotho education system and has been discussed extensively in the background to study problem of this research (1.2). However, the basic argument of this research is that there are now pressing developments to move from missionary educational ideology of propagation of Christian doctrines in Lesotho.

These developments include the following:

a. Lesotho is no longer under colonial rule but a democratic country that supports freedom of religion (Lesotho, 1993).
b. There is an increasing number of non-Christian students in Lesotho schools including church owned schools who also have a right and freedom to their own religions (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015).
c. Church schools are no longer classified as private/independent schools but public schools since they are run and administered by government funds (Lesotho Government Gazette: Extraordinary, 2010), and this means they have obligation towards government initiative on inclusive education.
d. Lesotho ratified different international conventions, declarations and recommendations for inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 2005).

5.6.2 Too much content to be covered

One participant argues that the teaching of single religious tradition provides enough content to be covered as opposed to the teaching of many religions which may present a lot of content for the students.

The participants expressed the following:

> Teaching different religions might increase content which may not possible to be covered within two years of secondary education and as a result leave religious education chaotic (REDT4).

The argument that the teaching of multi-faith religious education would require a lot of content may be the result of fear of the 'other' or experience from the current religious education. The current religious education is mainly about teaching Christian doctrine and values. Since its chief aim is to deepen the roots of faith in Christianity, it covers a lot of content. However, even the current Christian religious education is selective. For example, at junior secondary level, students only learn selected topics from the Old and New Testaments while at senior secondary school, they learn the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of Apostles.

The content of pluralistic religious education is underpinned in the first place by its scope.

The scope of pluralistic religious education is guided by the following:

a. Realization that illiteracy regarding religion is widespread.
b. This illiteracy is a source of prejudice and antagonism.
c. This illiteracy can be diminished by teaching from religion in public schools using a non-devotional but academic perspective (Gillard, 1999).

The content therefore includes the following:

a. Encouraging student awareness of religions in their diversity;
b. Studying religion as a phenomenon. That is, what religion is and can offer for human development, and not how to follow or practice a particular religion;
c. Exposing students to a diversity of religious views, and not imposing any particular religious view; and
d. Educating students about all religions, but not promoting or denigrating religion (Gillard, 1999).

In this sense, the content is clear and manageable and the main purpose cannot necessarily mean a lot of content, as to protect students against other religions.

5.6.3 All knowledge should be completed with Christian teaching

One participant believes that Christian religious education should be sustained because all knowledge is incomplete without Christian knowledge. According to participants:

> Church schools were established to develop Christian teaching. The purpose is that students should be educated in other forms of knowledge, but aligned with Christian teaching (REDT1).

Thus, from the participants' experience, other subjects taught in church schools are just additional while prime knowledge is gained from Christian teaching. Participant experience might come from church authorities. Recently, Radio Vatican (2015) reported that during the *ad limina* visit to the Vatican by the bishops of Namibia and Lesotho on 24 April 2015, Pope Francis acknowledged freedom of religion in Lesotho which he encourages the church that in this climate of freedom, the Catholic Church in Lesotho is able to work freely for a deepening of faith among its adherents through education. He insisted that since there are numerous challenges that confronted societies, bishops are charged with an important responsibility of promoting the Christian faith in particular through formal education. The pope concedes that the apparent decrease in vocations to the priesthood and religious life requires priests to seize every opportunity to teach about the fulfilling and joyful experience of offering one's life to Christ.

In this sense, the pope affirms Christian teaching as the foundation of all knowledge to address different people's predicaments as well as a tool for canvassing for religious calling. Lesotho Catholic Bishop's Conference (LCSC) (2015), highlights that the report by the Catholic Schools Secretariat (CSC) mentioned that initially, the rationale behind the establishment of Catholic schools was to teach reading and writing in order to enhance the absorption of Biblical and Christian values wherever possible in the country. The prime motive of the Catholic Church was the evangelization of the whole Christian person. The shift from such purpose came after the declaration made by the Bishop De Mazenod to his congregation that the church in Lesotho should not waste its time trying to convert a few heretics when there are two million Africans waiting to receive Good News; therefore, this encourages the church to ensure that it establishes sound educational institutions in Lesotho. As a result, Catholic schools today still remain places where integral formation occurs, where culture and faith are integrated and where formation of the entire person occurs.

Participant's experience comes from this conviction; however, this depends entirely on people who hold Catholic faith. Schools are dominated by many non-Christian students whose knowledge is not informed by Christianity. The necessity of Christianity to be studied is as much the same with other religions. It can be accepted that religion forms an integral part of human knowledge, but not a particular religious tradition.

5.6.4 Lesotho is a Christian country

One participant believes the continuation of the teaching of a single religious tradition is due to the fact that Lesotho is a Christian country. For the participants, single Christian religious education is maintained simply because:

> …*Lesotho is a Christian country (SP1).*

Discussion on Lesotho being a Christian country has been treated extensively in the background to study problem of this research (1.2). The argument that there is a religion for a particular country is unrealistic. As Forman (1982) argues, there is no religion which can be described as belonging to a particular continent or country any more. In fact, Christianity which is now said to be the religion of Lesotho found Basotho traditional religion already in existence. Even that African traditional religion which is indigenous to Basotho society has as well found its move to other parts of the world. Gerloff (2004) contends that following the intentional expansion of religious movements by mission, migration became one of the catalysts factors for religious spreading. This was facilitated by the movement of African individuals and communities beyond the shores of the continent to other geo-political contexts. The initial movement of Africans was due to a traumatic experience of the transatlantic slave trade which acted as a mode of forced exile into Europe, Americas and other parts of the world. The second phase of African migration was experienced in the second half of the 20th century when the new development of accelerated intercontinental migration in the context of globalization made possible for internal and external migration in which Africa became a continent continuously on the move.

Participant's experience ascribing Lesotho to a Christian country is based mainly on the issues discussed in detail in the background to study problem of this research (1.2).

5.6.5 Summary on the continuation of mono Christian religion teaching in Lesotho church-owned schools

There are many reasons supporting the continuation of the teaching of single religious education in church-owned schools. The first reason is Christian knowledge which is believed to have been essentially the reason for the establishment of church schools. However, there are currently pressing factors to move from traditional validity of the spread of Christian knowledge including religious freedom and inclusive education itself which advocates multi-faith approach to the teaching of religious education.

The third reason is that teaching more than one religion means a *lot of content* to be covered by students. While the argument may sound to be in favor of learners, it is mainly to protect students against the 'other' religious traditions.

The other reason is that all knowledge is incomplete without Christian teaching and therefore *all knowledge should be completed with Christian teaching.* Thus, other subjects taught in church schools are just additional while prime knowledge is gained from Christian teaching. While it is accepted that religion forms an integral part of human knowledge, learning single religious tradition deprive students a broad knowledge that can be acquired from different religions.

The last reason for the continuation of single Christian religious education is that *Lesotho is a Christian country*. However, there is no religion which can be described as belonging to a particular continent or country any more due to globalization and migration.

5.7 The possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho church-owned schools

The general opinion from participants is that it is not possible to introduce pluralistic religious education in church-owned schools. Reasons supporting their opinion is that the teaching of other religions might encourage the abandonment of Christianity, pluralistic religious education can cause religious conflicts and confusion, pluralistic religious education will undermine the maintenance of Christian dominance, there is a lack of knowledge on what actually religious pluralism entails and that there is a lack of religious pluralism insights for Church leaders in Lesotho.

5.7.1 Encourage abandonment of Christianity

Some participants contend that the teaching of other religions might encourage the abandonment of Christianity. They remarked:

> …the church can be uncomfortable (with the teaching of other religions) because it is like schools are opening opportunities for students to join different religions (REDT1). Introducing other religions means to open doors for conversion to other religions…why teach other religions if the intention of the church is to promote Christianity…The main disadvantage (of pluralistic teaching of religion) is that that could be the opening of doors for free movement from one religion to another (REDT2)…It advisable that students are not exposed to other religions. It would be like schools are introducing them to the new religions which they can join. Exposure to other religions can have negative effects in particular for church schools which jealously safeguard against any religious intrusion…Pluralism cannot be introduced in church schools. The church is even careful about different denominations. It always checks if the students in the assembly are following each denominational tradition and it is even more careful of Pentecostalism (SP4).

The argument that the teaching of pluralistic religious would be encouraging students to covert to other religions is from the experience of confession approach to the teaching of religious education that is currently the only approach to the teaching of religious education in Lesotho schools. The chief aim of confessional learning religion, popularly known as 'Learning religion' as discussed in the literature review of this research is to teach religion from the inside perspective. In this approach teachers are expected to be believers in the religion themselves and the purpose of instruction is make students to come to believe in the religion or if already believers, to strengthen their commitment to religion (Hull, 2002).

In the pluralistic approach, also called learning from religion, the aim is not to encourage conversion, strengthen students' commitment in a religion or promote a particular religious tradition, but to employ scientific study of religion. In this approach, students are challenged to be able to:

a. Reflect on the relationship between beliefs, teachings, world issues and ultimate questions.
b. Evaluate beliefs, commitments and the impact of religion in the contemporary world.
c. Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views for human relationships personally, locally and globally.

d. Express their own beliefs and ideas, using a variety of forms of expression, including creative forms and reasoned arguments (Hull, 2002).

Other than being evangelistic, pluralistic religious education intends to provoke challenging questions pertaining to the purpose of life, beliefs about supernatural powers, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops students' knowledge and understanding of all religious traditions including Christianity and other world principal religions, as well as other non-religious world views. It deals with personal reflection and spiritual development. It provides awareness and understanding on religious beliefs, teachings, practices, expression, as well as the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures. Students are provided with opportunities to learn from what different religions, beliefs, values and traditions can offer for human wellbeing. Students are challenged to reflect on, consider, analyze, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to make their own conclusions. While it enables students to develop their sense of identity and belonging, it also molds them to flourish as individuals in their communities, diverse society and global community. The purpose is to develop moral and ethics of respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own in order to combat prejudice (Hull, 2002).

5.7.2 Cause of religious conflicts and violence

One participant cannot foresee the possibility of introducing pluralistic religious education on the basis that such approach would trigger religious conflicts and violence. The participant argued that:

> The teaching of other religions can cause conflicts in Lesotho. We already know about the incidents of violence where Muslims are attacking Christians. Schools were established to help the church in its mission of spreading the Gospel of peace. Christianity promotes peace in society; it provides moral education which is acceptable for people to live together (REDT3).

It cannot be contested that Christianity contains moral education as participant has experienced. It is undeniable that Christian teaching promotes peace and discourages conflicts and violence. According to Silvestri and Mayall (2015), within Christian teaching, the key concept are reconciliation, which has been demonstrated by God when reconciling himself with a sinful humanity; redemption, which was evidenced by

Jesus' self-sacrifice to redeem humanity; and caring, in which Jesus taught his followers to pay attention to the poor and the marginalized groups of society. Christian teaching is about social justice as there is a close relationship between social justice and reconciliation; one cannot occur without the other. There is a history of Christian icons who became involved in peace activities impelled by Christian convictions such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, Sant'Egidio of Mozambique and Martin Luther King of the US.

However, Christianity is not the only religion or peculiar religion in the promotion of peace and wellbeing of human race. For example, Islam is based on fundamental human values encoded in the Qur'an. The centrality of Koranic teachings is about religious and cultural pluralism as having been divinely ordained principle of peaceful coexistence among human societies. Qur'an sets strict limits that must not be transgressed. It states that women, children, old and infirm men should not be molested, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms. According to Islamic teaching, the fullness of humanity is encountered when the poor, underprivileged, and destitute members of every community are catered and cared for. The basic goal should be to eliminate their suffering and poverty. Islamic basic values include universal dignity of humanity, the equality of all races, ethnic groups, and the sacredness of human life (Silvestri and Mayall, 2015).

Nonetheless, both religions teach that there are times when war is necessary. Christians justify war through its just war theory in which war can sometimes be a necessity, particularly when it is waged to end conflict and promote peace. Likewise, Islam has a theory of *de facto* just war principles which refer to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* meaning that war is permissible in self-defense, and under well-defined limits. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigor, but only to restore peace and freedom of worship of Allah (Silvestri and Mayall, 2015).

Therefore, there is no single religious tradition that can be accepted of promoting peace or violence. They all contribute to the two. Even Judaism emphasizes 'shalom' (peace) and 'pikuach nefesh' (preservation of life) while at same time believes in the Biblical stories where God fought battles for the Children of Israel and teaches of *milhemet hova*

(obligatory war) and *milhemet mitzvah* (war as fulfillment of a positive deed before God) (Silvestri and Mayall (2015).

Instead of learning from a single religious tradition which may have both positive and negative effects on human development, multi-faith religious education seeks to suppress all religious and non-religious elements that cause social conflicts and violence as well as breaking the boundaries between “Others”. The main argument of proposing pluralistic religious education is that in most cases it is not the religion itself which influences people to be in war with each other, but the exclusivist mindset of those appropriating and disseminating it, be it radical Islam/Islamism (who calls for ‘Muslim totalitarianism’), Christian religious fundamentalism, fascism, secular dictatorships, or extreme authoritarianism (Silvestri and Mayall (2015). The main assumption is that the teaching of different religions and worldviews can be a path to help students develop understanding about different religious traditions, which may lead to understanding of their spirituality (inner path, a feeling of connection with something beyond oneself, an intuitive and mystical experience). Openness and critical examination and comparative approach to faiths have potential to help in the cultivation of intercultural and inter-religious understanding. It is optimized that such an interfaith approach can offer young people from diverse traditions an opportunity to mix together in classrooms and outside of formal educational settings so that they can learn from one another and learn to embrace diversity and appreciate the presence of others (Grelle, 2002).

The supposition is that to understand the reasons for people to act as they do, it is imperative to know about the values and assumptions they hold, what they are grateful of, what they seek to achieve and what they feared. Students studying a people’s religion and philosophy as well as their folkways and traditions, are likely to gain an understanding of their ethical and moral commitments. Reading their sacred texts may provide them with important insights into their thinking. This kind of experience equips learners to fully exercise their responsibilities as citizens in a religiously pluralistic world that is overwhelmed by human abuses, by vast inequality in wealth and power, by the

degradation of the environment, and more importantly by continuous religious, racial, and ethnic conflict and violence (Grelle, 2002).

Pluralistic religious education advocates that students should be empowered to employ empathetic understanding so that they may enter into imaginative context and worldview of other traditions, of which, thereafter taking up standpoints of 'the other,' they may be able to enter into a respectful dialogue of equals where each is free and genuine to expose his or her own cultural assumptions to the standpoint of 'the other' and works to solve shared socio-moral problems through the fusion of moral horizons and the forging of practical agreements. Students develop skills of becoming co-participants in a dialogue where they imaginatively assume the 'voices' of other traditions (Grelle, 2002).

5.7.3 Undermining the church prime aim of education

The other reason which one participant view as a problem towards the teaching of pluralistic religious education in Lesotho, is that to shift to that approach in the teaching of religion would be to undermine the church's prime aim of education. One participant remarked that:

> …It is not likely that pluralism in religion could be introduced because the church's aim is to extend its teaching about the Gospel of Christ in school setting. To introduce multiple religious teaching might undermine or divert the chief aim of why the church established the schools (SP3).

The idea that church schools were established for the sole purpose of evangelism have been discussed in detail in the background to the study problem (2.1) of this research and under the reasons for continuation of the teaching of single Christian tradition in this discussion (5.6.1).

5.7.4 Cause of confusion

One participant reasoned that the teaching of different religious traditions and worldviews apart from their own existing Christian religious education would cause confusion. The participant expressed the following:

> Introduction of religious pluralism in schools can bring about confusion. Students would accept anything as religion whereas true and only religion is Christianity (SP2).

The participant raised an important argument. The truth claim of religions has always been the concern within pluralism discussion. Some prominent religion scholars share the same concern with the participant. For example, in defense of Christian exclusivism, Plantinga (1999) begins his argument by showing that there are different religious positions including:

1. *Theist* believes that the world is created by God, almighty, all-knowing, perfectly good, *personal* being (who has beliefs, plans, and intentions and who acts to accomplish them).
   - *Atheist* believes that there is no God.
   - *Agnoistic* does not believe in God or disbelieve in God; withholds judgment.

2. *Christian exclusivist* maintains that humans require salvation, God provides unique way to it and that way is through Jesus Christ his incarnated son.
   - *Non-Christian theists*: They accept (1), but reject (2), for example, Judaism and Islam.
   - *Non-Christian exclusivists*: They believe that some other religious belief (than belief in Jesus) is required for salvation.
   - *Non-theistic religious people*: They deny the first position (1) but believe there is something beyond the natural world and that human well-being/salvation depends on standing in right relation to it.
   - *Naturalist*: They reject that there is anything beyond the natural world.
     Could there be religious naturalists? The natural world is all there, but humans require salvation and getting in right relationship to the natural world.

Plantinga holds to (1) and (2) convictions. He is aware that exclusivism is generally rejected on two grounds:

1. *Epistemic objections:* asserting that there is no intellectual right to be an exclusivist. Exclusivism is uninformed, irrational, unjustified, unwarranted and illogical.

2. *Moral objections:* avowing that exclusivists are guilty of moral failures representing intolerant, arrogant, elitist, egotistical, unjust, oppressive, and imperialistic.

To these objections, Plantinga argues that religious exclusivism is not necessarily a moral or intellectual failure since human condition makes exclusivism inevitable in some situations. Plantinga maintains that in all world religions, it is impossible for each to convince others about its beliefs. He holds that disagreement does not necessarily mean oppression. He argues that there are some who disagree with his position even though they could not convince him on their argument. To disagree with others on moral issues even if one cannot convince them whether he is right and they are wrong does not necessarily mean one is arrogant or intolerant (Plantinga, 1999).

Also McGrath (1994) has reservations about religious pluralism. McGrath argues that religious pluralism draws much from liberal political philosophy and fails to do justice to religious concerns. It advocates two views that a) Different people have different religious views; and b) Therefore all religious views are equally valid. That is (1) there is no one but many truths, or (2) truth is one but it appears in many forms. In this sense mere existence of a religious idea appears to be a guarantor of its truth. The problem according McGrath is that even Nazi or Satanism may be accepted.

However, there is a strong argument against religious exclusion and a call to religious pluralism. Religious pluralism is informed by moral pluralism which cuts across all human differences that have polarized human nature into ‘us’ and ‘others’ such as politics, culture, ethnicity, gender and religion. Religious pluralism is about:

a. Understanding the reality of difference in order to accept and tolerate those who are different;
b. Finding what each from the difference can offer for the common good and to promote and appreciate the good that can contribute for the wellbeing of all; and
c. Identify together all anti-social and harmful beliefs and practices from all pursuing pluralism and together finding the means to eliminate all that do not contribute to the wellness of all.

It is realized that this is impossible task that needs different strategies, and religious education might be one of those revenues to achieve religious pluralism.

5.7.5 Maintenance of Christian dominance

One participant believes the introduction of religious pluralism in schools would deprive of Christianity its dominance in Lesotho education. According to the participant:

> Christianity has to remain a dominant religion in schools to maintain Christian doctrine as well as protecting Christianity against the influence of other religions. Teachers and students should be protected against other religions (REDT2).

In the participant's view, religious pluralism can challenge the dominance of Christianity which has to be maintained. The maintenance of Christian dominance protects teachers and students against other religions. The justification of the dominance of Christianity and protection of teachers and students against other religions is due to different factors according to Hull (2002). These factors are:

a. *Religious affiliation of a society, in which one religion dominates*. Lesotho is believed to be dominated by Christianity; hence the participant gives justification to that.
b. *Relationship between state and church*. There is a close relationship between Christian religion and the state in Lesotho.
c. *Historical religious experience of the country*. The 19th century Christian mission has taken over from the Basotho tradition in which ever since, Lesotho is described a Christian country. Hence the confirmation by participant.
d. *The nature of religious education*. Since its inception in Lesotho Schools, religious education has been linked to the propagation of Christianity.

However, there are other factors which have recently challenged this state of religious education as stated in the background to the statement of the problem in this research (1.2). There are now more than one religious tradition in Lesotho, the state has approved both inclusive education and religious freedom, and it is debatable whether there was any point in time when Christianity dominated Basotho traditional religion except in theory. It is therefore questionable to strive for the domination of Christian religious education.

Also, the overprotective approach to religious education that aims to defend adherents against other religions is being challenged in this context of pluralism. School is a social

institution which has to uphold democratic principles. As Subba (2014) contends, schools are places where democratic ideals such as equality, freedom, justice are instilled in individuals. Values like cooperation, respect for human rights, tolerance, justice, responsible citizenship and diversity should be promoted and they cannot be promoted in an overprotective situation where the aim is indoctrination. Religious education should foster respect for pupils' beliefs and encourage openness, critical thinking and investigative learning religion.

Democratic or liberal education aims to prepare students for personal and social responsibility in a diverse and interconnected world. This goal requires a focus on the whole student, including the inner development and intellectual pursuits often associated with religious practices (Goodman, 2008).

5.7.6 Lack of knowledge on religious pluralism

Many informants accepted that they do not know what religious pluralism is. After the researcher explained what religious pluralism is and what it entails and advocates, almost all of them demonstrated hostility against religious pluralism. For example, they indicated:

> No, No, No, only those religions that use the Bible as the source of information for knowledge about God (referring to different Christian denominations such as Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lesotho Evangelical and Methodist church) are to be taught in schools (SP1). Multi-faith approach should not be introduced in the schools for other religions that do not focus on the knowledge about God…Students would accept anything as religion, whereas true and only religion is Christianity (SP2)… The teaching of other religions can cause conflicts in Lesotho. We already know about the incidents of violence where Muslims are attacking Christians. Schools were established to help the church in its mission of spreading the Gospel of peace. Christianity promotes peace in society; it provides moral education which is acceptable for people to live together (REDT3)…No, it shouldn't be introduced because such approach cannot change a person, but simply impart knowledge of different religions (knowledge which they may not put into practice) (REDT4).

The idea of lack of knowledge among teachers is in line with what one participant suggested was the reason for the church leaders to frustrate the piloted multi-faith approach which was introduced in 2000. The participant suggested:

> I am sure that there has been an attempt by the government in 2000 in which multi-faith religious education was piloted in certain selected schools. Church leaders stopped such approach to the teaching of religious education abruptly. I would say

the reason was lack of exposure to multi-faith approach on the part of church leaders (SP6).

The position of the participants raises a serious problem of religious illiteracy. Religious illiteracy according to Moore (2015) refers to:

a. Lack of understanding about the basic teachings of world religious traditions;
b. Lack of understanding of the diversity of expressions and beliefs that emerged and evolved within religious traditions due to different social and historical factors; and
c. Lack of knowledge on the basic role of religion in social, cultural and political contexts of both historical and contemporary human life.

Moore (2015) mentions that the study conducted in East Africa, Pakistan, India, Indonesia and the United States revealed a remarkable religious illiteracy which manifested itself in the following shared practices and assumptions across these studied communities:

a) There is an inaccuracy of religious representation by those who call themselves religious and non-religious. For those who regard themselves as religious, inaccuracy is manifested on how they relate to their own religious tradition and traditions of others.
b) Religious traditions are represented by those inside a particular religion as internally uniform and static without the reality of it being diverse, dynamic and evolving.
c) Religion is understood exclusively in terms of sectarianism which makes the study of religion quite challenging.
d) Those committed to a particular religious tradition are regarded and regard themselves as the best source of information for that tradition and in many cases described as experts. This makes it difficult to differentiate between academic studies of religion from devotional expression of a particular religious traditional religion.

In many contexts, religion is considered ‘private’ and has nothing to do with secular public sphere of economics, political and cultural affairs of the people (Moore, 2015).

According to Nash (2007) and Moore (2015), religious illiteracy is the main source of religious violence and foster a climate in which some form of bigotry are accepted unchallenged and thereby create a situation in which violence and marginalization are justified. Tavares (2016) also contends that even though the causes of discrimination are complex and multifaceted but lack of knowledge and experience when dealing with other cultures and beliefs systems is an important contributing factor.

Religious literacy on the other hand promotes knowledge and understanding and familiarity with different religious and non-religious beliefs, and influence on how an individual makes sense of in his/her own beliefs, cultural attitudes and practices, and how important is faith and its influence on other people's decision making. It inspires religiously literate people to promote positive religious perception in order to counteract negative views of religion, which may be generated by religious illiteracy (National Secular Society, 2016).

Pluralistic education can enable young people to celebrate religious diversity and lived multiculturalism while at the same time equipped to overcome religious bigotry, intolerance and prejudice. Improved knowledge about religion and belief may as well foster mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence, and enable young people to become skilled intercultural navigators (National Secular Society, 2016).

5.7.7 Step-by-step through negotiations

One participant believes that there is a possibility of introducing pluralistic teaching of religious education. The participant indicated that:

> The problem with the previous attempt (multi-faith approach piloted in 2000) was that it was imposed on church schools by the government. There should be a gradual-step-by-step approach. For example, the current LGSCE Religious Education Syllabus has a portion that introduces students to the concept 'religion'. From that point, it would lead to the knowledge about multi-facets of religion as diverse concept…that cannot be explained by a single religious tradition (SP6).

The view that pluralistic religious education approach was introduced in 2000 but had to be discontinued due to church leaders' discontent is supported by another participant who expressed that:

> My school was one of the selected schools for piloting the multi-faith education introduced in 2000. However, it was not accommodated by church leaders. I don't know why it was stopped, but as teachers, the church denies us to teach what we know and like, since we learnt religious pluralism from teacher training college (LCE) (REDT6.

Another support that multi-faith approach was introduced is Molelle (2006) who took an extensive research to investigate why it was introduced and why it failed. Consequently, Molelle (2006) discovered that the piloting of pluralistic religious education came as a result of international declarations, conventions and recommendations for educational change which Lesotho is cosigner, and for religious education specifically, the change was aimed at introducing religious pluralism for cultural diversity and to promote communal principles central to African worldviews.

According to Molelle (2006), the general aim of the piloted religious education syllabus was to include all world religions with the purpose of introducing learners to how these religions influenced moral norms, political agendas, economic development and democracy. The approach represented a radical shift from a Bible-based approach towards a more generic or secular approach with an emphasis on dealing with social and moral issues.

Molelle (2006) concurs with research participants that the rejection of the piloted pluralistic religious education syllabus by church leaders as well as other education officials in church schools was the result of lack of consultation and involvement of the church in the development and implementation of the syllabus. The participants interviewed including church officials and NCDC staff members mentioned this lack of involvement on the part of the church which resulted in to church's refusal to accept the syllabus. The church's argument was that the government had simply imposed the syllabus on church schools without explaining it to them.

5.7.8 Summary of the possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho church-owned schools

It is generally opined that it is impossible to introduce pluralistic religious education in Lesotho schools. The first reason that would make it difficult to introduce pluralistic religious education in Lesotho secondary schools is that such initiative would *encourage*

abandonment of Christianity. The argument that religious pluralism could result in the abandonment of Christianity comes from the long held approach of teaching religion for evangelism. That is, teaching to convert or to strengthen the belief in a particular religion. In pluralistic approach, all religions including Christianity are taught and the aim is not to affirm a particular religion, but to develop moral and ethics of respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from students own religion in order to combat prejudice.

The other reason that is likely to impede the introduction of pluralistic religious education is that the end result of such approach would be a *cause of religious conflicts and violence* in itself. The argument in support of this view is that Christianity teaches about peace and inculcates moral principles of acceptance and tolerance, whereas other religions and in particular Islam preaches violence. However, all religions preach justice and peace and instruct on good moral principles. There are times when violence is justified on grounds of religious beliefs such as Holy war in Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

It has also been suggested that the introduction of pluralistic religion is unforeseeable on the basis that such move would be *undermining the church prime aim of education*. It is not deniable that initial aim of the church in establishing schools was to propagate Christian teaching for conversion and facilitation of church mission and ministry. Such original aim has been overridden by other developments in Lesotho such as religious freedom of religion, increasing number of non-Christian students in Lesotho schools including church owned schools, changing church schools status from private to public schools, and more importantly Lesotho's ratification of different international conventions and declarations for inclusive education which calls for inclusion in religious education.

Introduction of religious pluralism in Lesotho is again said to be not feasible on the grounds of *maintenance of Christian dominance*. The maintenance of Christian dominance is justified on the basis of protecting teachers and students against other religions. This view is based on the assumption that Lesotho is a Christian country while such a claim is vigorously challenged. There are now more than single religious

traditions in Lesotho, the state has approved both inclusive education and religious freedom, and it is debatable whether there was any point in time when Christianity dominated Basotho traditional religion except in theory.

The other reason for which religious pluralism is not likely to find its way in Lesotho is *lack of knowledge on religious pluralism*. It can be argued that lack of knowledge on the meaning of religious pluralism among teachers and religious leaders is tantamount to religious illiteracy, which can only be overawed by the promotion of religious literacy.

Even though there is a general opinion of the impossibility of the introduction of religious pluralism in Lesotho schools, there is still some hope that if such venture can follow a *step by step through negotiations* strategy, success is likely to be achieved. This optimism emanates from the fact that there was an attempt by the government to introduce religious pluralism in Lesotho church owned schools. The attempt was frustrated by the church leaders. The basic problem might have been lack of consultation on the part of the government. If a step by step through negotiation strategy can be employed in the future, a success is likely to be achieved.

5.8 Conclusion

From this chapter, three main conclusions can be drawn. The first is that there is misconception of inclusive education highlighted under the superordinate themes of the meaning of inclusive education and the role of church owned schools in inclusive education. Secondly, there is a paternalistic belief in the teaching of religious education which surfaced under the superordinate themes of Christian religious education and inclusive education and continuation of mono Christian religion teaching in Lesotho Church owned schools. Thirdly, religious illiteracy emerged from the superordinate themes of the meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education and the possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho Church owned Schools.

How these three conclusions have been arrived at and their actual meanings will be discussed further in the subsequent chapter on research findings and discussion.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings from data interpretation in the form of hypothesis development. The research superordinate themes constructed from data presentation, which were further engaged with in data interpretation chapter are synthesized. As the classics of IPA (Pietkiewicze and Smith, 2014) explain, IPA synthesizes ideas from phenomenology and hermeneutics as a process of allowing things to appear as they are and letting things speak for themselves combined with researcher's own interpretative conclusions since it recognizes that there is no such a thing as an un-interpreted phenomenon. The first step is to allow participants to make meaning of their world and, the second is the researcher's role of decoding that meaning to make sense of the participants' meaning making.

Furthermore, IPA like other qualitative research methods adopts inductive process. Qualitative research generally employs inductive thinking or induction reasoning because it moves from specific information about individual experiences to broader perspectives and theories about the events. The role of the researcher in making use of the inductive process is to begin with specific data, and then moves to detecting themes and patterns in the data. The results of the exploration may later lead to general conclusions or theories (Soiferman, 2010). Inductive procedure is based on the argument that experiences are best expressed inductively. Contrary to quantitative research that employs deductive method in which the aim of interpretation is theory-driven and may lead to a confirmation, extension or questioning of an already existing theory, through inductive method, qualitative data interpretation aims at developing data-driven hypothesis and new theoretical perspectives of the phenomena under investigation (Gelo, Braakmann & Benetka, 2008).

The table below simplifies the major differences between deductive and inductive methods:

Deduction	Induction

Moving from theory to data	Moving from data to theory
Common with natural sciences	Common with social sciences
A highly structured approach	Flexible structure to permit changes
Explain causal relationships between variables	Understanding of meanings humans attach to events
Select samples of sufficient size to generalize conclusions	Less concern with the need to generalize

Table 8: Major differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research

Source: Adopted from Pathirage, Amaratunga & Haigh (2008)

Moreover, Pietkiewicze and Smith (2014) explain that in IPA, researchers espouse ideographical stance as opposed to nomothetic position. Nomothetic is the research approach which utilizes quantified methods for data analysis, whereas ideographic approach deals with subjective accounts generated through inside situations and involving oneself in the everyday flow of life. Pathirage, Amaratunga and Haigh (2008), clarified that the nomothetic research approach emphasizes the importance of conducting a research upon systematic techniques employed in the natural sciences, which focus upon the process of testing hypotheses. In nomothetic approach, the emphasis is therefore placed upon scientific laws of explanations and use of deductive process through quantified operationalization of concepts. Ideographic approach, on the other hand, emphasizes the analysis of subjective accounts which are generated by getting inside situations. The aim of ideographic researchers is to provide rich descriptions of phenomenon.

The ideographic perspective provides new and unexpected insights through building upon new theories and concepts. Its contribution is often based on an in-depth understanding generated through compressing large amount of data obtained from participants' experiences through inductive process. With ideographic procedures statistical generalization are not possible, and its reliance on many empirical sources

makes it impossible to ensure validity and reliability but provides trustworthiness of research findings. The table below simplifies the difference between quantitative nomothetic and qualitative ideography.

Nomothetic methods emphasize	Ideographic methods emphasize
Deduction	Induction
Explanation via analysis of causal relationship	Explanation of subjective meaning systems
Generation and use of quantitative data	Generation and use of qualitative data
Testing of hypothesis	Commitment to research in everyday settings
Highly structured	Minimum structure

Table 9: Major differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research

Source: Adopted from Pathirage, Amaratunga & Haigh (2008)

IPA is ideographic in the sense that it focuses on detailed examination of particular instances, either in a single case study or in studies of a small group of cases. In such studies, the analytic process is to begin from a detailed analysis of each case then move to careful examination of similarities and differences across all cases in order to produce a detailed account of patterns of meaning and reflections on shared experience. Single cases offer the researcher an opportunity to study a specific context, as well as focusing on different aspects of a particular context. Thereafter, the researcher connects the findings to existing literature on the phenomenon to show how the case relates to other relevant research. At the same time, studies of several participants also highlight the shared themes and concerns and thereby affording an opportunity for theory or hypothesis development through drawing together additional cases to move towards more general claims (Shinebourne, 2011).

The significance of this chapter is against this backdrop. Since this chapter of developing hypothesis is important in responding to the research question and research problem, Jeong and Othman (2016) recommend that both should be highlighted in order to show how the developed theory or hypothesis responds to both. The core of the chapter is therefore to show how the findings build up to the developed hypothesis which tries to respond to the research question and the research problem. The overarching research question which the study was carried to address was:

Why do the Christian church schools continue to offer Christian centered religious education rather than religious pluralism?

The research problem was:

The main problem is the Christian church schools' continuation in the monism religious education approach instead of religious pluralism despite the fact that the government of Lesotho is a cosigner of series of international declarations, conventions and recommendations on inclusive education which also imply inclusive teaching of religious education. Also the reluctance of the Christian church schools to realize the fact of the existence of religious diversity in Lesotho and the desirability of religious pluralism as a response for inclusive education in a democratic, non-discriminative society like Lesotho.

From synthesizing, induction and ideography of data interpretation and discussion, it became apparent that there are three main overlapping factors or hypotheses contributing to the church schools' resistance to introduce pluralistic religious education. These factors include:

1. Misconception of inclusive education
2. Paternalistic religious education
3. Religious illiteracy

These three are discussed in detail in this chapter, which means circling between the two chapters; the chapter on data interpretation and the current chapter of research

findings as well as engaging in the chapter on literature review where the three hypotheses have been constructed from.

6.2 Misconception of inclusive education

There is a general misconception of inclusive education from both teachers and principals. Misconception is understood differently in different usages. In its common usage, misconception refers to understanding attached to a concept but in which that understanding does not correspond to a correctly meaning of an idea or theory (Shehu, 2015). It also means concepts that have peculiar interpretations and meanings for research participants but which are not accurate to concept of analysis (Bahar, 2003). Misconceptions are portrayals of lack of deeper understanding as displayed in their naïve explanations for various concepts and phenomena (Chi, 2005). Misconceptions are beliefs that arise from incorrect or incomplete information about new ideas, they refer to naïve or commonsense explanation of thought, feelings and behavior (Hughes, Lyddy and Lambe, 2013). According to Shehu (2015), misconceptions can be categorized in four broad groups; *preconceived notions*: referring to popular conceptions derived from everyday experience and used to interpret new information, *conceptual misunderstanding*: meaning certain developed ideas that arise from the fact that the new information is communicated to the people in a way that it does not challenge or confront their preconceived notions, *vernacular misconceptions*: referring to the meanings that arise from the use of words that mean one thing in everyday life and something else in other contexts and *factual misconceptions*: meaning falsities that have been learned in earlier stage of growth and that remain unchallenged into adulthood.

Although the current paper intends to use the term misconception, it has been argued within the interpretivist research community that participants' views cannot be labeled misconceptions. The argument is based on interpretivist ontological assumption about reality in which it is argued that there is no single reality about the concept, phenomenon or event. Reality is multiple and relative to a particular individual or group. The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism. Relativism is the view that reality is subjective and differs from person to person and it is therefore individually

constructed which means there are as many realities as individuals. The interpretivist ontology is sometimes referred to as constructivism as it emphasizes people's ability to construct meaning (Scotland, 2014).

According to researchers in interpretivist paradigm, instead of referring to people's conception of realities as *misconceptions*, it should be understood as *alternative conceptions*. They argue that misconceptions are not merely inaccurate or incomplete isolated pieces of reality, but portrayals of alternative conceptions of reality. The fact that there are consistent understandable patterns on how participants conceptualize reality about a phenomenon proves that reality is constructed and re-constructed in particular given social group (Chi, 2005). Alternative conception is a view that reality is a product of intentional, active, and ongoing construction, rather than being static, and reality is to be understood as continually being reshaped in the face of new information or experience. Under this perspective, the participants' conceptualization of reality is not considered flaws, but part of reality construction and interpretation. Rather than perceiving participants' ideas as deficient, this perspective respects them as being viable constructive alternatives about reality (Leonard, Kalinowski and Andrews, 2014).

However, interpretivist ontology is also referred to as constructivism since it emphasizes people's ability to construct meaning, is also heavily influenced by phenomenological hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the study of meaning and interpretation in historical texts. This meaning-making cyclical process is the basis on which the interpretivist paradigm was established. Ontology in interpretivist paradigm is defined as a specification of a conceptualization in which reality cannot be known in its purest form, but can only be interpreted through senses and experiences. According to interpretivist hermeneutics, the most fundamental aspect of a human social setting is that of meaning-making. These are verbally communicated and shape participant's view of reality and which in turn define, justify and interpret their behavior and actions. Therefore, the investigator in interpretivit hermeneutics is expected to have no prior, well-delineated conceptualization of the phenomenon, because this conceptualization is to emerge from the interaction between participants and investigator (Krauss, 2005).

However, it is important that researchers in interpretivist paradigm become learning facilitators who have the role of transforming learning through their ability to generate new levels and forms of meaning, which can in turn transform perspectives and actions. This means that in qualitative data analysis, meaning is constructed in different ways. Through construction, the researcher is not a blank slate, rather he or she is an active participant in the process of meaning construction. Epistemologically, the researcher is engaged in the research setting, participating in the act of being with the participants in the process of generating meaning with them (Krauss, 2005). The end result of qualitative research is not necessary to just affirm the meanings constructed by participants, but rather continue the interpretive cycle of meaning construction through which new can be developed through interaction between researcher and participants in order to change and give positive meanings to the phenomenon. The unique role of qualitative data analysis according to Krauss (2005) is to elicit important themes building toward the development of theory which is a great contribution of the researcher in the construction of meaning.

It is against this background that the theory of misconception of inclusive education has been developed and therefore justified as such. Misconception of inclusive education has been constructed from two superordinate themes; meaning of inclusive education and the role of church owned schools in inclusive education.

6.2.1 Misconception in the meaning of inclusive education

There are participants who correctly conceptualize inclusive education as referring to:

a. *Including all students from different socio, economic, cultural and religious background*. This kind of inclusion advocates for a total revolutionary approach to the education system where the meaning of inclusive education that does not only focus on a certain area for inclusion but a radical strategy in education that transcends cultural, religious, gender and other differences, adopting educational techniques such as multicultural, multi-religious, multilingual approaches.

b. *Improvement of school environment for favorable learning atmosphere for all learners*. This kind of inclusion calls for transformation of school environment to

become a child-user-friendly learning setting, in which the focus is not only to equip children with basic learning skills but also to enable them to take control of their lives and to promote justice, democracy, peace and tolerance. The child-user-friendly learning environment is characterized by school programs that are child-seeking, child-centered, gender-sensitive, cultural-sensitive and community-involved.

However, there is as well considerable number of participants who revealed misconception of inclusive education. They suggested that inclusive education means:

a. *Education opportunity for every child.* The idea of linking inclusive education to education opportunity for every child can be understood within framework of EFA in which inclusive education should have been enshrined. However, the focus of EFA has always been misunderstood as "schooling for all" that is equated with Universal Primary Education (UPE). The problem with this understanding is that it directs the focus to the increased primary school enrollments while exclusive curriculum has been totally ignored. The provision of schooling opportunity for all does not mean all are included in school system. The change of curriculum to include students from different religious cultural backgrounds is needed.

b. *Literacy for all.* Literacy for all as another element of EFA has always been aiming at provision of education to other groups who missed educational opportunities such as illiterate adults, out-of-school youth and drop-outs. To describe literacy for all as referring to inclusive education is a misconception of inclusive education since literacy for all does not mean inclusive educational programs and settings but education provision to the educationally disadvantaged groups.

c. *Including students with physical and learning disabilities*. While it is commendable that awareness-raising on the inclusion of disabled children has been the priority of government initiatives to the extent that participants show a clear understanding of what should be done to achieve inclusion of disabled children into regular school, inclusive education is more than that. It is not just about disabled children; it requires

that all children, including children with disabilities, not only have access to schooling, but that all children should have equivalent and systematic learning opportunities in a wide range of school and additional educational settings, despite the differences that might exist.

6.2.2 Misconception of inclusive education in the role of church owned schools in inclusive education

Another area in which misconception of inclusive education has emerged is in the role of church owned schools towards the promotion of inclusive education. Participants reasoned that church owned schools promote inclusive education in the following:

a. *Inclusion through admission*. Participants support inclusiveness of church owned schools through nondiscriminatory admission policy. To admit students from different denominations, religious traditions and even nonreligious background is understood by participants as inclusiveness in education. Participants justify the inclusiveness through admissions that do not discriminate on the basis of denomination, religion, primary pass grade, religion, initiation, age, marital status and pregnancy. This church school attitude simply means a change of tradition admission policy from discrimination on the basis of denominations, religions and cultural practices incongruent to church teachings. However, this is a misconception of inclusive education. Inclusive education is not just about admitting all in to school education, it incorporates inclusion in school environment that is free from prejudice and school curriculum that is cultural and difference sensitive.

b. *Inclusion through establishment of special schools for disabled students*. It is mentioned that church schools were the first to provide educational needs to disabled children. In the process, two strategies were employed, mainly to establish schools for the disabled and then integrating them into regular school system. This does not qualify for inclusive education, rather, segregation and integration. Students with disabilities were segregated from others to a particular level of study and then integrated into regular system and sometimes to a certain

level of education or to do certain subjects different from their peers without disabilities.

c. *Inclusion through persuading its members to send children to school*. Persuasive tactic has been the characteristic of the church's education which was traditionally used for different purposes such as the maintenance of the Christian order and tradition, conversion of Basotho people to the missionary religious beliefs and culture, to replace Sotho societal values with western Christian values, to create a new class of persons who form an aristocratic, privileged and loyal group that would act as interpreters between the missionaries and the people at large and to prepare young women for effective reading of the Bible and for home support services, as well as for clerical ad interpreter support services for men. The persuasive attitude of the church has been revived through government initiatives for EFA in free and compulsory education. However, persuasive tactic does not qualify for principles of inclusive education, but just for encouraging school attendance.

d. *Inclusion through coverage*. Inclusion through coverage is based on the fact that the church owns a considerable number of schools that cover the entire Lesotho area. This coverage increases accessibility and therefore increased learner enrolment. However, increased accessibility and increased enrolment do not necessarily mean greater possibility of inclusion. It may mean greater possibility of exclusion in which the majority experience exclusion in school environment.

6.2.3 Causes of misconceptions in inclusive education

Misconception of inclusive education cannot be understood in isolation from any new policy initiative. Misconception in policy implementation is caused by different factors according to Bell and Stevenson (2006). The first main factor is policy *content*. Policy content refers to what a policy entails. Whether it is well articulated and framed; whether the aims are clear enough to those who have to implement it; whether values contained within the policy are explicit or implicit. If the policy is not well articulated and framed, not clear enough and not explicit or implicit, misconceptions are inevitable.

Furthermore, every policy is liable to interpretations. Even those most explicit and implicit policies cannot go or be implemented without interpretations. It may be assumed by policy developers that the policy is clear and straightforward, but there still may be some interpretations and these interpretations are in most cases 'silences' that is, are not said out. These unsaid interpretations are responsible for misconceptions (Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

According to Ainscow (2005), inclusive education has always been clouded by *lack of clarity* and therefore liable for different interpretations which eventually lead to misconceptions. It has been defined in different ways including:

a. Improved school attendance and reducing incidences of exclusion.
b. Inclusion of individual children and young people categorized as having special educational needs in the mainstream education.
c. Providing an opportunity to learners to learn to live with the difference and learn from the difference.
d. Removing all barriers that hinder children and young people for education opportunities.
e. Presence, participation and achievement of all students and more importantly those groups of learners regarded to be at risk of marginalization, exclusion and underachievement.

Ambiguity of the meaning of inclusive education lends it to misconceptions which as well impacts on its implementation as an education policy.

This corresponds to different meanings attached to inclusive education in Lesotho which are:

a. Education opportunity for every child
b. Literacy for all
c. Including students with physical and learning disabilities

This also includes misconceptions on the implementation of the policy in which it is believed to have been implemented through the following:

a. Inclusion through admission
b. Inclusion through establishment of special schools for disabled students
c. Inclusion through persuading its members to send children to school
d. Inclusion through coverage

This means that the policy has failed to penetrate misconception of preconceived notions since participants understand inclusive education in relation to popular conceptions derived from their earlier experience of initiatives related to inclusive education such as EFA and the inclusion of disabled children. The policy also failed to infiltrate conceptual misconceptions where the initial ideas or broad ideas about inclusive education are used to conceptualize it. The policy further failed to overcome vernacular misconceptions where participants ascribe inclusive education to admission of all students, or the greater number of church schools across the country, or the persuasion of parents to send their children to school. Factual misconception is also evident not in the sense of what has been learnt in the early stage of growth, but in the sense of what has been leant in the early stage of policy implementation where the emphasis was on EFA goals and disabled children.

6.3 Paternalistic religious education

Paternalistic approach to religious education became apparent during interviews. Paternalism refers to the situation where there is an interference of a state, an organization or an individual with another person, without that person's consent, and that interference is based on the conviction that the person being interfered with will benefit from interference or will be protected from harm. Paternalism has the following characteristics:

a. Protecting individuals from themselves;
b. Ethically questioned in relation to personal autonomy or freedom;
c. Infringing on freedom since it limits the options available or influences the making of choices;
d. Intends to further the person's perceived good or welfare by interference; and
e. Interferes with or without the consent of the person concerned (Thomas and Buckmaster, 2010; National Collaborating Centre for Health Public Policy (2015).

Paternalism involves the following;

a. *Interference* condition which is done in an intrusive or non-intrusive manner that can reveal itself as paternalism;
b. *Consent* condition in which there may be explicit consent or in many cases tactic and inferred consent;
c. *Benevolence* condition in which paternalistic actions are justified on ground that they are necessary for the good of the person(s) being interfered with; and
d. *Superiority condition* in which paternalistic actions are performed by one who considers himself superior to the person(s) being interfered with (Leonard, Goldfarb and Suranovic, 2000).

According to Thomas and Buckmaster (2010), there are different types of paternalism. The first is what is referred to as *soft paternalism*. This type of paternalism is applied when the authority, be it the state, an organization or parent realizes that an individual is making decisions that are either involuntary or ill-informed. In this way, paternalism is justified on the basis of protecting a person from harm to which he/she did not consent to or ascertain to or in a situation where persons are acting involuntarily and unknowledgeable. Soft paternalism is the opposite of *hard paternalism* where intervention can be carried out even if an individual is acting voluntarily and knowledgeably but in which according to intervener such act may cause harm to the person.

The second form of paternalism is *moral paternalism* contrasted from *welfare paternalism*. Moral paternalism is where there is an intervention intended to protect people's moral well-being or to enforce particular community standards. Welfare paternalism concerns people's material or physiological well-being. For example, in moral paternalism prostitution may be prohibited in view that selling sexual services undermines people's moral well-being. Welfare paternalism on the other hand may impose anti-prostitution measures on the basis that the business puts sexual sellers on dangers to physical health such as contacting sexually transmitted diseases (Thomas and Buckmaster, 2010).

The third type is *weak paternalism* which is in sharp contrast with *strong paternalism.* In weak paternalism, paternalists legitimize interference on the basis of means through which people are seeking to work towards a particular goal or preference when it is believed that these means may not lead to desired outcome. For example, taking a certain medication for a particular disease may be prohibited if deemed to be ineffective. In strong paternalism, paternalist's interference is justified on people's ends with the belief that people have miscalculated, irrational or mistaken about their ends. For example, there may be a ban on literature providing information on how to commit suicide diseases (Thomas and Buckmaster, 2010).

Classical paternalism has been used to assess the principles of liberty (Mills, 1978), government and individual liberty (Dworkin's, 1973; Carter, 1977) and medical paternalism (Buchanan, 1978). Recently, paternalism has been adopted in other areas such as social work (Reamer, 1983; Reid, Floyd and Bryan, 2010) and the area of religion (Love, 2007; Givule, 2008; Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012). It is against this backdrop in which paternalism is applied in religious education.

Paternalist religious education became apparent during interviews under two subordinate themes, mainly Christian religious education and inclusive education and continuation of mono Christian religion teaching in Lesotho Church owned schools.

6.3.1 Paternalistic approach to inclusive education through Christian religious education

Paternalism surfaced when participants explained the promotion of inclusive education through Christian religious education. Participants highlighted the following as Christian religious education responses to inclusive education while they in fact resemble paternalistic approach:

In the first place, Christian religious education promotes inclusive education since it is *a compulsory subject*. The view that making Christian religion a compulsory subject promotes inclusiveness might come from inclusivity catchwords that dominated inclusive education initiative throughout the globe such as "A school for all" – which may be translated into 'classroom for all' and therefore meaning to be in same religious

education classroom. The other is “Equality” – which means equal education opportunity including a common curriculum for all and therefore this commonness is enhanced through the same religious education curriculum. Another is “Uniformity” – which means the teaching of particular values that build towards oneness or sameness of all students and this uniformity therefore can be achieved through teaching Christian values for all. Another is “Accommodation” – which means that some learners who had experienced exclusion or not belonging should feel welcomed. Being in the same classroom, doing a religion of the school owner would mean that students from outside Christianity are being accommodated into Christian religion.

The last is “Integration” – The term has been widely used within inclusive education to mean the process of bringing children with disabilities from special schools or out of school into mainstream schools (also called mainstreaming). Integration therefore, means bringing them into a teaching and learning experience which they have not been exposed to. Integration education process is generally based on the conviction that disabled child has to be changed, or rehabilitated in order to fit into the regular school system and society. For example, a deaf child may wear a hearing-aid and be expected to learn to talk in order to fit in, while the teachers and other children are not expected to learn sign language, or other forms of communication. In order to progress to another level, a child with learning difficulties is expected to pass standardized tests offered to all children. In the context of religious education, integration means the process of bringing children into learning Christian values. In religious terms it has the same meaning as evangelism – making people to believe into Good news of their salvation. Those who have not been converted or from other religions are expected to change or rehabilitated in order to fit into religion. In the context of religious education, the approach is to promote and elevate a certain religion teachings against others.

However, making Christian religion a compulsory subject resembles paternalism in many ways. Classroom for all, equality, accommodation and integration bears resemblance to strong paternalism, in which church schools interfere on reasons that people’s religious beliefs may have been miscalculated, irrational or mistaken for true religion. This type of paternalism is also referred to as paternalistic assimilation.

According to Rees (1970) and Rodríguez-García (2014), paternalistic assimilation follows two main steps. The first step is accommodation and integration. In this step, those who do not belong to the religion begin to establish themselves to a certain extent to the religious beliefs of another religion and at least outwardly, and try to understand its basic teachings. For the accommodating group, this step involves a limited acceptance of the newcomers. There is at least degree of adaptation and acceptance that is consistent with peaceful co-existence between students from other religions and religion of their new school. In this accommodation phase, the religious others are able to retain their own religious and cultural patterns and understand that the religion they are learning is basically for academic purpose.

The next step is assimilation which is the paternalistic assumption of equality between two or more religious groups with the dominant group exercising paternalistic role. Paternalistic assimilation is based on the idea that equality can be achieved through the full adoption of the rules and values of the dominant religious group and through the avoidance of any considerations of religious diversity. The assimilationist paternalism is justified on the basis of respecting common religious values and principles that are shared by the majority in order to foster a cohesive, inclusive society. Assimilation is based on the idea of mono-religiosity and the full adoption whether by submission or absorption of the rules and values of the dominant religious group so that the minority groups become religiously indistinguishable from the dominant religion. In general, it assumes a certain kind of behavior on the part of the host group, thus, positive acceptance of the assimilated group. It is a stage in which there is a complete adoption of the dominant religion and a complete disassociating oneself from one's religious tradition (Rees, 1970; Rodríguez-García, 2014).

Conversely, the assimilationist perspective and the total abolition of religious diversity that begins in and beyond the classroom or school imply a failure to acknowledge the complexity of plurality, and a failure that school cannot re-create a new person from one's own socio-cultural and religious background. It has been realized that this perspective has failed in terms of its perceived goals of social cohesion and equity, and the creation of a truly participatory political space. The result of such an approach is the

profound marginalization and social exclusion of sections of the population. In many cases where single religious tradition has been forced on students of different religions, religious violence and a sense of discrimination on the part of those not belonging to the taught religion are rife. Schools cannot re-create a new person from one's own religious-cultural background which is part of one's identity (Rees, 1970; Rodríguez-García, 2014).

Christian religious education is also believed to promote inclusive education since it teaches *equality and caring for the vulnerable and the needy*. Equality and caring for the vulnerable and the needy are believed to be the values that can only be cultivated through Christian religious education. However, rather than being inclusive, is a prejudice approach in which Christian teaching is elevated to the status of being the only source of truth, normal, or natural and having necessary skills needed by all with the purpose of disqualifying other religious traditions.

This attitude qualifies to be a moral paternalism which justifies intervention when the aim is to protect people's moral well-being or to enforce particular community standards. Christianity is imposed on all students on the conviction that it is a source of moral principles that promote equality and caring for the vulnerable members society. This kind of paternalism is based on ethnocentrism. Bizumic (2015) explains how ethnocentrism came to be used in religious studies; from the anthropological studies of religion to the study of religion on its own right. In religious studies, ethnocentrism is used because culture and religion and inseparable, most religions are ethically acclaimed and most religions account for ethnocentrism characteristics such as fundamentalist beliefs.

Religious ethnocentric paternalism has the following characteristics:

a. A belief in the superiority of one's own religious group;
b. Making of judgments based on the standards of one's religious groups and applying those standards in judging others behavior who may be from different religious backgrounds;
c. Assuming that one's own religion is the source of acceptable moral principles; and

d. An intellectual, emotional, and cultural attitude of a particular religious group who regard the identities and values of other groups of people as false, inferior, or immoral as compared to their own (Aboagye-Mensah, 1993; Zikargae, 2013).

Ethnocentric paternalism is based on a belief that when individuals from out-group see themselves as members of an in-group they are more likely to contribute to collective welfare of everyone within the group and adapt to behaviors acceptable for all and that group affiliation will lead to identity formation (Axelrod and Hammond, 2003).

Even though ethnocentrism has positive effects on the members belonging to the dominant religious group by serving as an antecedent towards devotion in one's own religion and willingness to sacrifice for one's religious beliefs and helps in constructing and maintaining one's cultural identity, it leads to misunderstandings, particularly of the minority groups. The minority group comes with its own religious stereotypes which are in conflict with the stereotypes of the dominant group. These stereotypes according to Zikargae (2013) are very important to explain why ethnocentrism cannot be expected to produce the results of absorbing the minority groups into the beliefs systems of the dominant religious group for collective behaviors and cohesion.

According to Zikargae (2013), stereotypes are critical to religious group identity and are major contributing factor for ethnocentrism. Most stereotypes end up as negative labels placed on individuals simply because they are members of particular group. These stereotypes, especially the negative ones, do have negative outcomes on the communication environment of diverse groups. They narrow people's perceptions; they usually jeopardize intercultural communication and take on a negative tone.

Stereotypes generally refer to:

a. Rigid preconceptions that are shared together by members of a particular social group;
b. Psychological convictions of knowledge, beliefs, and experiences, and expectancies that are held together within a defined social group;
c. Assumptions that people in all cultures make about the characteristics of members of various groups;

d. Perceptions or beliefs people hold about groups or individuals based on their previously formed opinions or attitudes;
e. General traits held in common by a particular group; and
f. Characteristics that differentiate one group from the other (Zikargae, 2013; Blum, 2004; McGarty, Yezerbyt and Spears, 2002).

Stereotypes can work both positively and negatively. On the positive side, they categorize and classify people as such and provide answers on why people act the way they do. In other words, they explain the general behavior of a particular group, they are essential for identity. People tend to know and understand others through stereotypes. In a sense, they reduce a threat of unknown. Czopp, Kay and Cheryan (2015) argue that positive stereotypes are the ones that have to be celebrated in the promotion of pluralism as they represent the plurality itself.

Nonetheless, the negatives of rigid stereotypes are so profound that they:

a. Lead to a total misunderstanding of values, beliefs, intentions, contributions, and practices of other religions, thereby, frustrating any attempt to comprehend others positive contribution in the well-being of all.
b. Lead to acceptance of ones group's norms, values and behaviors as sole moral, good and proper while those of other groups are often perceived as immoral, wrong, and improper.
c. Lead to the exaggeration of group differences in which ethnocentric religious groups see themselves as superior to other groups, which are liable to be treated as inferior.
d. Complicates inclusive and creates problems in attempts to inclusive programs because people expect others to think and behave as they do.
e. Hinder people's understanding of the customs of other people, and at the same time, keep people from critical understanding of their own customs.
f. Lead to intolerance of other religious traditions and used is to justify the mistreatment of others who resist succumbing to the stereotypes of the dominant religion.
g. Lead to a rejection of the richness and knowledge of other religions.

h. Obstruct meaningful inclusivity and block the exchange of ideas and peaceful religious resources for eloquent inclusiveness of different religious groups (Zikargae, 2013).

This means that paternalistic ethnocentrism approach to the teaching of religious education is not capable of promoting inclusive education since it is motivated by stereotyping which may undermine the principles of inclusiveness which means accepting each other as different as they are. It also undermines the pluralist approach which emphasizes the coming together of different perspectives for the betterment of all.

Inclusiveness of Christian religious education is supported through *holistic approach to human development*. This conviction is based on individual growth in which personal development should be addressed at both cognitive and affective levels as though Christian religious education is the only perfect religious education capable of the entire human growth. This is a prejudice approach in which knowledge from one religion can be capable of holistic human development, whereas holistic religious approach within inclusive education means knowledgeable about all religious and non-religious traditions and their contribution in human life.

Christian religious education is as well assumed to promote inclusive education since *it addresses social issues that affect all human beings*. The assumption is based on the link between religious education and Life Skills. Life skills refer to abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life context. While agreeable that religious education imparts skills and values for inclusive education, single religious tradition has been criticized as indoctrination, discriminative, intolerance and a source for religious conflicts.

The two justifications for Christian religious to be inclusive since it targets *holistic approach to human development* and that *it addresses social issues that affect all human beings* can as well be ascribed to hard paternalism and its motives such as ethnocentrism and stereotyping described in detail above.

6.3.2 Paternalistic approach in the continuation of mono Christian religion teaching in Lesotho church-owned schools

Paternalistic approach has also surfaced in the justification of the continuous teaching of single Christian tradition irrespective of factors necessitating pluralist approach, more importantly inclusive education initiatives. These paternalist justifications include:

a. *Christian knowledge* which is believed to have been essentially the reason for the establishment of church schools regardless of currently pressing factors to move from traditional validity of the spread of Christian knowledge including religious freedom and inclusive education itself which advocates for the inclusion of people of multi-religious approach.

b. *A lot of content* to be covered by students posed by the teaching of different religions. While the argument may sound to be in favor of learners, it is mainly to protect students against the 'other' religious traditions.

c. The view that *all knowledge is incomplete without Christian teaching*; therefore all knowledge should be completed with Christian teaching. Thus, other subjects taught in church schools are just additional while prime knowledge is gained from Christian teaching. While it is accepted that religion forms an integral part of human knowledge, learning single religious tradition deprive students of a broad knowledge that can be acquired from different religions.

d. The argument that *Lesotho is a Christian country*. However, there is no religion which can be described as belonging to a particular continent or country any more due to globalization and migration, unless a persistence in promoting one religion over others.

All these arguments for the continued teaching of a single Christian religious tradition demonstrate paternalism. They all account for strong paternalism that is motivated by assimilation, ethnocentrism and stereotyping discussed above.

6.3.3 Causes of paternalistic Christian religious education

Two factors from the above discussion may be hypothesized as the main cause of paternalistic religious education. The first is assimilationist perspective of inclusive education described above. It has been recognized worldwide that paternalism in general became to be realized in the implementation of inclusive education due to misrepresentation of inclusive education as an assimilation process which is believed to be working towards the best interests of the assimilated and assimilating groups. Assimilative inclusive education process is believed to have the following benefits:

a. Providing support to individual students to enable them to 'fit in' to the mainstream program without any changes being made to that program.
b. Children who fit in the existing education arrangement do not disrupt the education of the majority but become part of the majority.
c. Those being assimilated have 'imperfect' bodies such as disabled children or religious beliefs in case of those with different beliefs from the majority (Runswick-Cole, 2011).
d. Stability and interaction harmony is envisioned to be maintained when the minority group is eventually becoming 'invisible' as it took on the values and behaviors of the larger group.
e. Individuals enjoy being treated as insiders when they conform to the dominant norms of the culture.
f. The minority group imitates the assimilating group so that their values and attitudes would be assumed to be similar. Such behavior may increase the satisfaction of belongingness needs and concurrently decrease the dissatisfaction of uniqueness needs (Inglis, 2011).

The second factor and more important to paternalistic approach is evangelicalism. Britton (1976) defines evangelism as the process of winning converts to Christian faith through different methods such as teaching, preaching, canvassing and propagandizing in order to make Christianity a dominant force of the world order. Christian religious education which is being informed by evangelism is a process of informing, instructing and enhancing people's faith in Christian religion. The chief aim is to enlighten people

into benefits of becoming Christians or for those already Christians, to strengthen their faith in this self-fulfilling religion. The evangelistic perspective is explicitly provided by Thiessen (2013) who argued that evangelism which is synonymous to proselytizing means persuading or influencing others into accepting certain beliefs which is the exact mandate of education. Thiessen (2013) argues that Christian faith necessarily takes place in the context of pluralism and responds to inclusive education through education and evangelism as having the same objective of influencing or persuading students to certain knowledge. A Christian foundation to education within inclusive setting is basically presented alongside utilitarian approaches to ethics (an ethical philosophy in which the happiness of the greatest number of people in the society is considered the greatest good) and paternalism. Evangelism, proselytizing and education are only wrong if presented unethically. Ethical evangelism results into following criteria:

Dignity criterion: Ethical proselytizing is conducted in a way that it protects the dignity and worth of the persons being proselytized (Thiessen, 2013). This idea is emphasized by the participants in the mentioning of *equality* as one the concerns of Christian religious education towards inclusion.

Care criterion: Ethical proselytizing must always be an expression of concern for the whole person and all of his or her needs – physical, social, economic, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual (Thiessen, 2013). Participants mentioned that Christian religious education is aimed at *holistic approach to human development* and *it addresses social issues that affect all human beings.*

Psychological coercion criterion: Ethical proselytizing is not conducted through excessive psychological manipulation. It avoids:

a. Extreme approaches to bringing about conversions;
b. Exploiting vulnerability. Especially when dealing with children, young people, vulnerable adults, and individuals facing personal crises; and
c. Excessive appeals to emotion and fear (Thiessen, 2013).

This criterion has been explained by participants when saying that Christian religious education promotes inclusive education since *it teaches equality and caring for the vulnerable and the needy*.

Social coercion criterion: Ethical proselytizing acknowledges that some degree of power and control is inescapable in proselytizing, however, excessive expressions of power, or the exploiting of power-imbalances when proselytizing is considered unethical (Thiessen, 2013). This criterion featured in participants' argument that Christian religious education promotes inclusive education since *it is a compulsory* subject. To make it compulsory enables all to feel belongingness.

Rationality criterion: Since proselytizing involves persuasion to convert, there should always be ethically acceptable means of persuasion including the providing of information in order to make such a decision. As well as including giving reasons for the proposed change of heart and mind (Thiessen, 2013). That is why under this criterion, participants justifies inclusiveness of Christian education through emphasizing that *Christian knowledge* is the basic establishment of church schools; thus, to attend a church school is related to intention to acquire Christian knowledge. Furthermore, *Lesotho is a Christian country*, which means all should be included in a religion perceived to be a national religion.

Truthfulness criterion: Ethical proselytizing should be truthful by telling the truth about the religion being promoted. It should also be truthful about other religions it intends to discourage. Promotion of proselytizing integrity should characterize the purpose of evangelism. Proselytizing avoids unethical hidden agendas, hidden identities, lying, deception, and failure to speak the truth (Thiessen, 2013). The view that *all knowledge is incomplete without Christian teaching*; therefore all knowledge should be completed with Christian teaching, means that, other subjects taught in church schools are just additional while prime knowledge is gained from Christian teaching, supports this criterion.

Humility criterion: Ethically acceptable proselytizing is characterized by humility (Thiessen, 2013). Humility can be described in the general assimilationist approach in

which those being proselytized are given opportunity of the sameness with the proselytizing group.

Tolerance criterion: Ethical proselytizing does not mistreat those persons holding different beliefs from the proselytizer but are cared and treated with love and respect. While fair criticisms of other religious or irreligious beliefs form the basis for proselytism, the proselytized are treated with respect without hostile attitudes or the use of insulting and abusive language against other religions and worldviews (Thiessen, 2013). Tolerance criterion explains the general inclusive justification of Christian religious education as explained by the participants.

Assimilation and evangelism are the main factors contributing to the justification of the teaching of single religious tradition, mainly Christianity, as a promotion of inclusive education.

6.4 Religious illiteracy

The most important factor inhibiting pluralistic teaching of religion is Religious illiteracy. Religious illiteracy, which has been briefly discussed in Chapter five (5.7.6 Lack of knowledge on religious pluralism), is hypothesized as another factor hampering the introduction of religious pluralism in response to inclusive education initiatives in Lesotho secondary schools.

Religious illiteracy can best be understood by first conceptualizing the term ‘literacy/illiteracy’. The concept illiteracy/literacy is internationally debated within different disciples. The concept was originally used to measure the level of reading and writing. Martínez and Fernández (2010) explain that 1958 UNESCO General Conference held in Paris accepted literacy skills as reading, writing and numeracy. The term “illiterate” came to define any person who is unable to read and write. This criterion becomes to be used as the standard approach for international censuses. National illiteracy population was used to refer to the people who were not able to read and write.

With the spread of formal education in the mid-1960s when reading and writing became widespread and national education status could not be measured by simply counting the number of those who could read and write against those who could not, the concept

of illiteracy began to change. Functional illiteracy began to gain acceptance in which reading and writing skills could no longer be used to define the person's illiteracy status. Literacy became more complex, including the acquisition and development of the communication skills essential to enable a literate person to participate in social life and economic productivity. The World Congress of Ministers of Education, held in Teheran in 1965 defined "Functional literacy" as the learned abilities that enable individuals to function in different ways in their nation states as citizens, parents, workers and members of their communities. The notion of literacy was expanded to refer to the skills that enable people to function in their social, civic, cultural and economic contexts (Martínez and Fernández, 2010).

By 1966, the concept of functional literacy became the basis of the Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP) which was developed by the 1966 UNESCO General Conference, emphasizing that education should focus on the acquisition of basic skills through experience and work-oriented learning. During this time, the concept of literacy became to emphasis literacy in terms of non-formal learning experiences related to economic development. The level of literacy could be measured in terms of skilled labor. In the 1970s, Paulo Freire developed a theory of 'conscientization' that dominated the international arena particularly in developing countries stressing that social awareness and critical enquiry are key factors in social change, heavily influenced by the conception of literacy by 1966 UNESCO General Conference. UNESCO awarded Freire the Mohamed Reza Pahlavi Prize for literacy at the 1975 International Symposium for Literacy held in Persepolis (Iran), where his theory was adopted in UNESCO literacy initiatives. The Persepolis Symposium declared that literacy must go beyond the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and numeracy, but should include skills that contribute to the 'liberation of man' and to his full development. Paulo Freire contributed to the development of an analytical tool which gave a new meaning of literacy which extends literacy beyond technical skills to include social relationships and broader cultural processes. Literacy began to encompass skills in civic and political rights, spiritual development and cultural competencies (Martínez and Fernández, 2010).

The year 1990 was marked by UNESCO as an International Literacy Year, and during the same year the World Declaration on Education for All was adopted at Jomtien, Thailand. Literacy acquainted itself with inclusive education where the UNESCO gave a new meaning to literacy as not just a skill but a set of culturally and socially determined practices. This new meaning of literacy was also emphasized within inclusive education at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senekal in 2000 (Robinson, 2005), and further captured in United Nations Literacy Decade, 2003-2012, International Strategic Framework of Action (UN, 2009).

The expanded meaning of literacy/illiteracy lends the concept complexities in terms of analysis and application. In response to these complications of the concept, Perry (2012) provides different theories that explain literacy and offer frameworks in which one may draw his/her analysis or application of the concept literacy/illiteracy. These theories are *literacy as social practice*, *multiliteracies*, and *critical literacy*. Literacy as a social practice theory explains the difference between literacy as an acquired skill and literacy as set of practices within social interaction. Social practice theory is explained in two different models of literacy which are *autonomous* model and *ideological* model of literacy. The autonomous model is the one which operates under formal literacy acquisition through instructions. Literacy in this perspective is conceptualized in strict technical terms. In this sense, literacy is assumed to be a set of neutral skills that can be applied in any situation unrestricted by the context. Literacy in the autonomous viewpoint can be used to characterize people in terms of cognition skills as those who have important literacy attributes and those who are deficient because they lack such literacy skills

The ideological model on the other hand conceptualizes literacy as a set of practices not skills that are anchored within a specific context strongly influenced by cultural and power structures in society. The ideological model led to the emergence of literacy discourse that came to be termed the “New Literacy Studies” that represents a shift of paradigm from considering literacy as an acquisition of skills, to literacy as a social practice. New Literacy studies recognizes multiplicity of literacies that can be explained according to time and space and which are also differentiated in relations of power

determinant by asking the question “whose literacies” are dominant and whose are marginalized or resistant (Perry, 2012).

Theorists of New Literacy Studies or literacy as social practice defines literacy as the application of what people gathered from reading, writing, and texts in real world contexts and the ability to justify why they do what they are doing. In other words, literacy as social practice means what people do with literacy. Such literacy practices are not just informed by read and written texts, but are shaped by, values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships. Social relationships play a crucial role because literacy practices are basically understood through the interaction between people within a given group and community rather than those properties within and describing the individuals. There are two main groups of literacy as social practice which are *literacy events* and *literacy practices*. Literacy events are those observable literacies in which it can be seen what people are doing in their social relations with the information from the texts. Practices, on the other hand, are not seen but can only be inferred because they relate to unobservable beliefs, values, attitudes, and power structures. Since theorists within literacy as social practice tend to put more emphasis on literacy events, they usually focus on print and written texts as their framework of literacy analysis or application (Perry, 2012).

Literacy as social practice can be summarized in the following characteristics:

a. Literacy is basically a set of social practices that can be inferred from events which are related to the texts.
b. There are different types of literacies related to different domains of life.
c. Literacy practices are influenced by social institutions and power relationships in such a way that some forms of literacies become more dominant, visible and influential, while others are dormant.
d. Literacy practices are usually executed within a broader social goals and cultural practices.
e. Even though literacy is historically situated, it however changes through acquired new literacies in the process of informal learning and sense making (Perry, 2012).

The second literacy theory is multiliteracies which is in itself the extension of literacy as social practice. Just like literacy as social practice, multiliteracies puts more emphasis on the real-world contexts in which people put their literacy in to practice. It also recognizes the role of power relationships in shaping literacy learning and literacy practice. The main difference between multiliteracies and literacy as social practice is that the first engages with the multiplicity of communications channels and media rather than single print literacy source which is the main focus of literacy as social practice. Scholars working within theory of literacy as social practice tend to focus on practices that surround print literacy, while those working within the frame of multiliteracies consider what came to be known as *multimodality* (O'Rourke, 2005; Perry, 2012).

Multimodality means that meaning-making is communicated through different channels in which texts are just part of other modes including visual, audio, and spatial patterns of meaning. Multimodality is in sharp contrast from the long dominate description of literacy imposed by Western societies in which the priority was given to the only one mode of communication that involves hearing and sight. The sense of hearing is associated with the sounds of speech and the sense of sight with letters. Overemphasis on written forms of meaning-making tends to neglect other modes which are socially, culturally and historically that may have direct influence on individuals' meaning-making. Therefore, literacy cannot just be defined in terms of print or written texts but includes multiliteracies modes such as visual, gestural, spatial, and other forms of representation (Perry, 2012).

The multiliteracies theory means that literacy should be both cognitive and social relating to paper, culture, and electronic texts. It must also be strategic, that is, being able to recognize what is required in a given context, be able to analyze the already known in order to make it relevant to a given context and situation. In such a way, a multiliterate person would become a problem solver and strategic thinker, and an active and informed citizen. Therefore the *multi* in multiliteracies means having multiple forms of knowledge and understandings about literacy and social contexts that enable appropriate and successful performance in all aspects of life (O'Rourke, 2005).

The third theory is critical literacy theory whose classics are Freire and Macedo. They argued that to be literate does not just refer to the understanding of how meaning is socially constructed within texts, but to understand how political and economic contexts influenced the construction and dissemination of those texts. Ever since these classics, literacy became to be understood as being more complex than the traditionally defined skills of reading and writing. Critical literacy theory argues that aligning literacy with skills of reading and writing is in fact an expression of an ideology of a particular attitude of normative sociopolitical consciousness which is essentially exploitative in nature. True literacy is critical literacy which emphasizes the social construction of reading, writing and text production within political contexts of inequitable economic, cultural, political, and institutional structures. The basic aim of critical theory is to reflect on whether literate skills are able to be employed as social practices and to what purpose are their uses (Bishop, 2014).

Critical literacy is concerned with exploring the contribution of literacy in the situation where particular social and cultural groups of persons occupy unequal political positions of access to social structures. Instead of promoting any particular literacy of any particular group, critical literacy seeks to understand how a certain type of literacy has for historical as well as contemporary social structures given privilege to some while others ideas have been total excluded from mainstream narratives. In this approach, critical theory is as well conscious of not falling into a “colonizing logic” or other forms of theoretical imperialism. Critical literacy theory is guided by three forms of educational practice which are *liberal education*, *pluralism*, and *transformative praxis*.

a. *Liberal education*. This is an approach to any discipline of knowledge where intellectual freedom is imperative and where different interpretations are essential in order to develop a rational argumentation that eventually could get justification, but in a continuous not static process.

b. *Pluralism*. In this educational approach, there is an emphasis on literacy that is able to evaluate principles that support a conception of diversity. The notion of diversity that is grounded on benevolence toward those groups which do not form

part of the mainstream, but who are in the process maintaining the mainstream education processes.

c. *Transformative praxis*. This approach takes the radical potential of critical literacy into direct emancipatory action in the socio-economic and political context. Praxis is the literacy process in which conditions of oppression are revealed and the literacy is put into practice in a collective manner with others in a cycle of action-reflection-action against such oppression. The guiding principle in the processes of transformative critical literacy praxis is an analysis that involves an attempt to understand how the social construction of literacies is being structured and influenced by the agents in the established structures of power in order to reveal their political implications. Critical literacy praxis is as well called "political and social literacies" since it involves an analysis of a text at a deeper level to unpack how and by whom the text has been created and how and by whom it is sustained. The purpose of praxis is not necessarily to create literacies that are "potentially subversive" that may lead to the literacies of political indoctrination, but to develop a critical consciousness, or what is called "conscientization" in Freiran terms. This means even when engaging with texts that might be considered "reactionary," a critical literacy approach facilitates the process of understanding the nature and implications of the ideologies under analysis with a reflective procedure in which one considers his or her own ideological investments. The purpose of critical literacy is therefore to illuminate the difference between the moralistic indoctrination and an ethical approach to literacy through a critical consciousness that neither moralizes nor normalizes (Bishop, 2014).

The basic purpose of critical literacy theory is to analyze the social legitimation of certain knowledge in schools with the view that "no curriculum is neutral" since the selection and organization of curricular information is necessarily an ideological process. Therefore, it is necessary for those engaged in educational endeavors such as schools, teachers, and students to study the constructed nature of knowledge about institutions and experiences in the purpose of discovering whose history and knowledge is included in and promoted by curricular texts and operational contexts, so that they

could reflectively determine if the school functions as a democratic institution or as a site of social control. In this way, critical literacy becomes a different approach from other approaches to literacy learning that claim to address the sociocultural contexts of learners while intentionally remained distant from the politics of education and knowledge. Critical literacy recognizes that academic literacies can serve to socially reproduce dominant ideologies such as racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, xenophobia which perpetuate all forms of injustices (Bishop, 2014).

It is against the backdrop of the expanded meaning of literacy/illiteracy in which religious illiteracy in the context of Lesotho has been hypothesized. The theories of literacy as social practice, multiliteracies, and critical literacy are being employed to serve as guidance in the justification of the hypothesis. Religious illiteracy is discussed within the framework of disciplinary literacy. Disciplinary literacy refers to the use of knowledge and abilities gained from a particular discipline such as history literacy, computer literacy, and other disciplines, hence religious literacy. Religious illiteracy has been hypothesized from the superordinate themes of meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education and the possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho Church owned Schools.

6.4.1 Religious illiteracy in meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education

In the meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education religious illiteracy emerged when the majority of participants claimed not have any idea on what religious pluralism means. Insensitivity to ‘religious pluralism’ amongst educators can be explained in different theories of literacy. In the first place it is illiteracy in relation to the literacy as social practice theory which could be explained in the following:

a. In literacy as social practice, literate persons should be able to demonstrate their literacy in social practices that can be inferred from events which are related to the texts. Failure of religious knowledge and abilities to recognize the presence of plurality of religion suggest religious illiteracy. Religious texts such as the concept of religion itself which could not be exclusively used for any particular religious

tradition provide enough resources to recognize religious events relating to multiplicity of religion.

b. In literacy as social practices, literate individuals should be able to realize the influence of social institutions and power relationships in such a way that some forms of literacies become more dominant, visible and influential, while others are dormant. Failure to realize that Christianity as dominant religious tradition and its relationship with the state apparatus pacifies literacy in religion as a broad concept that includes different religious traditions which needs to be explored is an indication of religious illiteracy.

c. Literacy as a social practice is usually executed within a broader social goals and cultural practices. Existence of different religious traditions influence the general social goals of including everybody from different social groups in social services and being sensitive to different cultural practices influenced by religion as part of culture. Failure to realize a need to include people of different faiths in education and being educationally insensitive to the culture of people of other religions is sign of religious illiteracy.

d. Literacy as social practice accepts that literacy is historically situated, but it also recognizes that it has to change through acquired new literacies in the process of informal learning and sense making. The existence of multi-religions should inform religiously literate people of the need to engage with other religions even though they might be new in terms of history or not learnt from a formal education setting. Failure to do so justifies religious illiteracy.

In the second place, the educators' insensitivity to 'religious pluralism' can be ascribed to illiteracy in relation to the theory of multiliteracies. Multiliteracies works within the framework of multimodality which means literacy is not confined within written texts but other channels of communication and meaning-making. Literacy is communicated though other forms of meaning-making such as media, electronic texts, culture and social influences. Even if one has not been taught formally a certain area of knowledge,

one may learn from other forms of acquiring knowledge. Ignorance of religious pluralism cannot be blamed for not having learnt it from formal education institutions. Media continues to teach about religion-related issues such as religious exclusion and its consequences. Internet has information on religious pluralism. The changing culture brought about the convergence of the living together of people of different faiths is another channel to learn about religious pluralism. Failure to make meaning of religious pluralism from all these channels means religious illiteracy.

The other point discovered from participants in discussion on the meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education is that it means *teaching for awareness of the existence of different religions*. Awareness according to participants is promoted through introducing students to religious differences of theistic, non-theistic and atheistic religions without actually learning about or from them. In theistic religions, students are only learning Christianity. In other words, students are just being exposed to text literacy not function literacy. Literacy acquired from Christian texts cannot be applied in the context of multi-faith interaction in social, cultural and political spheres. A chain of religious illiteracy is being promoted from religious educators to students.

Teaching for the awareness of the existence of different religious traditions without knowledge of those religious traditions which inhibits religious literacy functionality is interconnected to the affirmation by participants that religious pluralism in relation to religious education means *teaching multiple religious traditions*. Although this is correct, it is not advocated for, which means illiteracy as measured by critical literacy (that will be discussed in detail in the next sub-heading). Failure to interrogate why a certain type of literacy mainly Christian literacy has for historical purposes dominated other forms of religious literacy is tantamount to religious illiteracy. The fact that contemporary social structures have given privilege to Christianity while other faiths have been totally excluded from mainstream literacy also amounts to religious illiteracy.

6.4.2 Religious illiteracy in the possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho church-owned schools

The area in which religious illiteracy emerged in a profound way was when participants gave their views on the possibility of introducing pluralistic religious education in church-

owned schools. Participants asserted that the introduction of religious pluralism *would encourage abandonment of Christianity* which is related to the idea that such initiative would *undermining the church prime aim of education* and it would challenge the *maintenance of Christian dominance*.

The three points raised by participants reflect religious illiteracy measured by critical literacy theory. The basic tenets of critical theory are *liberal education*, *pluralism*, and *transformative praxis*. *Liberal education* is recommended in all democratic states as having a potential to develop democratic values. It is the teaching and learning aimed at developing the knowledge and capacities of free individuals. Free people are able to evaluate information and to predict future outcomes. In other words, freedom means capabilities in decision making. This is an approach to any discipline of knowledge where intellectual freedom is imperative and where different interpretations are essential in order to develop a rational argumentation that eventually could get justification, but in a continuous not static process. Critical literacy in liberal education refers to abilities enabling individuals to engage in an emancipatory process whereby they are empowered to be able to evaluate the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions, social practices and cultural forms in order to select information of relevance and interests for the purpose of taking action (Mayo, 1995).

The pursuit of denying broad religious education that include information from other religious traditions in fear that such approach would *encourage abandonment of Christianity*, *undermine the church prime aim of education* and *challenge the maintenance of Christian dominance* is an indication of religious illiteracy. Strhan (2010) refers to liberal education in religion as liberal religious education. Religious illiteracy analyzed within critical liberal religious education shows a failure to allow students critique different truth claims from different religious traditions, to evaluate autonomously and rationally the best religious way to live one's own life, to question, whether the things they are ultimately concerned about are in harmony with the way reality ultimately should be, and to ask of whether they are living a life grounded in a false illusion or not.

Another critical literacy tenet is *pluralism*. Pluralistic critical literacy is concerned with empowering the marginalized social groups in the mainstream or dominant education

system such as Christian schools education in Lesotho. The classic of critical literacy Paulo Freire viewed the education of dominant group as the transmission of the socially acceptable information. This is according to Paulo Freire is a 'banking model' approach to education in which education becomes an act of deposition while students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. The teacher in this education system issues communiqués and makes deposits while the students become passive recipients of information which they have to patiently memorize and repeat (Byrne, 2011). In the banking education system teachers are turned into doctrine managers who instill the dominant group's epistemologies, belief systems, and values, and believe it to be their responsibility to make sure that students adhere to the dominant groups' doctrine (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014). Banking education is a reflection of illiteracy from critical literacy perspective. This illiteracy is reflected in participants' view that the introduction of pluralistic religious education is likely to be *a cause of religious conflicts and violence in itself*. The argument supports schools responsibility to transmit and protect Christianity doctrine which is believed to promote peace and inculcates moral principles of acceptance and tolerance, while other religions and in particular Islam preaches violence.

Banking education is challenged by pluralistic critical literacy which emphasizes the need to empower students to challenge dominant knowledge through social and cultural modes of information acquisition. According to pluralistic critical literacy, knowledge is attained through a process of 'epistemological encircling' which is a continual reconstruction of different perspectives, reflection on one's own knowledge and beliefs and reinvention of new knowledge. Knowledge attainment is a process of doubts about one's knowledge and about others. Therefore, education is a process of critical thinking when confronted by different conflicting truth claims. This approach to education promotes respect and tolerance towards others. Critical thinkers address diverse standpoints in order to gather knowledge fully and inclusively. The root meaning of 'respect' and 'tolerance' is 'to look again', or to re-inspect in order to enter into dialogical process of plurality of subjective knowledge. Teachers' and students' role in religious education is that of openness towards new perspectives and a desire to share one's doubts. The centrality of religious literacy in pluralistic critical theory is to value diversity

as an educative tool. Critical teachers and students in religious education acknowledge that they are learning to be who they are by relating to what is their opposite (Byrne, 2011).

The last tenet of critical literacy is *transformative praxis.* The central concepts in transformative praxis are ‘praxis,’ ‘conscientização’ and ‘dialogism.’ Praxis is an ancient Greek concept which means the synthesis of theory and practice in a way that each informs the other. Practice has to inform the theory as much as the theory informs practice. The basic assumption here is that any action taken without reflection is related to acting blindly, while there is also no reflection without an action. Central to praxis is that there is no apolitical education, and therefore any educational practice should be informed by praxis. That is, an action relating theory to practice should be understood within a specific social context in order to challenge power relationships for transformative action (Saleh, 2013).

In praxis, the functioning of critical literacy is to liberate both teachers and students whose voices and identities are lost in order to regain their lost voices as well as resisting unjust societal reproduction and to become active agents for educational and social change. It enables the learners and teachers to reflect on what is being taught within their concrete situations in order to find out why things are the way they are and how they could be changed (Aliakbari and Faraji, 2011).

Conscientização – Conscientization or critical consciousness is not brought about intellectual effort alone but through praxis which involves theory, action and reflection. Critical consciousness is a process in which through learning, taking action informed by literacy acquired and reflection upon the learning and action, both teachers and students begin to regain their self-actualization. Self-actualization is the process in which through learning one begins to understand their past, or their self-formation which is the root cause of their present situation, and what it means to be self with others. Self-actualization is self-identity in relation to others. Critical consciousness is the realization that actualization is constrained by the presence of cohesive forces or factors within individuals in social, religious and cultural contexts. These factors shape how people think about themselves in relation to others, and limit their understanding on

what is best for them in their community in which they live with others. The purpose of critical literacy is how these factors are identified and confronted through praxis in order to obtain freedom (Dirkx, 1998).

According to Mthethwa-Sommers (2014), conscientization or critical consciousness is a process in which the individual comes to be aware of self and as a product that has been shaped and molded by values and belief systems in which he/she venerates his or her own social, cultural and religious background. It is only when one is aware of and accepting the fact that she or he is a product of discriminatory and unjust social structures that she or he can begin working toward striving for a more equitable place for everyone. Critical consciousness is an educational process in which individuals achieve deeper awareness of the socio-political and religious realities that shape their lives and the development of capacity to recreate such social, political, religious and cultural realities for the betterment of all.

Dialogism in critical theory means that learning is process of tackling and examining familiar phenomenon from various points of view through learning from each other. Critical theory advocates that dialogue is critical in understanding the nature of differences, building bridges, and forming alliances in order to eradicate all structures that fuel conflicts caused by differences. Dialogue in critical theory is a process in which people enter into educating one another to acquire critical consciousness in order to have an opportunity to learn from diverse perspectives for the purpose of transformative action. Learning in a context where people are provided with a diversity of viewpoints enables them to engage in a productive critical exchange and confrontation. Therefore, critical dialogue necessitates an opportunity to examine one's locations in social context while understanding the location of others within social structures. Dialogue is also a stage for different viewpoints as required by democratic principle of embracing plural and diverse viewpoints (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014).

Transformative praxis corresponds to what one participant refers to as *step-by-step through negotiation*. Step-by-step through negotiation is one of the strategies to counteract imposition of pluralistic religious education by government education officials as well as conscientizing church leaders on inclusive education. The imposition of

pluralistic religious education is a sign of religious illiteracy on the part of government officials responsible for curriculum development and implementation as well as for church leaders to resist pluralistic religious education. Moore (2014) highlighted that religious illiteracy means lack of understanding on the role of religion in social, cultural, and political life of the people influenced by historical and present contexts. This illiteracy surfaces when multi-faith approach is introduced without taking into consideration the following:

a. There are conservative religious practitioners from different faith traditions who are likely to oppose learning pluralistic approach in schools for their understanding that it is the role of faith communities and families to teach about religion from their own theological perspectives (Moore, 2014). This is exactly what participants explained as the understanding of the church officials that teaching religion is church responsibility and should have been consulted before.
b. Pluralistic teaching of religion is not neutral and therefore has to be justified in relation to a larger aim associated with the nature and purpose of the education system itself within specific local contexts (Moore, 2014). Hence, some participants argue on why this kind of religious education.
c. Plurality of religious curriculum cannot be justified as pluralism if it does not ensure the existence of a collective rationality in favor of religious inclusivism in school system. Plurality is only achieved when all social actors, including church officials, parents, government and students are involved in the decision-making about pluralistic religious education (Colombo, 2013). The idea that the teaching of different religions was imposed on church disqualifies the approach to be referred to as pluralistic approach education.
d. Introduction of pluralism in religious education cannot be reducible to ‘one-size-fits all’ as a common trend for policy makers who in most cases fall on the risk of hyper-idealization of education policy (Colombo, 2013). The context of Lesotho where a considerable number of schools is owned by Christian churches with an articulated statement of purpose or mission statement reflecting the vision of education they seek to promote need a special approach to the introduction of pluralistic religious education.

Critical transformative praxis is essential in this respect to include all education actors including NCDC personnel, church leaders, teachers, students and the public. More particularly because the proponents of critical literacy theory mention that it is not only restricted to the schooling system but extends to all areas of educational enterprises.

6.4.3 Causes of religious illiteracy

There are different factors suggested as sources for religious illiteracy:

1. *Religious sectarianism*: Individuals who are raised in or have been converted into to a certain faith tradition or expression can only learn about that particular religious tradition or expression from their faith communities or through devotionally based forms of education in the schools aimed at promoting a particular religious worldview and values that are congruent with the doctrine of that particular religion. Sectarianism is based on religious absolutism which denies other religious traditions truths, whereas there is no religion or philosophy which can exhaust the whole truth. Learning within religious sectarianism limits the scope of students' religious knowledge. It also fails to teach students to associate with people of different religious beliefs as result create a society of mutual hatred between religious traditions. While it recognizes the freedom, the rights and responsibilities of parents. Learning within religious sectarianism violates child's own freedom of thought, conscience and religion. It contradicts the aims of education as it does not expand the cognitive horizons of the student who is left with only one choice of responding to the transmitted religion or not (Englund, 2010:245-248; Jensen, 1999; Hull, 2001). Views from participants that pluralism in religion education would encourage abandonment of Christianity, undermine the church prime aim of education and challenge the maintenance of Christian dominance are reflection of religious illiteracy emanating from religious sectarianism model that shapes people's thinking about religion and religious knowledge.

2. *Media representation of religion*: Media is another influential source of information about religion. Mediazation of religion is increasingly being used to describe how

the media progressively come to mold religious ideas, experiences and interactions in contemporary global society. The consumption of religious materials is communicated in the form of factual, entertainment and newsworthy events. Media literacy has been applauded for that following:

a. It enhances access to information and promotes participative communication in knowledge production and sharing.

b. Instead of having a group of individuals who are recognized as having authority and expertise, learning and teaching occur in a mutual equal relationship and quality is assured through interactive process rather than being controlled by certain institutions through fixed, formal procedures and regulations.

c. It promotes liberal and democratic education since the generated and shaped body of knowledge is open to everyone regardless of social position.

d. Through social network sites and blogs, people from different backgrounds engage in participative learning through sharing ideas, collective reflection, criticizing, and developing religious ideas and values.

e. It raises consciousness about the risk of equating religious values and knowledge to certain read text and culture which are often used by the dominating social groups such as the educated, middleclass and culture of established religious institutions, rather than the less well articulated forms of religious expression in media and popular culture (Lövheim, 2012).

Hoover (2012) underscored how media literacy has changed people's thinking in relation to religion and has given even more understanding on religious enterprises. Media does not present religion in religious terms but in media expressions. For example, religious activities are presented when they are 'newsworthy'. Journalists are not interested in promoting a certain religious

tradition but in how religion contributes in the “news” making, that it is, what is new and different, something unexpected about religions. Therefore, religions make news when they do things that contradict what people believe about religions. Stories such as religious hypocrisy, moral failures by religious leaders, entanglement of religion with politics and religious conflicts and violence, all catch journalists’ interests and make news. In a sense, they portray religion as social and moral instrument rather than a sacred and secret phenomenon clouded by myths.

Media provides a religious freedom and liberty than other channels of religious information. It has contributed to decline in religious participation in the large established religious institutions, while at the same time has advanced a new trend toward individualized and personalized religious and spiritual practice. This new approach to faith is characterized by individualistic “seeking” or “questing”. Many people and more particularly younger people are beginning to make religious choices or specialized faith for themselves directed at their own needs and tastes (Hoover (2012).

However, there is also the opposite view that media promotes religious illiteracy. Lövheim (2012) realized that since the encounter of collaborative learning in media channels is based on anonymity, temporality and diversity of knowledge, experiences and motifs of participants from different religious and non-religious backgrounds, it as well contributes to intolerance and hatred. Anonymity and temporality provide a platform for hatred opinions without remorse. Also Morris (2014) comprehended that media reports track themes in stories on religion which are primarily controversially explained as “hot button issues”, including the issues of wearing of the hijab or burqa, teaching of Islam in schools, potential integration of religious minorities, abortion, religious extremism, homosexuality, and sexual scandals in the church. In most cases, these hot topics are poorly reported, and as a result fuel stereotypes and communication of inadequate knowledge about ethnicity and religion.

Shabeer, (2015) opines that contrary to what has been believed about the positive role of media in presenting facts, well researched, unbiased facts of stories that

communicate and educate people on general social, economic, political and religious issues; media propagates biased, fictional stories particularly when issues involve Islam and Muslims. Media continued attention has focused on Islam as a disruption in the global order. Through media propaganda, the global world has many stereotypes and misconceptions about Islam. Islam is often portrayed as "extremist", "terrorist", or "fundamental" religion.

It is against this background of media fallacies in religious information that media has been included as one factor contributing to religious illiteracy. For example, some participants found it their responsibility to protect students against other religions and more specifically Islam since they have learnt from the media that it preaches violence, terrorism and bloodshed.

3. *Privatization of religion*. Even though privatization of religion has been used and continues to be used, it however, needs to be used with care since it is a highly contested phenomenon. Kretzschmar (1999) explains privatization of religion as the limitation of religion to the private, spiritual concerns of the individuals. It expresses the situation where religion is regarded as something which operates on a purely private and personal level. Common terms used to describe religious privatization are ‘disengagement’ and ‘differentiation’ which are basically employed to define the process of secularization. Secularization explains the decline of the social relevance and power of the religion. It is a process in which religious institutions, actions and consciousness, lose their social significance. There are two main forms of ‘disengagement’. The first type of disengagement refers to context in which state assumes total power and control. In the process, there is an action of ‘taking-over’ – abrupt or gradual of different social functions which were previously the domain of religious institutions. The educational and welfare services which were previously provided by the churches begin to be supplied by the secular state. The second type is intellectual-existential form of disengagement in which religion is separated from other fields of knowledge and relegated to the position of church affair with no public relevance.

In this process of disengagement or privatization, Kretzschmar (1999) continues, the powers previously vested on religious authority is usurped by secular powers and religion becomes more and more alienated from social affairs and finally, turns out to be limited to the existential realm of individual persons. Therefore, religion becomes privatized, which means that privatization, is both an aspect and a result of secularization. Privatization involves religious withdrawal from the secular world and becomes relegated to purely inward character that has no influence on social institutions or corporate action, resulting in a society in which religion does not appear outside the sphere of the religious groups. A privatized religion is therefore a form of faith in which individuals turn to religion precisely in order to either escape or to withdraw from the pressures and problems of social reality.

However, Beckford (2010) argues that in its purest form, privatization of religion would mean the following:

a. A situation where individuals are less likely to be influenced by external sources of religious authority but their own intuitions and feelings;
b. A condition in which individuals create their own collections of religious ideas and symbols drawn from widely differing traditions;
c. A tendency for people to pursue individualized religiosity without participating actively in worshipping communities; and,
d. The situation in which individuals are free to practice religion of their choice where they are pilgrims and converts without dwelling in any particular faith tradition as regular attenders.

According Beckford (2014), there is no time in history where religion was privatized since many people who claim to religious were always participating in religious ceremonies, being committed to religious weddings and funerals, and in the words of Casanova (2006) what happened was only the separation of state and religion in which religions only ceased to being ‘state-oriented’ and became ‘society-oriented’ institutions capable of entering and influencing the public sphere of civil society. Beckford (2014) argues that in some countries such as Britain there was

no time when either privatization or secularization has ever been experienced since in practice, religion has always featured in political, economically and public recognition.

However, many seem to support privatization of religion as being in existence in many countries. For example, Zimmermann (2015) argues that internationally religious freedom is being adopted and perceived as equal to the right of everyone to accept as personal opinions whatever religious beliefs or none religious beliefs one might choose. In this sense, religion can be understood to be privatized because it has been removed from public debate and replaced by “neutral” secular rationales which thought to be necessary for preservation of civil order. It is as well believed that it is possible to detach citizens from their personal convictions, and that their reasoning is capable of being exercised in a religiously private neutral manner. Personal beliefs are to be kept to one self and one’s religious devotions be done privately in order to avoid disturbing the public order. Religion’s communal practices also have to be kept private or within enclosed church walls.

Also Carrette and King (2005) recognized that since the Enlightenment, religion has been alienated from its social authority with the veneration of scientific rationalism, humanism and modern, liberal democratic models of the nation state, a process which has been referred to as secularization. The process of secularization that relegated religion to the private sphere could be described as the privatization of religion, but in two distinct senses. In the first instance, it means the exclusion of religious discourse from the public domain of politics, economics and science. This was mainly achieved though resenting ‘the religious’ in terms of individual choice, beliefs and private states of mind. The idea was to assign the precise area in which religion should be located, in order to be free, the secular space of liberal political governance from the conflicts, intolerance and violence arising from the conflict between competing religious ideologies and groups. In the long run, religion became a matter of personal assent to a set of beliefs, a matter of the private state of mind.

In Lesotho there is both (de)privatization and privatization of religion. De-privatization of religion according to Casanova (2006) is a denial that there has been any time in history in which religion was ever privatized. The argument is based on the role of religion in which in some cases it continued to offer public services and continues to have influence in public sphere. In Lesotho Christian Holidays such as Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day and Christmas as Public Holidays have always been observed. Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) which is an organization that unites different Christian denominations in Lesotho has been recognized by the government and has been given special role in Lesotho political, social and economic issues (Unites States Department of State, 2013).

The Government is in partnership with the Christian churches in health and education sectors. In the health sector, the Christian denominations have organized themselves under the banner of CHAL (Christian Health Organization of Lesotho) operates 40% of health care and 57% of health care professional training institutions in the country (Ministry of Health, 2014; Lebina, Nchee and Erika, 2009). In the education sector, more than 90% of primary and close to 80% of secondary schools are legally owned and operated by Christian churches (The South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, 2010).

Nonetheless, there is also privatization enshrined in the constitution that “Every person shall be entitled to, and shall not be hindered of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Every religious community shall be entitled, at its own expense, to establish and maintain places of education and to manage any place of education which it wholly maintains; and no such community shall be prevented from providing religious

instruction for persons of that community in the course of any education provided at any places of education which it wholly maintains or in the course of any education which it otherwise provides" (Government of Lesotho, 2010).

Privatization of religion gives religious bodies to establish and run their own schools as they choose without state interference. The Christian church which owns considerable number of schools provides Christian education as it deems fit. Hence the majority of participants claim not to know what pluralism in religion is, arguing that pluralism would encourage abandonment of Christianity, or would undermine the church prime aim of education or would challenge the maintenance of Christian dominance. This demonstrates how privatization of religion contributes to religious illiteracy.

Furthermore, in Government and community schools (which are regarded as public schools though with contradictions since church schools are defined as both public and private) religious education is not taught. Nash (2007) argues on the urgency of religious literacy which public schools young adolescents have been deprived off and remain religiously illiterate and yet religion is no longer a private affair but a sensitive and political topic, inherently intertwined with issues of culture and power. Young adolescents are grappling with questions such as where did I come from? Who am I becoming? What is my purpose in life? What happens when I die? The majority are living with people of different faiths whom they do not understand. Some are experiencing religious conflicts and violence but do not know why do they occur and how can they be prevented. While other fields that promote equality such as gender, citizenship, culture, race and ethnicity have been explored, religious difference has been left unexamined leaving students making uninformed religious decisions that are likely to affect their future citizenship.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter discusses three main findings of research which are misconceptions of inclusive education policy that is caused mainly by policy content which is not well articulated and framed, with unclear the aims for the consumers of the policy who are

teachers who have to implement it and the values of the policy which are not explicit and implicit; the paternalistic approach to the teaching of religious education that is mainly underpropped by assimilationist and evangelistic perspectives of religious education; religious illiteracy caused by religious sectarianism, media representation of religion and privatization of religion. These causes set the basis for recommendations to be made in succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The overriding purpose of this research was to determine why inclusive education has not been extended to other areas of schooling aspects, mainly curriculum inclusivity with special focus on religious education which its inclusiveness spells religious pluralism. Both inclusive education and religious pluralism are currently dominating scholarly debate internationally. The research interest was prompted by the realization that in Lesotho the debates on inclusive education is dying out giving the supposition that it may be assumed that inclusive education policy has achieved its purpose. Religious pluralism does not seem to have been taken into account in Lesotho's context. Very little was attempted in few pilot schools and died out abruptly.

In order to bring to life the academic debates in areas of inclusive education and religious pluralism in Lesotho's context with specific reverence to religious education, the study has incorporated both research participants' views and scholars' theories on the issues for the basic purpose of arriving at informed insights pertaining to the matters in question. Research participants were drawn mainly from the foremost consumers of inclusion education, that is, those who may identify its need, relevance and implementation success or problems, essentially principals and teachers, while research areas were church schools where religious education is taught. As a result, the findings are arrived at through rigorous endeavor.

Through the synthesis of information obtained from different participants positioned within different existing scholarly theories, the research concluded that the problems constraining the implementation of inclusive education in religious education by teaching different religious traditions include (1) misconceptions of the concept "inclusive education" that mainly caused by the content of inclusive education policy which is neither explicit nor implicit and is ambiguous.

The misconception of inclusive education surfaced when defining what inclusive education means, such meanings as education opportunity for every child; literacy for all; including students with physical and learning disabilities were suggested. Apart from

the meaning of inclusive education, misconceptions also emerged in relation to the implementation of inclusive education policy where participants believe that implementing inclusive education means inclusion through admission; inclusion through establishment of special schools for disabled students; inclusion through persuading its members to send children to school; and Inclusion through coverage. Through robust, rigorous procedures, the study divulges that these misconceptions are a result of not well-articulated content of inclusive education and its too ambiguous nature without clarity of its comprehended aims.

The second contributing factor hypothesized to encumber the implementation of inclusive religious education through pluralism is (2) the paternalistic Christian approach to religious education. Paternalism of Christian education emerged from participants' views merged with scholarly theories. Scholarly theories used to analyze participants views were ethnocentrism and stereotype which revealed that there is paternalism in participants understanding that Christian religious education promotes inclusive education through making it a compulsory subject; it teaches equality and caring for the vulnerable and the needy; it employs holistic approach to human development; and that it addresses social issues that affect all human beings. Paternalism also emerged when participants reasoned the continuation of mono Christian religion teaching in Lesotho church-owned schools which they believe is necessary for the centrality of Christian knowledge; there could be lot of content to cover from other religions; all knowledge is incomplete without Christian teaching; and that Lesotho is a Christian country. Through rigorous analysis, it became evident that paternalistic Christian education is caused by assimilationist and evangelistic perspectives of Christian religious education.

The last hypothesized factor contributing in the hindrance of implementing inclusive religious education is (3) religious illiteracy. Religious illiteracy emerged when the participants reasoned for the meaning of religious pluralism in relation to religious education where the majority revealed total ignorance of the concept "religious pluralism" and when they argue that it means teaching for awareness of the existence of different religions. Illiteracy in religion emerged again when participants were giving their views on the possibility of religious pluralism for inclusive education in Lesotho church-

owned schools where they reasoned indiscernibility of such venture due to thinking that it would encourage abandonment of Christianity which is related to the idea that such initiative would be undermining the church prime aim of education; it would challenge the maintenance of Christian dominance; and it could be a cause of religious conflicts and violence. Scholarly theories synthesized with participants opinions are literacy as social practice, multiliteracies, and critical literacy. From the synthesis of participants' views and scholarly theory the emergent causes of religious illiteracy are religious sectarianism, media representation of religion and privatization of religion.

7.2 Recommendations

Recommendations are based on the envisioned significance of the study in Chapter 1 (Section 1.5), where the study was optimistic that it would contribute in the following areas of significances; significance for research community; significance for education policy; significance for practice; significance for students and communities; and significance for theory. Recommendations are made in line with the main findings that point to three main factors that are hypothesized to hinder the implementation of inclusive religious education through religious pluralism, mainly misconception of inclusive education, paternalistic religious education and privatization of religion.

Finding 1: Misconception of inclusive education

This current study hypothesized that there is a misconception of inclusive education caused by the content of inclusive education policy which is not precise, and the ambiguity of the concept "inclusive education" leading to the different interpretations that dictate different conceptualization of and the implementation of inclusive education policy, particularly in the area of inclusive religious education.

Recommendation for research community

A further research is recommended on how inclusive education policy content could be clarified and made straightforward for easy comprehension by those responsible for implementing it, particularly school principals and religious education teachers. Moreover, research must uncover different interpretations particularly those 'silences' or unsaid interpretations attached to the policy since they are the ones that contributes to

misconceptions of inclusive education policy. Guidance based on research for the precise content will also limit the ambiguity and contradictions in the implementation of the policy.

Recommendation for education policy

The present study revealed that inclusive education policy content is not explicit and implicit. The policy is also ambiguous. It is therefore recommended that inclusive education is not yet a finished product, readily to be consumed by schools. It needs to be understood as a process in which in its continued strategies of implementation, may be defined and re-defined till teachers grasp its meaning. It also needs to be in a continued revision and re-vision till its content can gradually become explicit and implicit, and its purpose becomes clearer to facilitate a clear procedure in its implementation. More importantly, its broad meaning has to be emphasized so that it could be broken into small pieces to the extent that differentiated responsibilities could be shared amongst teachers such as religious education teachers focusing on religious inclusive education.

Recommendation for practice

Principals and teachers are the ones affected by inclusive education since it is implemented in school setting. Although the content and guidelines for implementation are not clear, the philosophy of the policy is clear. It is therefore recommended that school principals and teachers are best placed to identify different ways in which the philosophy of inclusive education can be put into practice.

Recommendation for students and communities

The study did not include students and communities to find whether they have insights on inclusive education. However, through the current work, students and communities are challenged to engage in inclusive education discussions. In other words, the study intended to conscientize both students and communities to engage in inclusive education policy that affects them directly. As well as reviewing its content, seeking clarifications and exploring the best ways of its implementation.

Recommendation for theory

Misconception theory of inclusive education is not conclusive but still needs to be confirmed through other researches, and in particular through quantitative research as the purpose of qualitative research which is the orientation of the current study, is to develop a theory or hypothesis that would be tested through quantitative research for the purpose of generalization.

Finding 2: Paternalistic religious education

The current study suggested that inclusive religious education through pluralism is hampered by the paternalistic approach to the teaching of religious education which is hypothesized to be caused by interrelated assimilationist and evangelistic approaches to the teaching of religious education that are assumed to be employed for the best interest of students from other faiths and non-religious students. Whether subtle or blatant, paternalism has serious ethical connotations, particularly in the area of religion, in this modern era that is dominated by educational philosophies such as liberal critical educational enterprise that should enable individual to be viable in their democratic societies. Religion has always been questioned for its educational value, and mostly equated to indoctrination, whereas religion when taught in a liberalistic perspective has potential to develop necessary skills for individuals to have positive contribution in their democratic societal values.

Recommendation for research community

Although the current work rejects both evangelist and assimilationist paternalism heavily informed by value pluralism, there are strong ethical arguments for those who support assimilation and evangelism. A further research is still needed to find out whether the two can be used in favor of plurality of belief systems. In other words can it be possible for different faiths to be assimilative into one pluralist belief and ideology and can evangelism be used to proclaim the value of pluralism for the best interest of all?

Recommendation for education policy

Instead of adopting the assumption of ‘one-size-fits-all’ strategy in advocating for education policy, it is recommended that those responsible for education should first learn about the dominant ideologies in different schools. What underlines the church education system should be thoroughly studied in order to find out how the new policy can penetrate the long held beliefs on church education ideologies. Furthermore, the paternalistic approach to inclusive education enshrined in EFA initiatives such as free and compulsory education should be clearly defined how they differ from church’s beliefs and strategies for education for all or education for all to be become Christians.

Recommendation for practice

School principals and religious education teachers are neither assimilationists nor evangelists in strict sense of the concepts, but educators. The recommendation challenges them to review their role in education. Inclusive education calls for current education philosophies including liberal education and multicultural education. Assimilation and evangelism are mainly based on ethnocentrism and stereotypes which means transmission of and popularization of Christian values, beliefs, intentions and contributions while negating those from other religions therefore undermining the principles of inclusiveness, pluralism, liberal education and the meaning of education itself as against indoctrination.

Recommendation for students and communities

Students and communities are the ones with different religious beliefs; thus it is recommended that they should challenge ethnocentric and stereotype in church education policy. Students and communities are consumers of education services provided by church schools which are now understood to provide public education not private education since all education expenses in church schools are incurred by the government using public taxes and individual parent.

Recommendation for theory

In religion or even in policy development and implementation, paternalism is not commonly used. It still needs to be explored further for the possibility of being accepted, rejected or expanded. Although the current research acquaints itself with the existing literature on the theory of religious paternalism, such literature is very minimal and scattered while ample literature on paternalism focuses on medicine, health and political authority. Therefore, the current research recommends more debates in the application of theory of paternalism in religious education.

Finding 3: Religious illiteracy

The current study hypothesized religious illiteracy as another source obstructing the implementation of inclusive education through religious pluralism. The contributing factors for religious illiteracy are religious sectarianism which is sustained through confessional religious approach, media representation of religion in which at times some religious traditions are misrepresented in the media, and privatization of religion that leaves much responsibility of education to the church as well as denying students in public schools a right to learning of religion.

Recommendation for research community

Further research is recommended particularly quantitative research to study the suggested causes of illiteracy among Basotho in isolation. For example, to what extent does Christian exclusivism contribute to religious illiteracy, what are the effects of media religious information on Basotho – does it promote religious literacy or illiteracy? Is there a difference in religious literacy between students learning religion in church schools and those not learning in government and community schools?

Recommendation for education policy

It is recommended that religious pluralism should be taken seriously for inclusive education. Adoption of religious pluralism would also influence policy developers to realize that religion cannot be left with church schools but should be included in government and community schools. To deny religious education for students in

government and community schools contributes to religious illiteracy and contributes to privatized religion since religion will always be understood as a private church affair. Introducing pluralistic religious education would challenge religious education in church schools as an enterprise privately owned by the church, as well as its content.

Recommendation for practice

Principals and religious education teachers are recommended to engage with critical literacy theory rather than being agents of 'banking education' as depositors while students are depositories, they should become agents of transformative praxis where they are able to challenge the dominant literacy. Principals and religious education teachers are challenged for self-consciousness so that they could conscientize students and communities in order to promote dialogism between Christian church authorities, the government and other religious traditions.

Recommendation for students and communities

Schools are places for promotion of literacy not illiteracy. Students are at school to become literate persons for meaningful and self-satisfying function in their communities. Therefore, the study conscientizes students and communities to challenge church schools for the continued promotion of religious illiteracy through the teaching of single religious traditions. They also have to challenge the government for denying them the right to religious literacy by not providing religious education in government and community schools.

Recommendation for education policy

The religious illiteracy theory proposed here is mainly focused on religion studies with specific reference to school setting. However, the promotion of religious literacy can be achieved through multi-literacies, that is, it can be acquired even outside the formal school setting. In order to expand the theory, theological literacy has to be conducted to determine the level of theological understanding of religious pluralism in Lesotho's context, more particularly because church leaders as theologians were not included in this current study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: A letter of permission to conduct research

UFS-UV

02 May 2016

The Principal

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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Permission to conduct research

This severs to confirm that Rev. Rasebate Isaac Mokotso is a registered PhD Candidate at the above university. He is currently conducting research on *"Religious Pluralism for inclusive Education in Lesotho Schools."* The aim of the study is to gain empirical based understanding of whether it is possible for church schools to introduce pluralism religious education as a response to government's initiatives for inclusive education. This study is purely for research purposes. This study will also make sure that the rights and privileges of participants are maintained all the time and no specific names will be mentioned in the process.

We therefore wish to request you to please grant him permission to conduct this research at your school and also your assistance and participation in the study will be highly appreciated. The study intends to interview the school principal/deputy principal and the religious education teacher/teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jovuya Ntombana

Department Head and student's supervisor

Religion Studies

Faculty of Theology

Appendix 2: A letter of invitation for participation in research

National University of Lesotho
P.O. Box 122
Roma 180
Lesotho

01/03/2015

Religious Education Teacher/School Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Invitation for participation in research

My name is Isaac Rasebate Mokotso and I am a postgraduate student in a Religion Studies doctoral degree at the University of Free State, South Africa. I am conducting a research as part of the requirements for my degree. The title of my research is "Religious Pluralism for Inclusive Education in Lesotho Secondary Schools".

You are invited to take part in this research. The research aims to gain empirical understanding of whether it is possible to introduce pluralistic religious education in church owned schools as a response to government initiative for inclusive education.

All information collected during the research will be treated confidentially and will be coded so that you remain anonymous. Participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time and there is no penalty for doing so.

If you have any questions about the research or require further information, you can conduct the following:

Student Researcher: Rasebate Isaac Mokotso
Cell no: 59499100
Email: iscrasmok20@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Dr Luvuyo Ntombana
Telephone: 27 (0)51 401 3272
Email: NtombanaL@ufs.ac.za

Yours Sincerely

Rasebate I Mokotso