**The Implementation of New Religious and Moral
Education Curriculum in Post-Independent Namibia: A
Case Study**

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Abstract

This paper investigated the perceptions of Religious and Moral Education (RME) teachers with regard to the implementation of RME syllabus in Namibia. The paper engages a crucial global debate on paradigms for teaching religion and moral values while contributing to the literature through research in the Ompundja Circuit of Oshana Region, Namibia. Contrary to the previous colonial era when Christianity was the only recognized religion, the Republic of Namibia adopted a new constitution making it a secular state upon independence in 1990. This new constitution, however, brought new challenges to teachers who were previously trained only to teach Biblical Studies as a school subject. With this new constitution, Namibia adopted a policy of teaching a multi-cultural religious and moral education curriculum. The teaching of RME replaced Biblical Studies in the Namibian curriculum. Teachers are now required to make their learners aware of the different religious and moral values of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, African traditional religions, Bahai and others inextricably.

This, paper, therefore, presents findings from a case study research conducted at Ompundja Circuit of Oshana Region in Namibia that examined the perceptions of Religious and Moral Education (RME) teachers with regard to the implementation of RME syllabus. Fourteen teachers from selected schools participated in this study. Teachers were interviewed, observed and later completed a set of questionnaire. Findings indicated that teachers'

individual religious and moral values shaped the teaching and learning process; teachers' individual religious and moral values played a major role regarding conflicting concerns over RME; and as most RME teachers were Christian, they felt a commitment to share their personal Christian religious beliefs and moral values. The paper recommends that teachers be provided with the necessary teaching resources and be trained to develop more confidence and broad understanding of RME as a subject.

Key words: Religious and Moral Education, curriculum, Namibia, Biblical Studies, teacher training, secular state.

Introduction

This pioneering research investigated the perceptions of Religious and Moral Education (RME) teachers with regard to the implementation of Namibia's new RME syllabus. The study helps to inform the crucial global debate on paradigms for teaching RME values, while contributing to a growing canon of literature through research conducted in the Ompundja Circuit of Oshana Region, Namibia. This region was selected because the schools involved in this study, which follow the national curriculum, were within a 10 km radius from the University of Namibia Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus, where the researchers were based. Moreover, with the adoption of the new Republic of Namibia Constitution after independence was obtained in 1990, Namibia became

a secular state. This new secular identity was in stark contrast with the previous colonial eras when Christianity was the only recognized religion, and provided a significant challenge for teachers who were previously trained to teach only Christian Biblical Studies.

When European Christian missionaries first arrived in Namibia in 1806, their mission schools aimed to convert Namibians to Christianity, and Biblical Studies became a core school subject in the education system. From then on Christianity remained an integral part of the national school curriculum (Other religions were allowed, but not recognized or included in the curriculum). This tradition remained when Germany began to colonise Namibia (formally known then as South West Africa) in 1884, and later when South Africa was granted a mandate over Namibia in 1920. However, when Namibia became independent in 1990 RME was introduced as a replacement for Christian Biblical Studies in the new curriculum. Currently, teachers are required to teach their learners to be aware of various religious and moral values incorporated within Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, African traditional religions, Bahai and other faiths. In grades five to seven, learners explore Judaism, African Traditional Religions and Christianity; while in grades eight to ten learners are to study Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and other belief systems relevant to the

Namibian society. Moreover, in grades five to ten all learners are expected to work together by using their knowledge about faith in a local context to explore and integrate what is new and unfamiliar. Learners are to use what has been discovered about other faiths to reflect on and deepen their own religious experience and understanding. At all grade levels, the teacher's approach must not be to impose religious doctrine, but to be ecumenical; academically embracing all religions and moral values (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2005, p .2; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2007, p. 2).

Against this backdrop, this paper investigated teachers' perceptions toward RME as a subject and evaluated the implementation of RME in selected schools in Namibia. The study further assessed the constraints that hinder the effective teaching and learning within the RME context. To address these research objectives, this paper begins by giving a brief review of significant contextual literature followed by research methodology, results and discussion, and ends with conclusion and recommendations of the study.

Objectives

The objectives of this qualitative single case study were to assess RME teachers' perceptions of the subject, evaluate how the RME syllabus is being implemented in grades five to ten; and to investigate the constraints that hinder effective teaching and learning within RME.

A Review of Significant Contextual Literature

Before the colonial government of Germany controlled education in Namibia (formally known as South West Africa), religious education was in the hands of missionaries. In fact, both forms of education, religious and secular, were provided by missionary centres during the German era, and also initially during the South African regime. During these times missionaries promoted their religious beliefs in exchange for providing education, health care and jobs. In fact, in order to work for the missionaries and to benefit from their "civil" work, it was necessary to be converted to Christianity. Most of those recruited were teachers, nurses and police officers (Katsao & Mbumba, 1992, p. 25). During the period of South African rule, Christian Biblical Studies was part of the teacher education curriculum and the basic education curriculum (grades one to 12) and was usually restricted to reading of the Holy Scriptures and understanding church history from a Protestant perspective.

However, when Namibia gained independence in 1990, a new subject, Religious and Moral Education (RME), was introduced into the school curriculum (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1991). This subject (with a focus on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and African traditional religions) replaced Biblical Studies, which only allowed the study of Christianity. Unlike the former Biblical Studies curriculum, RME embraced the study of many different religions and forms of morality. In this way, RME teachers were now responsible for guiding their learners in how to live in a society characterised by religious and cultural diversity (Knitter, 1985, p. 206). To achieve this end result, RME teachers needed to be aware of diverse religions/worldviews and to accommodate them in their daily RME lesson plans. Moreover, within modern Namibia, it is quite likely that teachers in government schools may have learners from religious backgrounds very different from their own, or learners that belong to no particular religion. In every case, however, it is still the teacher's duty to introduce all learners to the RME curriculum regarding morals and values. Moreover, regardless of learners' religious affiliations, it was now the responsibility of the RME teacher to help all learners accept individuals with different value systems, and to help each learner to better understand their own personal value system.

According to the Namibian constitution, it is the right and responsibility of teachers and learners to exercise their religious freedom, while being tolerant of the religious views of others (Iita, 2012a; Iita, 2012b). “All people are equal before the law and each individual’s morality, religion and value system is respected according to the Namibian Constitution. And, according to Namibia’s Ministry of Education and Culture (1991), every Namibian is challenged to turn this country into an example of morality, spirituality and tolerance to the rest of the world”(p. 1). Clearly, with their new constitution, Namibia adopted a policy of teaching a multi-cultural religious and moral education to all learners (Lubbe, 1997, p. 17).

Although Namibia is a secular state with 90% of the population currently claiming to be Christian, Article 19 of the Constitution clearly provides for the right of religious and non-religious freedom (Republic of Namibia, 1990). Therefore, the aim of the RME curriculum is to enable learners to understand their religious beliefs and practices, and to accept other groups whose values and traditions may be different from their own. In such a context it should be understood that the aims of RME are to enable learners to better understand themselves and their changing multicultural world; to understand the diversity of religious beliefs and practices in the wider community; and to explore and value traditional African religions. Thus, the RME syllabus covers

a variety of religions and includes central themes on family and community life, worship, rules and laws, and the personal values of self and others (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2005; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2007). To better understand this educational agenda, a carefully circumscribed case study was carried to assess the implementation of RME in 21st century Namibia.

Methodology

In this methodology section, we discussed the research design that we followed, sampling procedures, research instruments and data analysis procedures.

Research Design. The researchers used a single case study based on a qualitative approach, as the purpose of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of RME by teachers in instructional and learning situations. Our main reason to select a single case study was to have an in-depth and contextual understanding of the subject under investigation, in this case, teachers' perceptions toward RME as a subject and the overall implementation of RME in schools. Yin (2009, p. 14) defines a case study as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident".

Sampling the population. The population comprised all government schools with RME teachers in the Ompundja Circuit of Oshana Region, Namibia. Purposive sampling was used for this study in order to select seven government schools in the Oshana Region, four urban and three rural, that reflected a Christian philosophy (a trait common to government schools in Namibia). According to Maxwell, (2004), purposive sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to the phenomenon that is to be studied (Maxwell, 2004). The criteria for selecting schools were as follows: (a) the school must be in the Ompundja Circuit, and must be within a 10 km radius from the University of Namibia-Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus, where the researchers were based; (b) the school must be a government school and should follow a Namibian school curriculum; and (c) the school must have been in existence for a minimum period of three years. Purposive sampling was also used to select the sample of 14 RME teachers from the pool of other teachers who could represent the population of RME teacher in Namibia in terms of background, training, qualifications and experience (Best & Khan, 1998, p. 186). The teachers were selected using the following criteria: (a) the teacher must be teaching RME as a school subject; (b) the teacher must have taught RME for a minimum of one year; and (c) the teacher must have a minimum qualification of a Basic Education Teachers' Diploma.

With regard to the demographic details of the sample, a total of 14 teachers participated in this study – 10 females and 4 males. The majority of teachers were in the 19-25 and 34-43 age groups. All participants were professionally qualified in the field of teaching and their years of teaching experience ranged from 1 to 20 years. As part of research ethics, participants were assured of their right to participate or withdraw if they so desired and confidentiality was also guaranteed throughout the study. All participating schools and teachers were allocated *pseudo-names*, for example, School A, B, C, or Teacher 1, 2, or 3.

Research instruments. The researchers used three instruments to collect data, namely, questionnaire, interview and observation. Each teacher in the sample completed a questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this research asked for biographical information, such as age, sex and years of teaching experience. The questionnaire further elicited responses that directly answered the research questions regarding the RME teachers' perceptions of Religious and Moral Education in teaching and learning situations, as well as their perceptions regarding the constraints hindering the teaching and learning of RME. The other reason why we used the questionnaire was to increase the trustworthiness and reliability of the data collected by using several sources of data gathering (Boundah, 2011).

The second instrument we used was interview. Interview questions solicited information with regards to teachers' perceptions of RME as a school subject, their application of the RME syllabus in various teaching and learning situations, and any constraints they perceived as hindering the RME teaching and learning process. Each interview lasted between 40 and 45 minutes and was audio recorded. The interviews were later transcribed for data analysis.

The third instrument used for data collection was observation. Each participating teacher was observed teaching a RME lesson at least once in his/her own classroom. An observation checklist was used to clarify what the RME teachers had said during the interviews and recorded in their questionnaires, and to ascertain if what the teachers said they did in their classrooms corresponded to what was actually observed. During observation periods, the researchers recorded how the teachers interacted with the learners, noting any observed barriers to effective teaching and learning and how they were handled; various teaching styles; and the intended content/learning objectives. The main purpose of the classroom observations was to complement the questionnaires and interviews, as well as to see how the teachers interacted with their learners, as suggested by Patton (1990). Thus, this method helped the researchers to have more confidence in making appropriate analysis and conclusions about the teaching and implementation of RME.

Data Analysis. The data collected from the interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations were analysed through triangulation in order to discover emerging and consistent themes. Data organization and analysis were based on the works of Bogdan and Biklin (1992) and Miles and Huberman (1994). The first phase of data analysis was to transcribe all the interview recordings. Data were then later broken down into manageable units and then categorized and synthesized to identify significant patterns using headings and tables. This data analysis procedure helped us as researchers to draw insightful conclusions.

Following a common practice in writing up qualitative reports, this study also included the voice of participants within the text. For example, to better highlight findings on the challenges to effective instruction, a teacher quotation such as the following would be included: “*When I do my preparations is when I face problems due to lack of materials. It will be better if I can go for in-service training.*”

Permission to conduct this study was given by the Ministry of Education. Confidentiality was guaranteed throughout the study, and participants were assured of their right to participate or withdraw if they so desired. All participating schools and teachers were allocated *pseudo-names*, for example, School A, B, C, or Teacher 1, 2, or 3.

Results and Discussion

Data analysis generated two comprehensive themes: teachers' general perceptions of RME and teachers' perceptions of constraints for teaching RME.

Teachers' general perceptions of RME. RME teachers were asked to express their perceptions regarding RME, and in most cases they simply described their own religious beliefs and moral understandings. The sample of 14 RME teachers described their understanding of RME as a school subject and their teaching experiences, which they perceived as involving religious beliefs and moral values which closely paralleled their own. What emerged was a general perception that RME played a major role in the education and development of the learners socially, morally and spiritually (see Table 1 for teachers' perceptions about RME).

Table 1: Teachers' Perceptions of RME

Participant	Response
Teacher 2	<i>“Religious and Moral Education is very important in schools because learners will be exposed to various things in the world. It must be taken very seriously so that learners should sort out what is right and what is wrong.”</i> <i>“Learners respond in the way that they show interest in the content of the subject. They also wish to compare stories in the Christian Bible with stories they learn in the Religious and Moral Education subject; stories such as that of Stephen in the Christian Bible with modern martyrs like Archbishop Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King, Archbishop Janani Luwum, Manche Masemola of South Africa. Learners question why they are not mentioned in the Bible. They only hear about Judas and others. However, I tried to explain to them that the modern martyrs came after the Bible was written.”</i>
Teacher 3	<i>“Religious and Moral Education is a very good subject that enriches the knowledge of learners about different religions and helps learners to make correct decisions. Learners also get a chance to be educated about [their] morals.”</i>

Participant	Response
Teacher 4	<i>“Religious and Moral Education is a good subject because it is an eye opener so that learners should know different religions and moral values. The subject helps learners to differentiate between various religious beliefs and helps them to stick to their own religious beliefs because each religion has its own doctrine.”</i>
Teacher 7	
Teacher 11	<i>“In Religious and Moral Education, learners learn morals, values and acceptable behaviours.”</i> <i>“It is a subject that helps to guide learners towards culture and religious beliefs, values and norms.”</i> <i>“It deals with many of social problems in our society. The subject helps learners to respect God in relation to how they perceive him. Learners take the subject to enhance their Christianity.”</i>

Participant	Response
Teacher 12	<i>“When talking about Religious and Moral Education, I refer to Christianity. It helps learners to respect their parents, elders and teachers at school. For example, one day a learner came to me and said, “Madam, I did something wrong because I went out with a boy”. I read something from the Bible. We talked a little bit and I advised the learner not to do it again, then we prayed. Now I am realising that the learner has changed for the good.”</i>
Teacher 13	<i>“In general, I did not recognise Religious and Moral Education as part of social life. Even when you visit different families you will find out that people do not take time to pray. Again, Religious and Moral Education is a good subject because learners need to learn about Christianity. Nowadays pastors are not enough and learners need to be encouraged to become the pastors of tomorrow. Since the learners have no more respect, when the teachers are teaching the subject, they (learners) will change their mind and behave according to the Ten Commandments.”</i>

Three key findings. Key findings from this specific theme indicated that: (1) teachers’ individual religious and moral values shaped the teaching and learning process; (2) teachers’

individual religious and moral values played a major role regarding conflicting concerns over RME; and (3) as most RME teachers were Christian, they felt a commitment to share their personal Christian religious beliefs and moral values. We will now discuss each of these key findings in detail.

Finding #1: Teachers' individual religious and moral values shaped the teaching and learning process. Participants' views about religious beliefs and moral values, such as discipline, respect for others and responsibility, reflected the main aims of RME, as stated in the curriculum. However, there were some differences in the participants' interpretation of religious beliefs and moral values. Some participants interpreted RME in terms of individual religious beliefs and moral values, while others interpreted RME in terms of multi-religious and cultural beliefs. However, all teachers sampled were concerned about the personal growth and development of their learners, while some indicated that teachers should act as role models when teaching RME. For example, Teacher 3 noted that *"It was necessary to promote RME in schools, as schooling was not only for knowledge delivery but also for the moral development of the learners. The teacher added that learners learned from teachers how to behave as human beings,"* while Teach 11 argued that *"It is a subject that helps to guide learners towards culture and religious beliefs, values and norms. It deals with many of social problems in our society. The subject helps learners to respect God*

in relation to how they perceive him. Learners take the subject to enhance their Christianity.”

Finding #2: Teachers’ individual religious and moral values played a major role regarding conflicting concerns over RME. Most of the participants interpreted RME in terms of Christianity. It was clear that most of them did not understand RME as comprising a study of different religions. In the main, it appeared that the participants interpreted RME according to their own Christian teaching experiences.

While every observed teacher used the same RME syllabus, it appeared to the researchers that they only taught a few carefully selected and preferred topics. All teachers prepared lessons from the syllabus, but these lessons generally reflected only the sections on Christianity. The sampled teachers were not following all topics as listed in the syllabus, and thus most non-Christian topics played a very minor role in their lessons.

Finding #3: As most RME teachers were Christian, they felt a commitment to share their personal Christian religious beliefs and moral values. The majority of the participants agreed on the importance of teaching moral values and attitudes in school, even though they had different opinions regarding the selection of lesson topics from the syllabus. Every teacher appeared to emphasize respect for others, responsibility, discipline, distinguishing between right and wrong, and commitment

within their school and classrooms. For example, Teacher 4 emphasized that *“Religious and Moral Education is a good subject because it is an eye opener so that learners should know different religions and moral values. The subject helps learners to differentiate between various religious beliefs and helps them to stick to their own religious beliefs because each religion has its own doctrine,”* while Teacher 12 viewed the importance of RME in terms of Christian education and counselling when stating that *“One day a learner came to me and said, Madam, I did something wrong because I went out with a boy. I read something from the Bible. We talked a little bit and I advised the learner not to do it again, then we prayed. Now I am realising that the learner has changed for the good.”*

Discussion of major findings. In some teachers’ views, the RME subject was a great help in counseling learners, regardless of their religious backgrounds. They felt it encouraged learners by telling them about God’s loving care, and by helping to boost their faith. They also mentioned that the subject helped learners know how to behave towards their teachers, parents and members of the community. Also, as the teachers believed that God’s commandments closely paralleled school rules and regulations, RME was viewed as teaching learners to obey both God’s commandments and the school’s regulations. The teachers also mentioned that there were some topics, like “belonging,” whereby the learner would learn to feel accepted and to develop a sense of belonging, as well as other topics

that reflected other aspects of life. For example, learners were taught about prayer, forgiveness and reconciliation, as well as the concept of equality in the eyes of God and men. From the teachers' perspective, RME strengthened the minds of learners to study and to cope with life's situations. As Teacher 4 mentioned, "In my teaching, I am not specific on one subject but I link subjects through my teaching experiences."

Thus far, these findings suggest that teachers are able to articulate the breadth of RME and to recognize the importance of knowing about different religions and moral values. Moreover, teachers in the interviews talked about how RME can help learners study about different religions, cultures and moral values. They were also able to provide clear responses to the question, "What are your perceptions as a Religious and Moral Education teacher with regard to Religious Education?" However, when observing classrooms and talking with teachers about their pedagogy, it was evident that while they included the moral aspects of RME, they did so only through a Christian perspective. Though the teachers knew the syllabus was designed to provide a comprehensive approach to religion, they focused on Christianity because, as Teacher 1 stated, "Since the learners were Christians, I put more emphasis on those morals." Storytelling came from the Bible and thus most classroom applications of RME had a Christian focus. And though generalizations must be limited,

given the sample size, the study did show that instructors were teaching RME only from a Christian perspective. In spite of attempts to develop curriculum that provided information about multiple religions, values, morals and ethics, teachers continued to teach what they knew best about RME, and thus they continued to teach through a Christian lens.

Teachers' Perceptions of Constraints

When asked to reflect upon constraints that impeded the effective teaching of RME, some of the major problems underscored included a lack of teaching materials/teaching aids, lack of pre-service and in-service training, and insufficient periods allocated to RME (see Table 2). And while teacher interviews revealed a concern about the constraints they faced when teaching RME, they also remained relatively optimistic. For example, though teachers lacked sufficient instructional materials to teach RME effectively, they remained confident in what they were able to do with their limited supplies which included the use of posters, overhead projectors and textbooks to meet the needs of the learners. As one teacher mentioned, *"We do not have learning and teaching materials, but the office is trying all the best to provide us with what we need to make use in the class to meet the needs of the learners, for example, posters and overhead projectors. Currently, it is good that the textbook has come. Sometimes we go overboard, it is not bad, but when you have the guideline, like text books, you will know how to utilize time*

and to set a target to cover the syllabus”.

Table 2: Teachers’ Perceptions of Constraints

Constraint	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Lack of Resources/Materials	13	92.9%
Lack of Appropriate Training	9	64.3%
Insufficient Period Allocations	8	57.1%

Lack of teaching resource materials. The data clearly show that the RME teachers perceived the major constraint to be a lack of teaching resource materials, for when appropriate resources were not available, they felt seriously hindered in delivery effective teaching. Thirteen of 14 participants (92.9%) involved in this study agreed that lack of resources/materials was a serious problem, as they felt these resources were necessary for continuous improvement of the teaching and learning processes. Both the literature and this study’s results agree that appropriate teaching materials are helpful for achieving prescribed educational objectives, to improve teaching skills, and to reduce unnecessary problems in the

teaching and learning process (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011, p. 244). This study also revealed that a lack of resource materials in schools contributed to ineffective teaching of RME, a conclusion also reflected in Adeyemi's (2004) position that a lack of teaching resource materials prevents the teacher from achieving the objectives of the lesson.

Lack of appropriate training. Only five of the 14 teachers (35.7%) who participated in this study indicated that they had received appropriate professional training regarding the teaching of RME. The majority of the teachers sampled (nine, or 64.3%) reported that they had not received any appropriate training. In other words, about two-thirds of the RME teachers sampled were teaching the subject without appropriate training (either pre-service or in-service).

From the teacher quotations in Table 2, we become aware of key issues causing many RME teachers to lack appropriate training. For example, the teachers sampled indicated a myriad of reasons for not receiving appropriate training which included: (1) lack of available training institution or subject advisor; (2) lack of ministry support (or serious commitment) for training in this new subject; (3) being assigned RME classes though this was not their major or specialization; and (4) never received an invitation to attend RME training. In summing up this dilemma Teacher 2 mentioned that “*We need in-service training for Religious and Moral Education, like the*

training we receive in Life Skills,” and Teacher 3 believed that “Most teachers are not trained at all to teach Religious and Moral Education. Many teachers did not get any opportunity to attend any of the training workshops...I think there are no workshops prepared for RME teachers.”

In sum, the researchers found that those assigned to teach RME received little or no appropriate training. Moreover, even at designated teacher training institutions within Namibia, only a few teachers chose to study RME, which further contributes to the shortage of trained RME teachers in the schools. It is the researchers perspective that religious and moral topics need to be taught by teachers who are both confident and competent, and that those teachers need to see their instruction valued by learners, colleagues and the community.

Limited periods allocated to the subject. Eight of the 14 teachers sampled (57.1%) indicated that the limited number of periods allocated to RME was a definite constraint on effective instruction. For example, Teacher 2 lamented that teachers needed more time for RME because teachers covered very little in the allocated time of only one 40 minute period per week. Moreover, this RME teacher also suggested that teachers can neither cover the syllabus nor any particular issue in-depth, given this minimal amount of instructional time. Another teacher added that she would have loved

to teach RME to her learners because of its special nature, but unfortunately she would not be able to do so, given the limited amount of instructional time per week. To resolve this problem, the researchers suggest the need for schools to consider more flexible timetables which might include both single period and double period lessons, or the addition of tutorial sessions that cater to learners' developmental needs. The researchers concluded that the subject could not serve its purpose due to insufficient periods allocated to the subject. To be effective, RME teachers need more time to teach the subject in greater depth. Although some RME teaching kits are available in staff rooms, they are of little use if there is not enough instructional time available to apply the suggested lesson plans.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study not only highlights the problems incurred when a new subject, such as RME, is implemented without sufficient support and training. Moreover, it contributes to the debate regarding both the lack of research on religious education from a comparative perspective, as well as the appropriate place for religious and moral instruction within nations who have clearly articulated a constitutional policy of religious neutrality, such as Namibia. The curriculum design of RME reflects the stated goals of Namibia's new constitution, as well as the current religious and moral values articulated

in curricula guides for grades one to ten - which include human rights, respect for others, freedom and responsibility, discipline, population, love, sex and marriage (Iita, 2012[a]; Iita, 2012 [b]). Unfortunately, due to the limited training and experiences of most RME teachers sampled (in addition to insufficient educational materials and instructional time), observed instruction did not necessarily reflect the diversity of faiths represented in the new curriculum, nor the secular nature of the Republic of Namibia's Constitution.

In conclusion, the researchers found that Religious and Moral Education as a subject played a very significant role in the personal, moral and spiritual development of the learners, as well as instilling positive attitudes in the lives of the learners in a multi-religious and culturally diverse society. However, while the researchers believe that RME was designed to address the needs of Namibia's learners, it will not be able to fulfill its goals due to a lack of resources, insufficient periods allocated to the subject, and the lack of appropriate pre-service and in-service training workshops. Moreover, as most RME lessons observed by the researchers focused on Christian Biblical Studies, as opposed to a broader and more diverse focus on multiple religious and moral perspectives as prescribed by the new curricular guides, this course will continue to fail to reflect Namibia's new constitution which has departed from its colonial past and state supported religions to a new era that

respects diversity and religious freedom.

Based on this study's findings, the researchers recommend the following: (1) The Ministry of Education should address the lack of RME teaching resource materials in schools as a matter of urgency; (2) The Ministry of Education and University of Namibia (UNAM) should design and offer pre-service and in-service training programs for RME teachers; (3) The Ministry of Education should monitor and evaluate all schools to ensure that the teaching and assessment of RME is taking place at all levels as spelt out in the syllabus; and (4) No specific religious formation (for instance Biblical Studies) or proselytization should be promoted or tolerated.

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