

**SOME RITUAL PERFORMANCES IN THE MARITAL LIFE AMONG MAPULANA  
IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA**

BY

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## DECLARATION

I MASHEGO FLORENCE TENA the undersigned, hereby declare that this study is my own work and has not been submitted previously to any university for a degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my Father MASHEGO FRANCE WITNESS who instilled the love of studying and writing in me.

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Special thanks to God Almighty for the protection all the way to and from the University.



## SUMMARY

**Chapter one** deals with the introduction of the study, problem, aim, objectives, rationale, significance, methodology and literature review.

**Chapter two** deals with the stages and different types of marriages among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area.

**Chapter three** deals with the performance of marital rituals.

**Chapter four** deals with rituals performed on the death and burial of a baby of less than six months, a husband or a wife.

**Chapter five** deals with findings and recommendations.

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Different groups of people have their own ways of performing rituals. Like any other group, Mapulana have their own way of performing marital rituals. Marital rituals are aspects of their cultural life.

Ritual in this study refers to the involvement of sets of symbols, involving feeling of reverences. These actions include praying, singing and eating certain kinds of foods. They include numerous prohibitions or rules of avoidance connected with particular persons, objects or other phenomena. Ritual is also a primary mode or religious expressions, one that unites words, gestures and material objects to form sacred drama Mahlake, (2007:5)

To Mapulana, marital ritual performance is their culture. Oyisi (1988:2) states that culture is the way we do things, implement artefacts and paintings as well as figurines for religious forces such as religion. Ellwood (1973:23) refers to culture as the total way of life of any society. She contend that every society has a culture, no matter how simple this culture may be and that every human being is a cultural being participating in some form of culture.

Communities have different cultures. This idea is reinforced by Guma (1967:1) when saying that a peoples past is its spiritual heritage and as such, it should not only be nurtured, but preserved and jealously guarded at all times. This is because of the stability that it provides, for without, a nation is like a tree without roots, liable to be blown over the gentlest of breezes. With culture people can withstand the strongest of hurricanes, because it is firmly rooted. Mahango in Mthembu (2006:5) defines culture as attributes such as language and materials on relationships with members of the community.

## **2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM.**

Every society emerges from a particular culture. Perry and Perry (1993:33) highlights that culture provides the individual with ways of satisfying biological and emotional needs in a manner approved by the society. It also includes all accumulated knowledge, ideas, values, goals and material objects of a particular society. It is of great importance for a society to maintain and protect its own culture. A society which does not practise its own culture is regarded as a society that destroys its origin. This idea is reinforced by Taylor (1957:1) when stating that culture taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, customs and many other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Culture can also be seen as a way of life, a system of behavioural society. The practice which is commendable in one society may be regarded as a taboo in another society.

Culture has to do with rituals. Ritual practices are pervasive in all human societies, while in some, they are observed in the everyday life of the individual and the group from cradle to grave. Rituals are therefore, the only means through which the performance world is brought into contact with the sacred. They serve as an institutional intermediary in agents. Marital rituals are part of Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area's traditional life and they understand its meaning and believe that certain people have ritual impurities. Oyisi (1988:91) for instance, states that if purification is not performed, that particular person is exposed to danger and something unpleasant would happen to him or her, such as illness which might eventually spread to the whole community.

The young generation should be taught and encouraged to uphold the values of their ancestors and continue to celebrate and honour the past. By so doing, the performance of marital rituals as culture can be seen as education which moves from one generation to another. Makgoba (1999:96) concurs with this statement when he noted that the organised education of the youth of a community is part and parcel of the culture of a community because

without culture, there is no education and without education no culture and no community. Kwenda (1997:19) states that culture is designated to preserve extremely important information about the details of African religion and culture that only the elderly have and which is likely to disappear if it is not recorded. According to De Coppet (1992:15), rituals are supposed to follow some time-hallowed precedent in order to be a proper performance. The above ideas indicate that man cannot do away with rituals as they are part and parcel of life.

The performance of marital rituals among Mapulana in Bushbuckridge seems to be increasingly neglected because of Christianity. Because of Christianity the young people are no longer paying respect to ancestors, while the elders are vulnerable to be called witches because of the ritual practices they perform. Mönnig (1967:71) mentions that witchcraft is loathed and feared more than anything else and is a force which is ever recognised by many who have become Christians. Kgatla (2003:11) regards witchcraft as a common topic of conversation gossip and a measuring stick with which to judge others.

### **3. AIM OF THE STUDY.**

The aim of this study is to critically study and examine the role of marital ritual performance among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area. In order to accomplish this task, the following questions need to be answered:

- How does marital ritual performance strengthen the marriage relationship between husbands and wives?
- How does the performance of marital rituals contribute towards the sustenance of cultural norms and values.
- How does it contribute towards the prevention of divorce?
- Which role is played by the performance of marital rituals?

#### **4. OBJECTIVES.**

This study intends to:

- Explore the importance of marital ritual performance among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area.
- Examine the effect of the performance of marital rituals by the youth in preparation for their future marital lives.

#### **5. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY.**

The study is necessary in that it shows the role played by marital ritual performances among Mapulana in Bushbuckridge area in the sustenance of traditional norms and values.

#### **6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.**

The study is important because it attempts to help to preserve certain Mapulana cultural practices. It will also be a way of transmitting such performances from the old generation to the new one. This knowledge or performances will help the emerging community to appreciate its traditions. They will learn old values and concepts of a challenging world. The study will serve to preserve some aspects of marital ritual performance that are disappearing in the current multi-cultural South Africa.

#### **7. METHODOLOGY.**

##### **7.1 Qualitative research method.**

Qualitative research is based on naturalistic enquiry where the researcher uses multi method strategy to gather data. Kvale (1996:70) states that qualitative research is sensitive to human situations since it involves an emphatic dialogue with the subjects studied, and may contribute to their emancipation and empowerment. It is concerned with understanding social



phenomena under investigation from the participant's perspective Macmillan and Schamacher (1993:373).

The study aims at understanding phenomena within a particular context and understanding reality by discovering the meanings of people examined in a specific perspective approach to social interaction. This method aims at describing, making sense of, interpreting and reconstructing this interaction in the terms of the meanings that the subjects are attached to. It is also used when the researcher wants to probe into a person's attitudes, feelings, fears, biases, ideas, hopes and aspirations. Creswell (1994:2) defines qualitative research as an enquiry process of understanding a social human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in natural setting.

## **7.2 Collection of data.**

The study will employ primary and secondary methods in the collection of data.

### **7.2.1 The primary research method.**

This study will make use of interviews to facilitate verbal discussions that could elicit responses from the chosen respondents. The interviewees will consist of the following people:

- Twenty traditional healers who usually perform marital rituals.
- Ten couples who have undergone the marital ritual performance process.
- Ten adult members who have a clear knowledge of the importance of marital ritual performances.

### **7.2.2 The secondary research method.**

The secondary research method will help to establish as accurately as possible the importance of relevance of the subject matter already used by a variety of scholars. This method entails the collection of data from articles, newspapers, academic books, magazines and dissertations.

### **7.2.3 Ethical Considerations**

Research subjects are usually not comfortable to reveal their identity and confidential cultural practices. The Mapulana and Bapedi research subject for this study are not exceptional. Thus, only names of the informants were noted excluding surnames. The main reason is that the information that emanated from the questions will be strictly used for the purpose of this study and strict confidentiality will be maintained in handling the data.

## **8. LITERATURE REVIEW.**

For a research to be effective, it is possible for a researcher to review literature that is relevant to the topic. Various scholars have undertaken studies on ritual performance in general and marriage in particular, since marital ritual performances have not been dealt with extensively.

### **8.1 Oyisi (1988).**

Oyisi differentiates between types of rituals. He divides them into simple and complex rituals. Simple rituals are regarded as personal, for example when one pours the first few drops of drink on the ground and calls the name of a dead father or other relative to come and partake before drinking. By this ritual, the dead relative is acknowledged. Simple rituals do not require a special functionary.

Complex ritual are regarded as social rituals. They involve the participation of another person or persons other than the one performing the ritual. This may

be the ritual for supplication rendered by a household head or a lineage. They may be performed by a senior member of the lineage because by virtue of his or her position in the group has direct access to members of the lineage in the spirit world.

## **8.2 Bowie (2000).**

Bowie states that rite of passage is often used to refer to the life cycle or life rituals, concerned with a change of status in the lives of individuals and groups. Rituals surrounding birth, initiation, marriage and death would be typical examples of these life crisis rituals.

## **8.3 Mahlake (2007)**

In her research entitled *Makgoma among Mapulana in Bushbuckridge* states that traditional marriage amongst Mapulana in Bushbuckridge is not simply a means of formalising a relationship between the members of the opposite sex for the purpose of procreation. More importantly it is a means of relating the ancestors of the bride and the groom.

## **8.4 Mönnig (1967).**

Mönnig states that marital status is a highly desirable one. In fact, it is an obligatory status, in that it's expected that every member of the society of an appropriate age should marry, whether man or woman. In the cycle if the exchange of marriage goods is broken, it will be to the detriment of all the relatives involved. Here, he is referring to the Pedi where marriage as has been shown, is affected by the enactment of certain ceremonies and by the delivery of dowry. The dowry are known as the '*magadi*' which is always donated in the name of a specific person and whatever the circumstances may be, this person will be the legal father of the children.

## **8.5 Junod (1927).**

Junod divides the lobolo feast of the Ronga clan into stages where a goat is used in all the stages.

### **8.5.1 Preparations.**

The bridegroom with his friends goes to the future parents. If he does not find his sweetheart there, he knows that she has wisely hidden in the neighbourhood. He brings with him a goat which will be playing an important role in the proceedings.

### **8.5.2 The assault of the village.**

This is the stage in which the lobolo is paid.

### **8.5.3 The counting of the lobolo.**

The lobolo is deposited in the centre of the square and fixed into the ground to be witnessed so that the witnesses will witness if the marriage turns out badly.

### **8.5.4 The wedding procession.**

A goat is taken as a sacrifice and slaughtered at the door of the hut of the brides mother.

### **8.5.5 The religious act.**

The bride and groom sit on a mat in front of the brides hut and are blessed by the father of the groom by eating the digested food which has been taken from the goat. The Father of the groom takes a small quantity of the half digested grass which has been taken from the paunch of the animal between his first finger and thumb makes a little ball of it, touches his tongue "tsu" as if he were slightly spitting.

### **8.5.6 The symbolic belt.**

The astragalus of the right leg of a sacrificed goat is carefully kept for this ritual. All along the belly, they cut a strip of skin reaching as far as the neck and up to the chin, which is cut so to form a kind of pocket at the end of the strip. The astragalus is put into the pocket and the father must not look at his daughter in law's face in doing this.

## **9. OPERATIONAL INDICATORS AND DEFINITIONS**

### **9.1 Ritual**

According to De Coppet (1992:18) ritual is seen as a formulaic spatiality carries out by a group of people who are conscious of its imperative or compulsory nature and may not further inform this spatially with spoken words.

Oyisi (1988:90) states that rituals are the means by which the sacred and the profane are brought together without doing damage to the social fabric. Myburgh (1981:89) stresses that ritualism is an important aspect in the maintenance of the right relationship both between individuals in a society and their spiritual counterparts. Rituals are in fact so common and such an integral part of primal religions that it is almost impossible even to attempt to present or catalogue the types that are performed in instances where individuals or the entire group has broken a taboo or has either wittingly become polluted and unclean. The touching of the dead body is one such act, which usually entails the consequent performances of a purification ritual.

## **9.2 Marriage**

According to Mönnig (1967:129), marriage is not an individual affair, legalising the relationship between a man and a woman, but a group concern, legalising the relationship between two groups of relatives. It is a legal act in which the relatives of a groom publicly transfer certain marriage goods to the relatives of the bride.

Krige (1943:142) supports the above idea by stating that the main function of marriage is to create and perpetuate alliances between groups of people. Sexual or temperamental capability between the perspective spouses is not regarded as an ideal. Emphasis on romantic love, and pre-marital sexual experimentation, with a view to testing out compatibility, would be incongruous with the prevailing type of marriage which is regarded as more than a relationship between families, carrying privileges and obligations that transcend the death of either spouse.

## **9.3 Culture**

Hebding and Glick (2003:05) stress that culture refers to all that is learned by humans in society, the understanding of their thoughts, actions and feelings. To these authors culture possesses the following elements:

- It is learned,
- It is shared,
- It is our social legacy,
- It is a totality of what people learn, share and transmit by means of their interaction within a social group.

According to Peddington (1950:3), the culture of people may be defined as the sum total of the material and intellectual equipment with which they satisfy their biological and social needs and adopt themselves to their environment. Groenewald (1996:14) states that culture acts as a screen between a person and social reality colouring it in such a way that interpretation and

understanding of reality may be totally different from that of a person of another culture. Oyisi (1998:3) mentions that culture is a heuristic device which serves as a conceptual tool for indication certain phenomena field that certain activities and certain objects may have a meaningful existence in the social system.

## CHAPTER 2

### STEPS AND MARRIAGE TYPES AMONG MAPULANA IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA.

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at analysing the process of marriage among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area. In order to achieve this aim, the chapter will concentrate on aspects such as steps of marriage, choosing a marriage partner, marriage gifts and also different types of marriage among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area.

#### 2.2 Steps of marriage

In an interview with Rosta (2011) of 87 years, it is observed that, Mapulana have some restrictions on the choice of a partner. A man cannot marry his parents' sisters, the daughter of his brother or sister as well as any daughter of his half brother or half sister.

The above idea is maintained by Schapera (1953 : 41) who stated that all Tswana, on the other hand encourage marriage with first cousins preference is usually on the mother's side, a father's brother's daughter is also favoured.

Rosta (87:2011) continues, in Mapulana culture it is accepted for a young man to marry his first cousin.

Marriage steps to be followed are as follows:

##### 2.2.1 *Go apiša* (proposing love)

Bašitegiye (84:2011) states that '*go apiša*' is when a young man proposes love to a young woman. After proposing love and being accepted a young man



informs his parents about the young girl who has accepted his proposal. Basitegiye (84:2011) continues that a young man may approach his father frequently through his aunt, mother or uncle to request that negotiations be opened for his marriage with the girl of his choice or a partner his father may have suggested for him.

Sofina (69:2011) states that if the young man makes the suggestion, his father is traditionally very reluctant to give his consent, but will usually agree at the end unless there are specific reasons against the marriage such as suspicion of witchcraft or long standing enmity between the families. The decision of the parents is accepted as final by the Mapulana.

Sofina (69:2011) further states that if the young lady's family is known to the young man's family, the young man's parents will look at certain qualities of the young lady such as humility, hardworking and beauty so as to bear beautiful children. The qualities the young man's parents want from the in-laws are wealth in the form of cattle and mealie-fields and respect also to ensure that their son will be treated with respect. If the in-laws are witches the parents to the young man will not permit him to commit himself to such a family. In most cases Mapulana do not want to marry from poor families, says Sofina (69:2011).

Mphigiye (80:2011) states that if the family of the '*makoti*' (young lady) is unknown to the parents of '*Mokgonyana*' (young man) his aunt will be sent to the family of the young lady to search for their home. If the qualities the young man's parents are looking for are available, then they will be satisfied. Mphigiye (80:2011) further states that the young man's parents will send his aunt to visit the young lady to give her '*lefokorong*' (half-crown). If the young lady accepts the half-crown it is regarded as a sign of the proposal acceptance and in turn the young lady will give the aunt an african necklace made of african beads. The aunt will act as '*mmaditsela*' (a go between or mediator) of which all communications will go through her.

Elfas (73:2011) states that if the young lady denies the half-crown, the young man's parents will talk to the young lady's parents so that they convince their daughter to accept their proposal. After this convinced acceptance, the process of '*magadi*' (lobola) negotiations starts.

The idea above is enforced by Krige (1943:142) who states that the social organization determines when one shall marry, and the parents, not the individuals concerned, set the machinery of the organization into motion.

### **2.2.2 '*Mampotsa ke mang*' (who told you)**

On this stage of marriage, Banyatsiye (73:2011) maintains that a word from the young man's family is sent to the family of the young lady through '*mmaditsela*' (a go between or mediator). On that day other two friends or sisters or cousins of the same age to the young lady have to be invited so that the mediator can identify the '*makoti*' (the would be daughter -in-law) and call her by name. If the right one is chosen the go between gives her money of which long back it was used to be a pound and these days the amount is five hundred rands.

### **2.2.3 '*Manyaniso*' (courtship)**

Bantlemme (86:2011) define manyaniso as the money which is given to the young lady from the young man and it is not meant for '*magadi*' (lobola).

Melina (64:2011) states that, a message from the young man's family is sent to the young lady's family. The message go through '*mmaditsela*'. On this stage '*mmaditsela*' does not go alone. She is accompanied by the young man's uncle and his elder sister.

Melina (64:2011) further states that, on their arrival, they have to wait at the gate and the gate will be opened for them. If they open the gate on their own a fine of two thousand rands will be paid. They will find relatives of the young

lady waiting for them. The relative include the young lady's parents, her uncles, aunts and her siblings.

Lofia (74:2011) states that, in most cases the guests occupy the sitting room. In this case the mediator is the aunt to the young lady. For the start of '*magadi*' lobola negotiations money will be popped out by the guests as '*pulamolomo*' (mouth opener). Long back the amount was fifty cents of which these days is five hundred rands.

Lofia (74:2011) continues, the guests send greetings to the in-laws through the go between. Such greetings are not done verbally but through money. It was pound long back and these days is one thousand rands. The lady's family accepts the greeting and, mouth opener through '*mekgolokwane*' (hullulations).

In an interview with Salios (82:2011) it is observed that, the mediator goes back to the guests to inform them that their greetings have been accepted, and asks them the reason for their visit. The guests inform the mediator that their son saw a young lady in the family and he is asking for hand in marriage. The young lady is called by her family and asked if she knows the visitors and their reasons for visiting. If the young lady says yes, both families hullulates.

Salios (82:2011) further states that, after the young lady's answer some money for '*manyaniso*' (courtship) is popped out. In the past it was eight rands nowadays it is one thousand five hundred rands. The aunt to the young lady places a scarf on the floor and puts the one thousand five hundred rands on it. In the Mapulana culture, the money is not taken by hands. The young lady has to take it by the scarf.

Salions (82:2011) continues that, the acceptance of '*manyaniso*' (courtship money) by the young lady indicates that she has accepted the marriage proposal of the young man. The go-between goes that back to the visitor and informs them that the young lady has accepted the courtship money. The guests ask for permission to go back home through the go-between. The

host's family gives the in-laws food and home brewed beer as an indication of the new relationship. Before they go, a date for '*magadi*' (lobola) is set and agreed upon by the two families.

Melina (64:2011) states that, at this stage the '*mokgonyana*' (the would be son-in-law) is allowed to visit the in-laws so that they should know him better. Some years back, the young man was not allowed to visit the bride's place during the day, but would only pay nocturnal visits, and he was expected to be circumspect, and not to enter the bride's hut openly. Melina (64:2011) further states that, these days a young man is allowed to sleep at the in-laws' home. When paying visits, the young man should dress presentably and have money to give his brothers and sisters-in-law. This serve as a proof of his manhood.

#### **2.2.4 Magadi (Lobola)**

Bareresiye (79:2011) maintains that, '*magadi*' (lobola) is a medium of exchange for cattle passed on to another family at the marriage of a son.

According to Styat (1931:143) lobola may be regarded as a legitimizing bond ensuring the social status of those concerned and of that offspring as well as the compensation by one family to the other for the loss of one of its members.

Bareresiye (79:2011) states that, on this stage, a message from the young man's family is sent to the in-laws about '*magadi*' (lobola) date through '*mmaditsela*'. The same people representing the two families are the ones who negotiate '*magadi*'. In the past strictly cattle were expected for '*magadi*'. If the in-laws did not have cattle money would be payable at a rate of one cow equalling twenty rands. Nowadays most families prefer money to cattle and only one cow is preferred for the wedding ceremony. Nowadays a cow is equal to two thousand rands or more. It is the lady's family to decide how many cows they require for their daughter's marriage.

According to witness (68:2011) the '*magadi*' requirements are as follows:

- Cattle – of which the number is suggested by the lady's family. One cattle is equal to two thousand rands.
- Herdboy-to look after the cattle, which is equal to one hundred rands.
- Knife-to slaughter the cattle of which is equal to one hundred rands.
- Snuff, scarf and blanket-for the mother in-law,
- Liquor such as brandy and overjacket-for the father-in-law.

Witness (68:2011) further states that, the young lady's family may suggest any number of cattle except seven because the number seven when counting fingers is said to represent pointing to witchcraft. The representative from the young man's family must come with three cows at first because according to Mapulana culture, the '*bakgonyana*' (representative of the young man's family) do not deliver all the '*magadi*' at once because the '*makoti*' is not on sale. Mapulana marry or give '*magadi*' so as to strengthen the new relationship.

Witness (68:2011) continues that, another date will be set to come and give the lady's family the remaining cows or amount of money. On that day, the lady's family will give one cow back to their in-laws and it is the final beast of thanksgiving to the parents of the bride for fulfilling their obligations.

According to Mönnig (1967:65) infant betrothal is arranged by the delivery of '*poo*' (a bull), which seals the agreement. Although further marriage goods will subsequently be delivered, the group who donated the '*poo*' (a bull) will have a claim on the girl which is practically irrevocable. Although called a bull, a cow in calf is customarily given with the indication that its milk should be used in bringing up the child.

Witness (68:2011) further states, the guests send a goodbye message through a go-between to the young lady's family. Food and traditional beer are given as thanksgiving. On their arrival at home, relatives and neighbours hullulates sharing beer and food and they dance. A date for the final stage is set.

#### **2.2.5. 'Go Kgopela sego sa meetse' (asking for the gourd of water).**

Belaele (69:2011) states that '*go kgopela sego sa meetse* (asking for the gourd of water) is the final stage of marriage. A cow is slaughtered and home brewed beer is prepared. It is a feast. On that day, the go-between is accompanied the young man's elder sister. On their arrival, the go-between pops out an amount of twenty rands as an indication of asking for the '*makoti*'. It was twenty rands some years ago but nowadays it is seven hundred rands.

Belaele (69:2011) proceeds to say that in the Mapulana culture, the money is given to the '*makoti*' and she has to share it with the lady who looked after her at the initiation school. It is up to '*makoti*' how much she should give her.

Belaele (69:2011) further says, on that night the go-between is informed about the cow to be slaughtered.

Ratfina (86:2011) states that, on the following day, there will be a feast, where the couple will be given presents to start their new home. The presents may include pots, dishes, traditional mats, spoons and brooms. After the feast, the go-between, the elder sister to the young man together with the bride go back home. The bride is accompanied by '*diphelets*' (bride's friends) and will proceed slowly to the '*bogadi*' (in-laws home).

Ratfina (86:2011) proceed to say that, in the Mapulana culture, the young girl's mother is not allowed to accompany her daughter to '*bogadi*' (in laws). They stop frequently on the way and will only proceed when given gifts. The

approach the groom's home the more frequent their stops and the larger the gifts needed to persuade them to continue.

Mönnig (1967:136) stresses that the acceptance of these gifts signifies that the bride is formally received into the new group, into which she hesitantly introduced herself by revealing her name.

Legwaisang (95:2011) says that, the '*diphelets*' stays at the in-laws for a week. After a week, a goat is slaughtered, the meat is covered in its skin and they go back with it to the young lady's family.

### **2.3. Types of marriages.**

Gamebotse (89:2011) maintains that there are different types of marriage among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area. These include the following:

#### **2.3.1 'Seantlo' (substitute wife)**

Gamebotse (89:2011) says, '*Seantlo*' (substitute wife) is a woman married as a substitute for a deceased sister. It may also happen to the younger brother of the deceased who can marry his deceased brother's wife. The aim of this marriage is to take care of the deceased brother or sister's children.

Gamebotse (89:2011) further states that, if a woman dies leaving children who still need maternal care, the husband can marry a sister of the deceased to take care of the children. Such a woman will however, have the independent status of a primary marriage, and will live in her sister's homestead only until the children of the latter are old enough to take care of themselves and a separate homestead will be build for the second wife and her own children.



### **2.3.2 'Hlatswadirope' (Cleansing of the thighs).**

According to Styat (1931:152) if a man's wife dies childless, she is often replaced by one of her sisters or part of the lobola is returned by her father. There is no obligation on the part of the wife's family to provide another woman, but they generally do so to maintain friendly relations between the families.

Theetsang (70:2011) states that, '*hlatswadirope*' (cleansing of the thighs) is married as a cleanser to cleanse the thighs of her sister by bearing children for her. If after some years of marriage, a woman has no children, she will approach her parents and ask them to give her a sister to help her. If a sister is available, they will comply with the request, through the '*magadi*' they received, under obligation to their son-in-law. If they have no other daughter available they will approach their relatives particularly the barren woman's mother's brother.

Astokia (82:2011) states that, the '*magadi*' offered need not to be as much as that of the primary marriage. This type of wife is not a substitute but an ancillary wife. She has no independent status of her own homestead. She has to live on the homestead of her barren sister.

Astokia (82:2011) further states that, the children born from this secondary union will be regarded as the children of the primary marriage and will inherit the barren mother's homestead. Should such sisters quarrel, a separate house may be built for the ancillary wife, but this will be eventually destroyed at her death because it cannot be inherited by her children as they belong to the primary homestead.

### **2.3.3 'Go nyalelwa lapa' (married for homestead)**

Sita (86:2011) says, this type of marriage happens to an old widow who did not have children. If not having a younger sister, she has to look for a young



lady of her choice and marry her. The reason is for her to occupy the widow's homestead.

Sita (86:2011) further states that, the old lady chooses a young man suitable for the young lady so as to bear children. It may be her brother's son or any of her relatives.

Ballakae (62:2011) states that, in this case, the '*magadi*' is paid in full. The children born from this union will be the widow's own children because they will inherit her homestead. The main reason for this marriage is that the widow will be left without a relative who will perpetuate her household.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Marriage is one of the respectable ritual amongst Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area. Married people are highly respected than unmarried ones. This chapter has concentrated much on different types of marriages, steps of marriage and also terminology used in marriage.

## CHAPTER 3

### RITUALS THAT STRENGTHEN MARRIAGE AMONG MAPULANA IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA.

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to reflect on types and importance of rituals that strengthen marriage among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area. Most rituals are performed by traditional healers because Mapulana believe that traditional healers have inherited the skills from ancestors. These traditional healers usually emphasise the curative and preventative aspects of medicine instead of pointing out to the so called witches to avoid destructive actions.

#### 3.2 Examples of rituals that strengthen marriage among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area.

##### 3.2.1 Rituals performed to a woman who is about to go to '*bogadi*' (her-in-laws).

In an interview with Fetsisang (82:2011) stated that, the night the married woman leaves her parents, rituals are performed. A mixture of mealie-meal, water and sorghum is prepared inside '*sego*' (calabash). The aunt will kneel down, drink the mixture, spit it and inform the ancestors that one of their grand daughters is leaving the family. The cow which was given by the in-laws on the last day of marriage is also introduced to the ancestors, it is because the transfer of cattle from the bridegroom's family among Mapulana serves as a ritual to seal the marriage and compensate the ancestors for the loss of their daughter in the homestead.

Fetsisang (82:2011) continues by saying these, on the daughter-in-law's arrival, the father-in-law pours puffadder's fats mixed with herbs inside the daughter-in-law's food. The purpose for this is that the daughter-in-law should

not think of going back home after eating the food. After this ritual, the daughter-in-law is given a new name by her husband's aunt.

### **3.2.2 Rituals performed by a pregnant woman.**

According to Mohloyeng (82:2011) immediately a woman conceives, Mapulana believe that she is in a contaminating stage. To reduce the danger of her situation she has to perform rituals. The pregnant woman should wake up early and draw water in a drum, chew a charcoal mixed with water and spit in the drum where all members of the family draw water.

Mohloyeng (82:2011) further states that, Mapulana believe that everybody who drinks water from the drum will be cooled from contamination. This type of ritual is called '*dikgapha*' (purification).

Garatsi (74:2011) states that, if there is a little baby in the family, a pregnant woman will chew a charcoal and a '*serokolo*' (traditional mint) and spit it in a mug with water. This type of ritual is called '*go kgerela*' (cut into pieces). The mixture is given to the baby and also to rub the baby's body.

### **3.2.3 Ritual for a woman who give birth to children of the same sex. ('*Go sokolla letheka*').**

Samson (75:2011) states that for a woman who gives birth to girls only, rituals must be performed because fathers worries about the one to take their names. Fathers always expect their first borns to be boys. '*Mosaba*' (a tough shrub with strong heart) is mixed with herbs is given to the woman, because of being tough and strong, Mapulana believe that the woman will give birth to a strong baby boy. While pregnant the woman is not allowed to fry popcorns because it is believed that her husband's testes will burst.

Isiraele (79:2011) says, a woman who gives birth to boys only, her womb is changed by the traditional healer. The healer prepares a mixture of herbs

mixed with '*sefagama*' (parasite plant growing from a big tree). The woman should start drinking the mixture after menstruation.

According to Lena (82:2011), Mapulana believe that, it is a taboo to make fire using '*sefagama*' or to cook with but a woman who is on this ritual is allowed to use it.

Lena (82:2011) maintains that there is only one healer around Bushbuckridge who is perfect on performing this ritual. The healer is residing at Sekwataleng village. Some healers claim to perform this ritual but they overdose the mixture. Such woman will give birth to a lazy baby girl who cannot do thing on her own and that will be the results of '*sefagama*', the parasite.

#### **3.2.4 Rituals performed to a miscarrying wife.**

Belnos (74:2011), a traditional healer purpets that, a traditional healer is consulted to foresee the cause of miscarriage. Miscarriage may be caused by the following:

- '*Noga*' (snake)
- Leakage of the womb
- Witchcraft
- '*Sekgalaka*' (growth in the womb)

##### **3.2.4.1 Miscarriage caused by '*noga*' (snake).**

Nkekele (80:2011) states that, Mapulana believe that a snake of about five centimetres grows in the vagina, it is said to have a black head. When the baby is between six and seven months inside the womb of its mother and starts kicking, the '*noga*' disturbs the process and cause the uterus to be open. When the baby comes out, the '*noga*' bites the baby with its head and the baby dies. It is believed that the healer snears the snake by cutting the four corners of the vagina and makes

two cuts in the anus with a razor and smears a brownish mixture on the cuts.

Belnos (74:2011) states that, the mixture is known to traditional healers but it contains a grinded placenta and is mixed with the soil of the snake's trail. When performing this ritual, the anus is blocked with '*phola*' (hon chews) and '*nkhutsega*' (sour morogo). It is believed that when the snake smells the mixture it can hide in the anus. When the snake touches the anus with its head, it will feel the sourness of '*nkhutsega*' and dies.

#### **3.2.4.2 Miscarriage caused by the leakage of the womb.**

Digopoleng (89:2011) states that, if miscarriage is caused by the leakage of the womb, the traditional healer has to stitch the womb with '*thiboya*' mixed with the white hen's blood and a womb of a woman or monkey. This ritual is performed between the sixth and seventh months of pregnancy. A mixture of '*thiboya*' and herbs is pushed into the vagina until it reaches the uterus. After the woman's womb has been stitched, the woman has to be always at home and not do any home chores until she completed her eighteenth month of pregnancy because it is believed that the mixture pushed into the vagina will come out because of the womb's leakage.

#### **3.2.4.3 Miscarriage caused by witchcraft.**

In an interview with Johannes (88:2011) maintains that, if miscarriage is caused by witchcraft, the healer will perform the rituals during the night because witches also perform their magics during the night. The woman is given a mixture of herbs to mix with her husband's urine and bath with. After that the traditional healer smears the woman's body with a mixture containing crocodile fats. The woman is given the mixture so that she and her husband can smear every night when

going to bed from the first day she discover that she is pregnant until when giving birth.

Johannes (88:2011) further states that, the reason for using the crocodile's fats is that the crocodile is chicky, so it will be difficult for witches to witch the couple.

#### **3.4.4.4 Miscarriage caused by 'Sekgalaka' (growth in the womb).**

The traditional healer Belnos (74:2011) purpets that if miscarriage is cause by 'sekgalaka' is identified by menstruation. By then, the woman will be releasing dark and thick blood. The mixture given to the woman is called 'go goloba' (dry clean) which will thoroughly clean the woman's womb. After being dry cleaned by the traditional healer, the woman will release normal blood during menstruation as usual. It is then that the woman can fall pregnant and give birth on her ninth month of her pregnancy.

#### **3.2.4 Rituals for a wife who gives birth to children who live for less than three months.**

Leepiye (80:2011) states that, a baby is born like any other normal baby. For the first month, the baby looks healthy, on the second month the baby suffers from 'lenopa' ( a disease that cause the baby to be thin) and dies.

Leepiye (80:2011) continues that a traditional healer is consulted by the couple. The couple is requested to bring along a root of any tree found in a dug grave irrespective of the age of the deceased. Some herbs are cooked with the roots and mixed with urine of the couple. The mixture must be taken by both husband and wife. The traditional healer instructs the couple to have sexual intercourse daily. After a month the healer will expect good results, that the wife is pregnant. On the first week of the baby's birth the same mixture will also be used to bath the little one.

### 3.2.5 Rituals for couples who do not bear children.

In an interview with Melina (64:2011) states that, the primary aim of marriage is to bear children who will in-turn increase their respective clans, besides extending the clans, children also form the integral part of the family. It is because of children that the couple sticks together.

Melina (64:2011) further states that, the inability to bear children may results in some conflicts within a family. The barren wife will increase the husband's lust for concubines. Once the husband adopts that style of living, he will not be in good terms with his real wife. To avoid the conflict within the couple which will weaken the marriage, their in-laws perform rituals towards them.

Hlapatsi (79:2011) says that, the most worried person is the mother-in-law. To perform the ritual, they prepare '*leotš'a*' (sorghum) separately so that the couple can urinate on the seeds so as to germinate. The one whose seeds do not germinate, is the one who is barren or infertile. The couple is not told about the results of the seeds. If the seeds of the husband did not germinate, the mother-in-law becomes closer to the daughter-in-law so that she cannot be suspicious of her infertile husband.

Hlapatsi (79:2011) maintains that, the mother-in-law looks for a related man who can make babies for her son. The mother-in-law will send her daughter-in-law to the field to fetch fire wood. She will find the chosen man with chopped wood waiting for her in the field. That is the arrangement and agreement between the mother-in-law and the chosen man. The chosen man may also kill an animal and be given to the daughter-in-law as a present. The mother-in-law will be the only person who knows about the presents. More presents will be given and the daughter –in-law will fall in love with the chosen man.

Leekisang (72:2011) maintains that, an old lady may be chosen to talk to the daughter-in-law about having an extra marital affair. She is given a chance to choose any man, reason being that she will have a strong bond with her

children because of the love she has for the chosen man. The disadvantage is that the woman would no longer respect her husband. The husband will love the kids and be proud of them and believe that they are his.

### **3.2.6 Rituals towards a husband who has other love affairs.**

Baretlogele (88:2011) narrates a story of a jealous wife who consulted a traditional healer in 1959 at the village of Moloro. Her husband was married to two other wives, so she wanted the husband to spend most of his time with her. The husband was a dress maker, and he used to sit on a chair when sewing clothes. The healer gave the woman herbs to put under the chair on which the husband sits most of his time when sewing clothes. The man felt as if a snake was moving on his buttocks and started suspecting that one of his wives must have done that.

Baretlogele (88:2011) further states that, the husband felt a snake moving because he had his own traditional healer who performed rituals on him. Such rituals are called '*go tiiša monna*' (building a man to be strong). The husband knew that one of his wives may be too jealousy. The husband consulted his traditional healer and was informed that the snake's movement is one of the herbs given to women whose husbands have many wives.

The reason for the jealousy wife to do that was because she feared to lose the man. The woman do this because of anger, the wife's feeling of anger is aroused after realising that the good that was her due has been diverted to another.

Bahlakiye (76:2011) states that a jealousy wife consults a traditional healer and is given a mixture of red herbs with water to bath with. The traditional healer requests the woman to bring along a white hen which is killed and the blood is added to the mixture. The hen will be eaten by the traditional healer only. These days because most traditional healers perform rituals for



business they mix the herbs with goat or sheep's blood and the meat is eaten by the healer only.

Bahlakiye (76:2011) further states that, the woman mixes the mixture with water and bath, dig a hole behind their room and pours the dirty water inside. Such herbs can also be placed inside the husband's pillow. The reason being that the wife wants her husband not to have extra-marital affairs.

Losina (89:2011) says that, for a husband to love his wife, the traditional healer has to request the wife to bring along her husband's public hair, underarm hair and inside shoes dirt all to be combined with her own. They are mixed in a yellowish liquid given by the traditional healer and poured into a bottle and closed tightly. The reason for closing the bottle tightly is that they lock the husband not to have interest in other women. The wife digs a hole in front of the main entrance and put the bottle in. Attraction will start when the husband steps into the house passing where the bottle is placed. From then, the husband will not longer have extra-marital affairs.

### **3.2.7 Ritual to keep a husband home.**

Ratanang (76:2011) maintains that, for a drunkard husband who is not always at home, his wife prepares traditional beer, and the husband will invite his friends to come and drink. The wife will store some for the husband to drink the following day. It may be two or five litres. This type of ritual is performed when the wife is breast feeding. The wife will mix the mixture given by the traditional healer with '*mokgato*' (woman's milk) and the traditional beer and be given to her husband.

Khesina (84:2011) states that, after drinking the husband will vomit a lot and will no longer drink beer and always be at home with his wife. This ritual is an arrangement of the mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law. Khesina (84:2011) further states that, this type of ritual may result in death because in 1968 a woman in Casteel Village overdosed the mixture and this resulted in the death of her husband.

### **3.2.8 Rituals to avoid divorce.**

Talina (71:2011) maintains that if the in-laws suspects that their daughter-in-law is about to leave their son, a ritual is performed. This type of ritual is caused by jealousy especially if the daughter-in-law is beautiful, wise and hardworking. A wife may leave her husband because he is no longer working, that is he is no longer earning an income to maintain the family.

Solegi (75:2011) states that, the wife may leave her husband because he is no longer performing well when having sexual intercourse. His penis is no longer having an erection due to illness such as sugar diabetes. The mother-in-law consults a traditional healer. The healer requests the mother-in-law to bring along a black mountain living millipedes.

Solegi (75:2011) further states that, the traditional healer puts the millipede inside a bottle with a blackish liquid which is mixed with the urine of an old lady and closed. The mother-in-law digs a hole behind the daughter-in-law's room and puts the bottle inside. The reason for this ritual is the love the mother-in-law has for her daughter-in-law and her fear to lose her grand children.

Renios (80:2011) maintains that the water used to clean a corpse's face can also be used for such divorce-avoiding rituals. The mother-in-law pours drops of the dirty water inside the daughter-in-law's food so that she can take it when eating. The reason is that she will no longer remember to go back home because everything for her is as dead as the corpse.

### **3.2.9 Conclusion**

The chapter was all about rituals strengthening marriage. Husbands and wives do not want to be separated, grandparents fear to loose grandchildren, rituals are performed to strengthen marriage though some may result in separation or divorce. The chapter was about the advantages and types of rituals that strengthen marriage.

## CHAPTER 4

### DEATH AND BURIAL RITUALS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter aims at analysing the death and burial of a small child, a married man or a married woman. It also looks at the rituals performed during death and burial among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area. Death and burial rites are sometimes used to strengthen family ties in many societies. Among the Mapulana of Bushbuckridge this is no exception.

#### 4.2 Death and burial of a baby below six months.

In an interview, Moina (90:2012) stated that some years back the dead baby was not taken to mortuary. It was buried by old ladies and the mother inside the house because the death of a small child did not affect many relatives beyond the family group compared to that of a woman or a man. These days the dead child is taken to the mortuary and a death certificate is issued.

According to Moina (90:2012), the mother is given a mixture of water and herbs to drink and be told not to urinate unless being told to do so. The old ladies prepare a shallow grave and the dead baby is wrapped with a blanket and placed inside a cardbox. The mother puts the dead child inside the grave and is told to urinate on the corpse and after that put the soil inside the grave with her bums being helped by old ladies. Mapulana believe that if the mother does not urinate on the corpse it will not be easy for her to fall pregnant again. These days a hole is bored from the coffin and the mother urinates on that hole (Moina 90:2012).

According to Balahliye (88:2012) the couple are told not to have sex for a period of three months because they will be contaminated. During this period the wife will be sleeping with the mother-in-law to be sure that the couple does not have sexual intercourse. These days the couple may have protected sex during this period using condoms to prevent being contaminated. If the mother is to have other children she has to rub them with '*letlajane*' (an African potato) on their bodies to prevent contamination.

Balahliye (88:2012) continues by saying that, after three months the couple is given a mixture of water and herbs to bath with. By then they will be purified and are asked to have sexual intercourse. The discharges from their sex organs will be wiped with a new towel. The towel will be given to the mother-in-law as a sign that the couple is prepared to have a baby again.

#### **4.3 Death and burial of a husband or wife.**

In an interview with Remeka (84:2012), states that, long ago when a husband or wife was critically ill, his close relatives always stayed with him/her in the hut. If the husband/wife seem to be dead his eyes were closed, relatives would go out of the hut, shut the door and sit at the door. While seated, they waited for the deceased to cough or sneeze. Long ago some sneezed or coughed and awoke. If the deceased does not sneeze or cough his or her body is wrapped with a blanket, all materials in the hut are taken out and the windows are smeared with a mixture of water, ash and herbs given by the traditional healer.

According to Remeka (84:2012), the close relatives of the deceased would inform the induna so that he could grant them permission for burial and a message is sent to all the affected relatives and neighbours to bring condolences to the bereaved family. The relatives lament as each new relative joins them. The elder aunt to the deceased makes fire which will burn until the deceased is being buried.

The condolences brought by the relatives are in the form of wood, mealie-meal and water. When visiting the bereaved family they don't have to greet each other by shaking hands.

Tlalaganang (79:2011) states that, a word through the go-between is sent to the in-laws to report the death. Long ago it was reported with two rands. These days is reported with one thousand rands.

Tlalaganang (79:2011) further states that the elder son of the deceased is the one to indicate the spot where the grave is to be made by beating on the spot with a pick. Long ago the burial was to take place the following day after sundown and before sunrise and the body was carried by male relative and buried behind his house. These days the deceased is taken to the mortuary for a period of a week or more so as to make thorough preparations for the funeral because some relatives to the deceased are far. The corpse is placed inside a coffin and buried at a cemetery.

According to Thomi (80:2012) as soon as the relatives have arrived for the burial, the corpse is prepared for the burial. The sinews of the knees and elbows are cut to ensure that the body is in the embryonic position. If the deceased is the husband, his wife is given water mixed with herbs and her hair is shaved by an old widow. The widow's family sends a representative who will give food to the widow because it is believed that when given food by her-in-laws they will poison her food. Long ago the widow was expected by her-in-laws to cry throughout until the burial of her husband.

In an interview with Bahlabegiye (76:2012) states that before the burial of the husband the widow sits in the corner of the hut, sits with her hands being folded and not looking at people who will be sending condolences to her. The widow is not allowed to go out of the hut during the day. Long ago the widow was not allowed to bath and change clothes before the burial of her husband. These days widows

are allowed to visit to banks, funeral parlours and their husband's work places. They are not allowed to visit the toilet during the day. The widow is given a bucket to urinate in during the day until the husband is buried. She is only allowed to visit the toilet during the night.

According to Bahlabegiye (76:2012) the representative who is sent by the widow's family is the one who is taking care of the widow, she is the one in charge of removing the bucket from the hut to the toilet.

The day the deceased is brought home, the hut is divided into two rooms with linen. The linen serves as an indication that the widow is permanently separated from her husband. The coffin is placed in the other side and the widow is left on the other side. The widow is instructed to cover herself with a blanket not to see the coffin. The widow is the first person to see her dead husband and is given chance to do that at twelve o'clock midnight, says Lebelelang (88:2012).

Baritiye (88:2012) states that, these days the grave is dug a day before the funeral. In the early morning of the funeral the widow goes to the cemetery accompanied by the go-between to see the grave of her husband. On their arrival, they take roots from the grave which will be cooked mixed with herbs and be given to her ill children including children of the deceased relatives. The mixture is served as a medicine which cures diseases such as epilepsy and '*mookelelo*' (nose-bleeding). The roots will be taken back to the grave because Mapulana believe that the deceased will go with the illnesses.

According to Lebelelang (88:2012) on the burial day, the widow comes out of the house before the coffin. Long ago the wife was dressed in a sewn mourning black dress and a scarf on her head which she would wear for a period of twelve months because women are always expected to lament most and to mourn longest. These days widows buy their own black mourning clothes and wear for six months.

According to Mapulana if the deceased is the wife, the husband has to wear a black beret and a black jacket for three months.

Samuel (89:2012) states that, long ago if the deceased was the husband, the widow would sit next to the grave and the deceased's relative expected her to cry for the last time. When the corpse is placed inside the grave, the widow is the first person to put soil inside the grave. After burial, the dead man's cup or plate used by him during his life are placed on the grave. If the deceased is the wife her plate, basin or shoes are placed on the grave.

Samuel (89:2012) further states that, on the burial day unsalted meat of a goat slaughtered for the burial is roasted and eaten by the mourners. The widow is not given such type of meat. Her food is prepared and cooked separately.

In an interview with Swabisiye (72:2012) the following day after the burial related males to the deceased move the entrance of the deceased home to another side. The very same day in the morning, the widow is taken to the '*nokeng*' (river) by old widows to perform rituals. They go along with a white hen and an egg which will be mixed with herbs by the traditional healer who is a widow. The egg is placed in between the thighs of the widow and be instructed to walk and break the egg with her thighs. When the egg breaks, the healer kills the hen mix its blood with the egg and herbs and be given to the widow.

Swabisiye (72:2012) further states that, the widow is told to lick the mixture twice and spit on her left hand side and also on her right hand side and lick for the third time and swallow. The widow is given a clay pot to fetch water from the river and carry it to home.

When reaching home she has to break the clay pot at the new entrance and being chased by old widows and enter inside the hut. The very same day in the afternoon the old widow who is representing



the widow's family will take the widow out of the hut where she can be seen by people as they pass their condolences.

According to Melina (64:2012) then follows the period of abstinence. The custom had it that in the case of death of a husband such a period was observed for twelve months but nowadays it is observed for six months. If the deceased is a wife the period is observed for three months these days. During this period the family members are not allowed to plough, do any building or do any repairs to their houses and no feasts may be held.

Melina (63:2012) states that, at the beginning of the period of abstinence the hair of all children of the deceased is shaved off and black cloth strips are tied around their necks. There are things that the widow is supposed to do and which she is supposed not to do. They are as follows:

- Not having sexual intercourse because Mapulana believe that the man whom she is involved with will be contaminated.
- Always move with folded hands behind her back.
- Always wear black clothes, black shoes and a black scarf on her head.
- Always sleep at her home.
- Not to sit on a chair but on a traditional mat with her legs always folded.
- Not do any ploughing in the field or garden.
- Not to beat and shout at children.
- Not to sleep on a bed but on a traditional reed mat (these days a mattress is used).
- Not to eat with people from the same plate.
- May not remain overnight on the lands.
- Not to use her children's eating utensils.



Lebogang (82:2012) states that, in case of the death of a wife the widower has to wear a black beret and not folding arms. He is not allowed to talk to women but he can do any job. The widower is not allowed to share beer with friends.

According to Legogang (82:2012) at the end of the period of abstinence, a feast '*go apola*' (took off mourn clothes) is held and all family members will be shaved on their heads. Traditional beer is prepared and a goat is slaughtered. Even if the family can slaughter a cow, a goat from the widow's family will be slaughtered because it is used when performing rituals. The '*mošwang*' (undigested waste in the stomach) of the goat is mixed with traditional beer and herbs and be smeared on the upper body of the widow or widower.

Naisy (78:2012) states that, during all these ritual performances there is no secret. These is done in front of the widow or widower's hut where people can see. This is performed while the widow or widower is seated on a reed mat. On that day everyone has to present the bereaved family with a gift.

Naisy (78:2012) further states that the widow is instructed to offer the first goud of beer to the man she chooses to have relations with in the future. Preferably this will be a younger brother of the deceased or any male relative of the deceased. The future children of the widow will belong to the deceased.

According to Beleya (88:2012) the widow must not have sexual intercourse with the chosen man before having sex with a foreign man for seven days because Mapulana believe that the chosen man will be contaminated and die.

Beleya (88:2012) states that, according to the culture of Mapulana, the widow has to visit to a faraway place to meet any man whom she does not know and have sexual intercourse with. By doing that, the widow will be purifying herself and that particular man will be contaminated and die. After being purified the widow may have sexual intercourse with the man of her choice.

Mapulana are related to Bapedi in the sense that they both respect culture and chieftancy. According to Mapulana and Bapedi '*bogoši bo a tswalelwa, ke bja madi*' (a king becomes a king by birth). A chief is always respected irrespective of age. In a death case a message is sent through the family's mediator to report the death case with money. Weddings are also reported and a portion of the slaughtered beast is taken to the chief as a '*sebego*' (informant).

Marriage proceedings in Mapulana are the same as in Bapedi. Mapulana and Bapedi marry '*seantlo*' (substitute wife), '*hlatswadirope*' (cleansing of the thighs) and '*timamello*' (chief's elder wife). The difference is that in case of the Basotho the '*timamello*' (chief's elder wife) is chosen by the community to be married by the chief whereas in Mapulana the chief chooses his elder wife for himself. It is also common for cousins to marry each other in both Bapedi and Mapulana culture.

Mapulana as part of Bapedi attend initiation schools. Long ago an uninitiated person was not respected married or allowed to attend any community meetings.

In death cases a widow has to mourn for the deceased husband for a stated period in Mapulana as any Sotho speaking group. The difference is that in Mapulana a widower also mourns for his deceased wife for a period of three months by always putting a black beret on his head, by not shaving his head, underarm and beards. However the Bapedi widowers do not mourn for their wives.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

From the chapter one can realise that Mapulana live according to their norms and standards of their culture. During death there are specific rituals to be performed towards children and spouse of the deceased. The period of abstinence is respected and honoured because of the fear of contamination.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the chapter is to give a summary of the research findings and recommendations of this research study. The study aims at analysing marriage rituals among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area.

### 5.2 Findings.

The researcher would like to propose that in terms of the research findings, attention be directed to the following:

- Through the study 98% of the people interviewed believe that marital rituals are mostly performed by women because they like competitions especially competing for a husband, whereas 2% of people interviewed agree that women perform marital rituals because they want to be loved by their husbands.
- From this study, all people interviewed believe that the performance of marital rituals is caused by jealousy and are performed to secure marriages. In marriage the couple must be humble. By being humble all family members will not have fights.
- From this research, one has also come to realize that elderly people perform marriage rituals towards their sons and daughters fearing to lose their grand children because the inability to bear children blocks the stream of life. By so doing the elders will be retaining the heritage of Mapulana.
- Through the study it has been discovered that respect for the in-laws is vital because by the time when the husband is having love affairs the will help the wife in performing rituals to restrict the husband to what he

is doing. Respect is a tool which binds family members together. When the couple respects one another they will lead their children as good example. Respect builds the spirit of tolerance, compassion amongst family members.

- Through the study one comes to the realization that sex is seen as the most important aspect in marriage. Both man and woman should be sexually satisfied. If not sexually satisfied one may separate from another. If the husband is in need of sex, the woman should comply with the man's need and this should also apply to the man. This will prevent the couple to quarrel.

### **5.3 Recommendations.**

- Elders must give lessons to the newly weds about the advantages and disadvantages of performing marital rituals because some of the rituals may strengthen marriage while others may distract it.
- Authors must write more about other ritual performances because this study is based on the performance of marital rituals among Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area.
- Traditional healers must explain the consequences of marital rituals especially those that result in divorce before they are performed.
- Husbands and wives to be open to one another especially if the wife is a barren, they have to reach an agreement of who will be the '*hlatswadirope*' (cleansing of the thighs). There should be no secrets in marriage because secrets may lead to divorce,
- For a good marriage, both husband and wife should respect one another. For a marriage to last one should be tolerant, humble and compromise. By respecting one another peace will ruin amongst family

members. The rearing of children should be the responsibility of both husband and wife.

- The concept of retaining traditional norms and values should be taken into consideration. On marriage all steps should be followed and fulfilled. Each society is what it is because of its norms and values. Mapulana in the Bushbuckridge area should live according to the norms and standards of their culture. By so doing their children will be cultured and become responsible citizens.
- In marriages love plays a vital role among family members. Some of the rituals are performed by mothers-in-law because of the love they have for their daughters in law, particularly if the daughter-in-law is the daughter of her brother, cousin to his son. The mother-in-law always love her daughter-in-law and protects her in all spheres of life.

### **Research Questions**

- What are Mapulana rituals?
- Who is responsible for performing rituals?
- How are rituals performed?
- What are the different types of rituals?
- Which impact can rituals cause in a life of a person?
- How can we identify a person who didn't perform rituals?
- What are the consequences of not performing rituals?
- Are all rituals performed by traditional healers?

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