

**AN APPRAISAL OF THE PORTRAYAL OF  
CHILD AND WOMAN ABUSE WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED  
NORTHERN SOTHO NOVELS**

BY

**SALOME RAISIBE MASHAO**

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**DECLARATION**

I, SALOME RAISIBE MASHAO, declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this has not previously been submitted to any other educational institution for any degree or examination purpose.

*SR Mashao*  
.....

**SIGNATURE**

*09-02-2004*  
.....

**DATE**

**DEDICATION**

I am happy to dedicate this dissertation to:

My mother, Linah Raisibe Shadung, and father, Johannes Malesela Shadung, without whose guidance and love I would not be what I am today;

My beloved husband, Joel Matsobane Modikana Mashao, who gave me support and comfort;and

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## **ABSTRACT**

Chapter 1 serves as an introductory section of the study. Main issues dealt with in this chapter include background to the problem, aim of the study, significance of the study, methodology, literature review, definition of concepts and summary of novels.

Chapter 2 deals with tribalism and racism, the causes of tribalism and racism, and the consequences of these types of abuse.

Chapter 3 concentrates on sexual harassment, its causes and consequences.

Chapter 4 treats physical abuse, child neglect, psychological abuse and emotional abuse, the causes and the consequences thereof.

Chapter 5 gives the conclusion and recommendations.

## **KAKARETŠO**

Tema ya 1 e bolela ka matseno a lengwalonyakišišo. Dintlhakgolo tšeo di šomišitšwego mo temeng ye di akaretša tlhaloso ya bothata bja lengwalonyakišišo, maikemišetšo a lengwalonyakišišo, bohlokwa bja lengwalonyakišišo, mekgwa, tshekatsheko ya dinyakišišo tša baithuti, tlhaloso ya mantšu a bohlokwa le kakaretšo ya dipadi.

Tema ya 2 e bolela ka kgethologanyo ya mehlobo le ya merafe, le tlholo ya yona, gape le ditlamorago tša ditlhorišo ka moka.

Tema ya 3 e bolela ka tlhorišo ya thobalano, tlholo le ditlamorago tša yona.

Tema ya 4 e bolela ka tšhomišompe ya petho, tlhokomologo ya bana, tšhomišompe ya monagano le ya maikutlo, tlholo le ditlamorago tša tšona.

Tema ya 5 e fa phetho le gore go ka dirwang ka ditlhorišo goba ditšhomišompe tše.

# CHAPTER 1

## NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Webster, in Goodman et. al., (1995:27) explains abuse as:

Improper or excessive use or treatment, language that condemns or vilifies, [usually] unjustly, intemperately and angrily; physical behaviour that seeks to control and exercise power over others.

The above explanation is also stressed by The Philological Society (1933:44) when it maintains that abuse is:

Wrong or improper use, misuse, misapplication, perversion, imposture, deceit, delusion, injury, wrong ill usage, violation, defilement, injurious speech, reviling, execration, abusive language.

From the above two explanations, one may deduce that the term 'abuse' is imbued with negative connotation. The present study will endeavour to examine abuse on children and women as reflected in the Northern Sotho novels.

The whole world, and South Africa in particular, is crying over child and woman abuse in its various forms; such as wife battering, domestic violence, sexual assault, pornography, prostitution, school violence and sexual harassment. These have received more attention than ever before in the past few years. Nonetheless, there is no improvement in as far as the alleviation of the abovementioned types of abuse are concerned.

The abovementioned types of abuse have been reflected abundantly in Northern Sotho novels. For instance, in *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987) *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (Lentsoane, 1992) *Molato Mpeng* (Matlala, 1982) and *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968), we observe the following types of abuse: Child neglect and physical abuse; racial discrimination; sexual assault; and domestic violence, respectively.

The causes of child and woman abuse are multifold and a panacea for this problem cannot be executed overnight. Flowers (1994:xiii) concurs with this view as he maintains that “solving these societal ills, each rooted in historical tradition, will not happen overnight.”

Flowers (1994:xiii) goes on to say that the complexities of hidden victimization; non-uniform laws; gaps in criminal justice; racial and sexual discrimination; victim and offender rights; and a fast changing technological society, all impede progress in the task ahead.



Understanding the dynamics of victimized and exploited women and children will help us to understand better the most effective means to approach the issue of victimization. And also to find a solution that will ensure the safety of victims or potential victims, and treatment or prosecution and detention of perpetrators.

All the types of abuse mentioned above are caused by unemployment, jealousy, discrimination of races, taking drugs, poverty, orphanages, alcohol and many others. That is why Garbarino et. al., (1980:20), emphasize that poverty is a very real source of stress on individuals and families, and in turn, promotes child maltreatment. They go on to say that toleration of poverty also reinforces the victim-blaming attitude of many well-intended social service agencies.

In *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987), Mpitiki's mother is beaten up by her uncle and dies instantly. In *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968), the woman is beaten up by her husband and runs away. The woman sustains serious injuries all over her body. Physical abuse is clearly explained by Flowers (1994:6) when he states that:

Physical abuse refers to physical injury such as beating, punching, kicking, bruising, burning, etc., perpetrated upon a child by a caretaker.

The Northern Sotho novels that will be used for the purposes of this study are *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987), *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (Lentsoane, 1992), *Molato Mpeng* (Matlala, 1982) and *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968).

### 1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to examine abuse as reflected in the Northern Sotho novels. In order to achieve the abovementioned aim, the following questions will be posed:

- What are the consequences of abuse?
- Why is abuse in most cases inflicted upon women and children?
- What are the causes of abuse in Northern Sotho novels?
- Can the abuse monster ever be eradicated?

### 1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in highlighting the following:

- Causes of abuse;
- Kinds of abuse;
- People affected by abuse; and
- Consequences of abuse.

## 1.5 **METHODOLOGY**

The following research methods will be used in this study.

### 1.5.1 **Qualitative research method**

Qualitative research method is the method that has a long, and distinguished history in the human science disciplines. Denzin et. al., (1998:2) explain qualitative research as follows: “Qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matter.”

Qualitative research method will be appropriate in this study because it enables researchers to study things in their natural settings; attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people attach to them. It involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials, case study, personal experience, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routine, and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives (Denzin et. al., 1998:3).

### 1.5.2 **Collection of information**

The following variety of methods will be used with regard to the collection of data:

### 1.5.2.1 **Primary research method**

The present researcher will use primary sources whereby information on abuse will be obtained directly from various people. In order to achieve the abovementioned purpose, interviews in the form of unstructured questions will be used. The research interview is perhaps the most powerful and versatile of techniques for gathering information directly from other persons. Tripodi et. al., (1980:2) say, routinely, an interview involves a face-to-face exchange between the person seeking information and the person giving it. It may also take place over the telephone.

Whether in person or over the phone, successful interviewing requires that an interviewer gives a good deal of attention to the research instrument as well as to his/her role in the interview situation. An interviewer's primary goal is to gather relevant data by encouraging, facilitating and guiding the respondent to provide unbiased and unambiguous answers to relevant questions.

Consequently, the present researcher will therefore conduct interviews with social workers, health visitors, nursery nurses, paediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists and other relevant people.

### 1.5.2.2 **Secondary research method**

The present researcher will also use secondary sources. This is the method whereby information is obtained from books, theses, Internet and articles.

## 1.6 **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Before any investigator undertakes a project, or any study, it is essential to review literature relevant to the topic under investigation. That means, any research is seen as a continuation of the previously already completed research.

Hitherto, Northern Sotho researchers have not yet exhaustively studied the abuse of children and women. They mainly concentrated on conflict that appears in novels, dramas, poetry and folktales.

Nevertheless, there are some scholars in the Northern Sotho circles who attempted to deal with abuse but rather superficially. Such include Mokgoatšana (1996), Mogale (1993), Motubatse (1994), Moloisi (1989) Mphahlele (1992), and Madisha (1993).

### 1.6.1 **Mokgoatšana S.N.C.**

Mokgoatšana, in his study, discusses how women in Puleng's work were denied the freedom to exercise their rights. They are incapacitated and thus would not exist

independent of their male counterparts. It is for this reason that women are associated with passive objects worthy of manipulation. They are even denigrated by being given bad names such as 'ditšhwene' (baboons). Mokgoatšana's study is a worthwhile one as it indicates that, for as long as both the normative structure of our society, and the body of knowledge are still seen in racial, class and sexual stereotypes, there is no hope of a better society free from inequalities.

#### 1.6.2 **Mogale N.S.**

Mogale also does not dwell much on abuse. He only gives a vivid picture of the ruthless suppression of Blacks whenever they try to liberate themselves from the yoke of oppression. Mogale makes us understand the socio-political situation in South Africa.

The relationship between poetry and politics is very strong in his work. Mamogobo's poetry, which forms the basis of Mogale's study, concentrates on the theme of the liberation of all Africans from colonial oppression. This poet was moved to action by the oppressive nature of colonialism in general, and that of apartheid in particular.

#### 1.6.3 **Motubatse B.N.**

Motubatse, in his study, discusses abuse cursorily. This is so because he only relates how children are abused in *Bowelakalana*. Boys, such as Mpitiki, Mogofe and Magoši, are

abused by both their relatives and white people. He does not mention the causes and types of abuse, and also how these children could be helped.

#### **1.6.4 Moloisi G.J.**

Moloisi explains the concept of conflict in the book *Kelelagobedi*. He introduces the parties that are in conflict. Lenkwe and Councillor Thoka decide to enlist the services of Kelelagobedi as a spy or secret agent. They want to thwart the efforts of the dissident group led by Noko and Phatlana. At the end, Kelelagobedi is seriously assaulted by the two assailants. He sustains injuries on the head and his spinal cord gets severed. The tape recorder and money he has in his possession are taken away by the two assailants. The blood on the hands and clothes of the men is evidence of the injuries sustained by Kelelagobedi. It is clear that he has been crippled for life. As it is evident from the above discussion, there is hardly any abuse reflected.

#### **1.6.5 Mphahlele N.W.**

Mphahlele discusses how women characters in Northern Sotho folktales are not obedient. They are given orders which they do not get carried out. One may say their disobedience is a means through that abuse is brought to an end.

In *Samosebelele* a man takes a stick and begins to beat his wife. She becomes humiliated by his actions. In some cases, disobedience may be caused by indignation on the part of the woman. The fact that she is forced to cook for a dog seems to be a problem to the woman in question.

The folktale shows clearly that women cannot tolerate abuse forever. Their disobedience of men symbolises the fact that they have had enough abuse from men, and it is now only appropriate that they stand up on their feet and fight for their rights.

#### 1.6.6 **Madisha M.M.M.**

Madisha analyses cultural conflicts in the drama entitled *Maaberone*.

In this drama, the character Maaberone is being treated like an object. In asking for her hand in marriage, Sekwala consults with her father, Masemola, but not with Maaberone herself. Masemola in turn does not consult with either Maaberone or her mother, but rather consults with other men to decide on his daughter's future. The men take the final decision that Maaberone will marry Sekwala and they send the reply to him. Only after everything has been finalised does Masemola bring the matter to his wife's attention, and not to ask for her opinion, but merely for information's sake.



## 1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

There are certain key concepts in this study that need to be defined and described so as to clarify issues in this research. The study deals with the child and woman abuse as reflected in Northern Sotho novels. The word 'abuse' includes child neglect and maltreatment; physical abuse; racial discrimination; domestic violence; sexual harassment; assault; and many others.

### 1.7.1 Child neglect and maltreatment

Much has already been said about individual characteristics of parents who abuse and neglect children. The Psychological Society (1933:79) defines neglect as the fact of disregarding, slighting, or paying no attention to a person, etc., the fact or condition of being treated in this way. Garbarino et al., (1980:7) describe why parents maltreat and neglect their children. They maintain that:

Emotional deprivation in a parent's own childhood, low levels of empathy, low self-esteem, social aloofness, and a variety of other personal characteristics all contribute to make a parent "high-risk" for child maltreatment. From this perspective the main cause of abuse and neglect lies in the individual parent. Abusive parents are different from non-abusive parents. They are pathological and may even require extensive psychiatric treatment to be "cured".

Parents who maltreat and neglect their children don't care about many things concerning their children, such as educating their children, cleanliness, healthy food, etc.

That is why Garbarino et. al., (1980:8) stress that parents who maltreat children prefer to solve problems on their own. They have few relationships outside the home, and they are likely to discourage outside involvement on the part of their children.

### 1.7.2 **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse involves the use of any physical act in order to harm, frighten, and gain control over another person. Davies et. al., (1998:22) explain physical injury as follows:

Black eyes, bruised faces and bodies, broken bones, stitches, and wounds are the most visible and clearly identified risks to a battered woman. A batterer uses a wide range of physical attacks to control his partner. This might include shoving her, shaking her, slapping her, pulling her by her hair, burning her, using items around the house to hit her, using weapons such as guns and knives to threaten or hurt her, and trying to kill her.

Davies et. al., (1998:22) go on to say that physical attacks can include sexual violence, including forced sexual intercourse or other sexual activities, which may also include the risk of HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Most women are battered during pregnancy. The accumulated evidence shows that physical violence is wide-spread, varies in severity, and is often repeated.

The above definition is also stressed by Goodman et. al., (1995:3) when they say that physical abuse includes not only the obviously severe physical abuse that causes injuries requiring emergency medical care but also any physical contact that aims to frighten and control:

Shoving, pushing her down on a bed, preventing her from moving by holding, and breaking or damaging objects around the victim. A victim is just as dead when she hits her head the wrong way on a doorknob after a little push as she is after being kicked down the stairs and stomped to death with the abuser's hiking boots. Physical abuse includes blocking her movements, locking her in a room or out of the house, denying sleep by forcibly keeping her awake, throwing objects at or near her, pushing, hitting, slapping, pulling hair, biting, arm twisting, punching, choking, burning, kicking, throwing her down stairs, and using a weapon against her.

One may conclude by saying, this is the cruelest of all forms of abuse and that it hurts far more than other abuses because it leaves deeper wounds that take much longer to heal. In many cases, it is so severe that it amounts to brainwashing.

### 1.7.3 **Racial discrimination**

To discriminate is to notice the difference between things. Hawkins (1996:131) defines discrimination as treating people differently or unfairly, especially because of their race, sex, or religion.

Davies et. al., (1998:62) concur with this view as they maintain that discrimination can be understood as treatment that denies access to services or resources, involves harsh judgements, or invokes more difficult standards of credibility or performance.

Davies et. al., (1998:64) continue to say that the typical problems of battering relationship are further complicated by issues of gender, race, socioeconomic status, immigration status, and language.

### 1.7.4 **Domestic violence**

Domestic violence is one of the hottest topics in the country today, because it is one of the most shameful secrets not only in our country but in countries around the world.

The above concept is defined by Goodman et. al., (1995:3) as physical, emotional or sexual abuse taking place within the context of a family household. It may be between adults, between adults and children, or between children. It may be physical, emotional, or sexual.

Miller et. al., (1998:82) give a distinction between domestic violence and family violence. They use euphemism on domestic violence to mean battered women and adult abuse. The term family violence is usually used to encompass child abuse, as well as adult abuse.

#### 1.7.5 **Sexual harassment**

Sexual abuse of children by other older persons has captured significant public and professional attention.

Kilgore (1992:3) defines sexual abuse as insisting that you dress in an uncomfortable sexual way, calling you sexual names like “whore”, or “bitch”, forcing you to strip, forcing unwanted sexual acts, withholding sex, criticizing you sexually, insisting on unwanted touching, assuming you would have sex with any available man. Miller (1998:118) maintains that sexual harassment is typically perpetrated by people who have power over their victims.

Hampton et.al., (1993:60) describe sexual abuse of children as specific sexual behaviour like exhibitionism, voyeurism, kissing, fondling, fellatio or cunnilingus, penetrating of the vagina, anus, or mouth with sexual organ or objects, and photography; either taking pictures of a child or exposing a child to pornographic materials, and sexual intent wherein the intent of the behaviour is the sexual gratification of an adult.

### 1.7.6 **Assault**

Assault is an onset or rush upon any one with hostile intent. It can be an attack with blows or weapons. Campbell (1995:76) maintains that severe assault refers to violence that is often life-threatening and includes beatings, hitting with an object, and use of weapons.

Campbell (1995:76) goes on to mention three risk factors for severe assault: generalized aggression, alcohol abuse and abuse by parents.

### 1.7.7 **Conflict**

Conflict is the struggle between people with opposing opinions. Cuddon (1976:152) defines it as the tension in a situation between characters (usually in drama and fiction but also in narrative poetry).

Conflict is one of the important aspects in Northern Sotho novels, drama, and folklore. There cannot be a proper progress in a story without clashes and battles. Two different types of conflict will be discussed.

#### 1.7.7.1 **External conflict**

It is when the characters struggle against nature or against another character; the main character is in conflict with an outside force. (Morner et. al., 1991:43)

### 1.7.7.2 **Internal conflict**

Here the main character struggles against himself or herself. It takes place within an individual. This types of conflict can neither be heard nor seen because there are no verbal nor physical actions.

### 1.7.8 **Characterization**

This concept is described satisfactorily by Morner et. al., (1991:33) when they state:

Characterization is the method by which an author creates the appearance and personality of imaginary persons and reveals their character. The ability to bring the people of his or her imagination to life for the reader is judged one of the most important attributes of a writer of fiction.

Characterization is therefore the creation of images of imaginary persons in drama.

In the same vein, Cohen (1987:105) regards characterization thus:

The art of creating fictional characters in words which give them human identity. Through characterization therefore, the characters created seem to exhibit human traits and personalities which can easily be recognised, responded to, and analysed by the reader, e.g. jealousy, beauty, youth, wickedness, kindness etc.

There are three main types of characters in Northern Sotho Novels that will be discussed:

#### 1.7.8.1 **The Protagonist**

The protagonist is the main character or the hero. He/She controls the scene from the beginning. He/She therefore receives the main focus. A work of art, such as a novel or drama, cannot exist without him/her.

#### 1.7.8.2 **The Antagonist**

He/She is the opponent that causes the protagonist's conflict and crises.

#### 1.7.8.3 **The Tritagonist**

He/She fulfills different roles but is generally found between the protagonist and antagonist. He/She may cause the conflict between the two, in the sense that he/she may practically initiate it, or he/she may be the bone of contention itself, or may be used by one of the parties in conflict (Cohen, 1987:174).

#### 1.7.9 **Setting**

Morner et. al., (1991:200) describe a setting as the general locale, time in history, or social milieu in which the action of a work or literature takes place.



Concerning the above quotation, one may add that a setting is an environment wherein different actions occur. These actions are performed by different characters on earth. In other words, actions, characters and environment are inseparable. There are different kinds of milieus such as rural and urban settings.

#### 1.7.10 **Culture**

Culture is defined by Alarcón et. al., (1998: 6 ) as:

... a set of meanings, behavioural norms, and values used by members of a particular society, as they construct their unique view of the world. These reference points include habits, customs, political beliefs, social relationships, ethical standards, religious faith, language, technology and financial philosophy, as well as material elements such as diet, clothing, or housing. Culture is both changing and permanent, material and spiritual. It carries with it the weight of historical events and legacies, as well as a transcendental approach to the meaning of its essential contents.

### 1.8 **SUMMARY OF NOVELS**

#### 1.8.1 *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (Lentsoane, 1992)

This novel talks about a woman (Kgoteledi) who forbids her son (Dikgoneng) to marry a Xitsonga speaking girl. Kgoteledi tells her son that Mihloti is not of their tribe and

therefore he cannot marry her. Kgoteledi wants Dikgoneng to marry a Pedi girl. Kgoteledi has been portrayed as a very cruel woman who does not have mercy on her son (Dikgoneng). Dikgoneng is also oppressed by his younger sister (Thola) who does not allow him to marry a Tsonga girl.

Dikgoneng is in love with Mihloti who is a student nurse at Baragwanath hospital. To make matters worse, Kgoteledi forces her son to marry around Pretoria (Mamelodi) but not Johannesburg. In fact, there is a girl in Mamelodi whom they feel Dikgoneng should fall in love with. Kgoteledi always uses abusive language against Dikgoneng and Mihloti.

Dikgoneng refuses to comply with his mother's wish because he does not want to share his life with a girl whom he does not love. He wants to marry a girl of his own choice.

At Marishane Seporo, Dikgoneng's uncle also forbids Phaswane, his son, to marry a Xhosa speaking girl. At the end, Dikgoneng and Mihloti are blessed with a baby boy who is named after Dikgoneng's father, Lehlagare. The marriage ceremony was conducted by Dr Maswanganyi. Dikgoneng and Mihloti stayed together happily.

When time went on, Kgoteledi suffered from heart attack and was admitted at Baragwanath hospital where Mihloti was working. Despite all the problems caused by Kgoteledi, Mihloti looked after her very well. Kgoteledi asked Mihloti to forgive her for everything that she did to her. Ultimately Kgoteledi died and was buried at Marishane.

Consequently, Mihloti, Dikgoneng and Thola lived together happily and peacefully.

#### 1.8.2 *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987)

This novel tells us about a neglected child called Mpitiki who neither knew his place of birth nor his parents until he was 13 years old. The boy is brain-damaged by his grandfather Makobe while he is still in his mother's womb, Mmaahwile.

Makobe beats Mmaahwile while she is pregnant because of the calf that is killed by a snake. Mpitiki is born in hospital and his mother Mmaahwile dies after delivery. The relatives leave him there until he is 13 years old. Dr Matšato adopts him but Mpitiki is not satisfied with this arrangement as he needs his biological parents.

Mpitiki runs away. On the way he meets a little boy called Mogofe who is also physically abused by his maternal grandfather.

Magoši also joins them because he is also neglected by his mother. Magoši's mother-in-law and his biological father maltreats him and he decides to run away.

These three boys meet white people on their way. The former agrees to work as herds of the latter's cows because the former were physically abused by their parents and relatives. On their way to Taamane, Magoši is attacked and killed by a tiger. Mpitiki and Mogofe cry bitterly because of Magoši's death that takes place in front of them.

Ditedu, a white person, is cruel because he beats Mpitiki severely and this leads to him running away. He arrives at Rre Hau's place and stays there for some few days. Rre Hau also maltreats Mpitiki by forcing him to build a wall with big stones. Rre Hau does not allow his children to help Mpitiki or even to play with him for that matter. In the end, Mpitiki runs away. On his way he meets two tribes fighting, i.e., Barolong and the Swazis.

He arrives at Lydenburg where Jobo is working. They give him clothes because his clothes are torn. Jobo takes him to the chief's kraal at Majaneng so that he can be known by his relatives. Moipati, his aunt, goes to the chief's kraal to collect him. Mpitiki lives with his aunt happily.

### 1.8.3 *Molato Mpeng* (Matlala, 1982)

The novel tells us about Seopela who forces his child Matete to get married to Mashosho who is one of Thamaga's sons.

Seopela is rich and this is borne out by the fact that he has many cattle, goats and sheep. Unfortunately, his cattle die of a certain disease. By that time, Matete was furthering her studies as a nurse. Since Matete's mother died while she is still a new-born, Seopela does not have enough money to further Matete's studies, despite his wealth.

On account of this, Seopela goes to Thamaga to borrow money, about R200,00, so that her daughter can complete her studies. He promises Thamaga his daughter after she completed her studies. He uses abusive language to Matete that she will get married to Mashosho whether she likes it or not. Matete refuses to comply with her father's wish because she does not want to share her life with an abnormal and ugly man.

Ultimately, Matete runs away from home and is involved in a car accident. She is taken to hospital. After some years Mashosho and Maphuthe, Thamaga's sons, die. Matete gets married to Phure, the man of her own choice.

#### 1.8.4 *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968)

The novel tells us about Leilane who is cruel and stubborn. One day Leilane beats his wife severely until she runs away to her mother's home. The matter is caused by his wife Mohlatša who vomits in front of him because of the type of food her husband is eating. Mohlatša's father (Morara) does not like the way his daughter is beaten up by Leilane. When Morara complains to Leilane, Leilane also beats him.

The second incident is about Talare who is married to two wives. The first wife has two sons. Talare does not like the first wife. He loves the second wife and that is why he helps the younger wife's sons to marry their own wives. Talare does not want the son of the first wife to marry his own wife.

Morara reports Leilane's case (for beating his wife) to the chief's kraal. Leilane is found guilty and is told to pay a fine in the form of three cows: one for beating his wife, the second one for beating Morara and the last one for the men who are judging his case at the chief's kraal.

Another incident revealed in the novel is about traditional healing whereby a black cat plays a prominent role. Maphuthe's son is using a black cat to heal people who are having fits. The treatment is not totally acceptable because the cat uses to scratch the patient before she/he could be healed. One day the cat scratches Maphuthe's son and kills him.

Leilane goes to Nthumule's kraal in order to cause a fight between Chief Nthumule and chief Lefehlo. At the end, the two chiefs fight with spears and assegais. Many people die in the battle. Maphuthe and Leilane are best friends. Maphuthe releases Leilane from Nthumule's kraal using traditional herbs. The two men run away from Nthumule's kraal and go to stay on the mountains where there are big caves.

One day Leilane throws Maphuthe into a precipice but Maphuthe does not die. He manages to get out of it and Leilane and Maphuthe's friendship continues. That is why Leilane's son marries Maphuthe's daughter and Maphuthe's son married Leilane's, daughter to strengthen their friendship.

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter that covers the background to the problem, aim of the study, significance of the study, research methods, literature review, definition of concepts and summary of the following novels: *Megokgo Ya Lethabo* (1992), *Bowelakalana* (1987), *Molato Mpeng* (1982) and *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (1968).

Chapter 2 deals with tribalism and racism, concentrating on *Megokgo Ya Lethabo* (1992) and *Bowelakalana* (1987).

Chapter 3 focuses on sexual harassment from the novel *Molato Mpeng* (1982).

Chapter 4 concentrates on physical abuse, child neglect, psychological abuse and emotional abuse as depicted in *Bowelakalana* (1987), *Megokgo Ya Bjoko*(1968), *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (1992), and *Molato Mpeng* (1982).

Chapter 5 deals with the summary of the previous chapters and some recommendations related to this study.

From the foregoing discussion one may deduce that there are different types of abuse although they have hitherto only been explained superficially. The Northern Sotho researchers do not focus on child and woman abuse.

An in-depth analysis of child and woman abuse in Northern Sotho novels will be discussed.



## CHAPTER 2

### TRIBALISM AND RACISM

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine abuse based on tribalism and racism as indicated in *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (Lentsoane, 1992) and *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987). Before one embarks on this topic, it will be appropriate if the following concepts can be defined or explained.

#### 2.2 TRIBALISM

Horsema et. al., (1994:x) define tribalism as:

The retreat by individuals into communities defined not by political association or by the state borders that enclose a political nation, but by similarities of religion, culture, ethnicity, or some other shared experience. The retreat is driven by fear and confusion, and fed by the reassuring 'sameness' of other in the group.

Webster (1993:1108) has the same ideas as Horsema et. al., when he defines tribalism as tribal consciousness and loyalty; especially an exaltation of one tribe above others.

Vail (1989:390) gives the definition of tribalism in short as a central factor in local and national politics.

From the above three types of definitions one may deduce that, under the present circumstances, the word tribalism seems to have negative connotation from a nationalist point of view. Vail (1989:372) explains ethnicity and tribalism as the terms that are often regarded as an auto-explanation for contemporary political conflict, but their ubiquitous use belies their vagueness.

S A C P discussion forum (2003:1) emphasizes the above definitions by explaining that the South African tribes were not, however, seen in themselves as an impediment to unity but as the building blocks from which unity could be constructed.

S A C P goes on to say that tribalism in Africa is synonymous with conflicts and instability.

Even today, the South African society still looks upon people in terms of their languages. Maybe this is rooted from apartheid era wherein the white government divided Blacks

according to their ethnic groups. When the National Party won the general elections (in 1994), it instituted the apartheid system. Blacks ruled themselves in the so-called Homelands as they were not part of the government of the day.

The Rennies Group (15) maintains that African Communities reveal significant differences in historical back-ground, ethnic context, language, social and cultural composition. These communities are further divided into four main cultural-linguistic divisions: the Sotho-Tswana, Venda, Shangaan-Tsonga and Nguni groups. Blacks could only live in areas called homelands and whites also could live or buy land in white areas only.

These tribal group members very often pass remarks that are very tribalist to one another. Words such as Lepedi (Northern Sotho speaking person), Lezulu (Zulu speaking person), Levenda (Venda speaking person), Letšhangane (Tsonga speaking person), are derogatory words which are used by blacks themselves in order to despise one another.

On account of the combination of apartheid and tribalism, the Pedi girls were not allowed to get married to any tribe except the Pedi boys. One would often hear them saying “I cannot get married to Letšhangane, Levenda etc.” and the Venda girls would also say, “I cannot get married to Pedi boys etc.”

It was believed that the Pedi women could not fall in love with Venda men or Tsonga men etc. It used to be like this because every tribe thought it was superior to other ethnic groups.

One can attribute this partly to the homeland system whereby Blacks were placed in different homelands such as Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, Lebowa, Gazankulu, Venda, Swazi, KwaZulu and Basotho Qwa-qwa.

In 1994, the first elections for all people in South Africa were held and the ANC Party won them. The old homelands wherein Black people were forced to live came to an end.

Even though we have a democratic government, what still worries many people is that even today the South African society still looks upon people in terms of the tribes they belong to. As long as our cultures and customs are not the same, one thinks tribal discrimination will rear its ugly head on a regular basis.

### 2.3 **RACISM**

Eberhardt et. al., (1998:110) maintain that the terms racism is usually reserved for negative beliefs and behaviours toward racially categorized groups or members of groups, involving elements of power differentials between dominant and subordinate groups, including strongly held beliefs about the racial or ethnic superiority of one's own group.

The above definition indicates that in racism there is a belief that certain races are by birth and nature superior to others. This means that racism is mainly based on racial discrimination practised by one race against another.

Eberhardt et. al., (1988:110-111) give three different forms of racism, all including strong beliefs about ethnic or racial inferiority:

- Individual racism is most directly linked to the concept of prejudice and refers to individually held out-group hatred, combined with ethnocentric views and beliefs of racial inferiority of the target groups.
- Cultural racism, linked to the concept of ethnocentrism, refers to the beliefs in the inferiority or nonexistence of cultural tradition, implements, and values of the target groups.
- Institutional racism refers to the system of laws, politics, and political, economic and institutional arrangements that perpetuate and maintain subordinate and dominant groups' positions in a society.

Bowser (1995:x) maintains that the formal theoretical definition of racism links individual acts of racially motivated prejudice and discrimination with institutional laws, customs, and practices that systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities.

## 2.4 THE CAUSES OF TRIBALISM AND RACISM

Tribalism and Racism are rooted deeply in apartheid and culture. Bapedi, Vatsonga, Vhavenda and other black tribes are still looked upon as inferior people, especially by white people. Even some black tribes still look upon other black tribes as being inferior.

## 2.5 THE DEPICTION OF TRIBALISM AND RACISM IN NORTHERN SOTHO NOVELS

### 2.5.1 Tribal discrimination

*Megokgo ya Lethabo* (Lentsoane, 1992) is a revelation of the clash between traditional laws and the freedom of an individual. According to the Bapedi traditional laws, parents, especially a father, have the right to decide whom their daughter or son shall marry. In accordance with this law Kgoteledi chooses a wife, in this case a Pedi girl, called Mokgadi, for her son Dikgoneng. Kgoteledi is supported by her daughter Thola on this issue. Thola does not want her brother to marry a Tsonga girl. This point is stressed by the following words:

Mokgadi le yena o go rata kudukudu.  
Mokgadi ke Mopedi ke ngwana wa gae.  
Mihloti ke Motsonga gomme ga ke tsebe

gore o mo iša kae? Le go bolela ga ke tsebe  
gore le boledišana bjang? (Lentsoane,  
1992:15)

(Mokgadi loves you too very much.  
Mokgadi is a Pedi girl, she belongs to our  
place. Mihloti is a Tsonga girl and I don't  
know where you are going with her. Even  
when communicating I don't know how you  
do it.)

From the above words, it is evident that Thola harbours tribalism. For her, it is not acceptable that two people from two different tribes should fall in love and end up marrying each other. She uses the issues of both one person not belonging to their area and communication gap as a pretext for showing tribalism. Thola's attitude does not come as a surprise because this is a commonly held view in South Africa.

The S A C P Discussion Forum (2003:1) also elaborates on this view when it maintains that Vatsonga/Shangaan and Vhavenda are still looked upon as inferior people in South Africa. Thola looks upon Mihloti as inferior person because she says Mihloti is a Shangaan girl and is not supposed to get married to a superior person such as Dikgoneng.

Dikgoneng tells his mother that whether Mihloti is a Tsonga girl or not he loves her very much. To him, whether Mihloti is a Tsonga girl or not is immaterial. What matters is that he is in love with her. After all, there is the adage that goes thus 'love is blind.' In order

to show that he loves her, he invites her to come and pay him a visit. Kgoteledi is against Dikgoneng's wish. She looks at Mihloti angrily and with disapproval, and utters the following abusive words:

Ngwanenyana e be la mafelelo o gata ka mo lapeng la ka. Ga ke kwešiše gore sebetenyana sa go no tsena ka mo ga ka o se tšere kae. Na masogana kua Tshwane a fedile ge o duletše go getlagetla mo morago ga Dikgoneng? Na mehlobo ya geno ga o e hlathe ge o šetšesetše yo Dikgoneng morago? O nkwe gabotse o be o nkwešiše gabotse, ke re ga ke sa nyaka go go bona o gatile gape ka mo lapeng le. Ke a bona, ga o ntsebe gabotse. O no kwa ba mpolela mo mekgotheng le boemaladipese. Ge o sa ntsebe gabotse, ke nna Kgoteledi. Ke re nna ke nna Kgoteledi. Ke fiša bjalo ka Kgoteledi. O ka no bapalela a mangwe e sego le la ka. Bookinyana bjoo bja gago o ka no dula le bjona ka geno. Nna bo ka se n khole ka selo. Dikgoneng yo wa seabela le yena ga ke tsebe gore o bone eng le gona sa go kgahla mang mo go wena. Ga ke tsebe gore ge dikgarebe di tletše naga ye tša go go phala o re o hlokile eng ge a tšhabeša ka morago ga gago. Ga ke tsebe gore le mo file eng, ka gobane šo, o re ga a gwame ka geno. O a bonala gore o tšwa lapeng la go hloka molao. Ka geno ba re o kae gonabjale? O lahle go lahlwa ke lenao. (Lentsoane, 1992:29)

(You girl, it must be for the last time you visit my house. I don't understand where you got the bravery of entering my house. Are there no gentlemen left in Tshwane since you are always after Dikgoneng? Are you not clear about your tribes? Why always after Dikgoneng? Listen to me and



understand me carefully, I say I don't want to see you again in my house. I can see that you don't know me very well. You only hear them talking about me around. If you don't know me well, I am Kgoteledi. I say I am Kgoteledi, I am hot like Kgoteledi. You may play in other houses but not mine. You may stay with that nurse profession of yours at your place. It will never help me. Dikgoneng being a fool, I don't know what he saw in you and that pleases people to you. I don't know because there are beautiful girls all over the world who are better than you and yet is always after you. I don't know the kind of a thing you gave him because here he is saying he comes to your place several times. I can see that you are from a mannerless home. Are they not looking for you at your place? It must be for the last time.)

The above extract shows tribalism and other common forms of humiliation and degradation which include verbal abuse in front of others, insults, name calling and criticism of Mihloti's abilities.

From all the previous discussion up to this far, it is clear that tribalism and culture go hand in hand. Some tribes think they are superior to others. Although Thola and Kgoteledi are black, they despise Mihloti because of her supposedly inferior culture. One can deduce that the way they talk to her is unpleasant and derogatory. Alarcon et. al., (1998:202) on this point, emphasize that:

Although all human beings belong to the same species, the way they arrange themselves vis-a-vis dominant belief systems, religious and spiritual expressions, language and collective interpretation of various styles of interpersonal interaction, all influence and shape how certain distressing life experiences can be expressed or acted out.

Apart from Thola and Kgoteledi, tribalism is also exercised by Seporo, who is Dikgoneng's uncle, when he utters the following words after hearing that his son Phaswana is in love with a Xhosa girl:

Ruri bana ba ba a re hlolela. Re sa tšwa go ahlaahla ditaba tša Motsonga bjale lehono ke tša Lethosa. Ga ke sa na le molomo. Nkabe badimo ba no nkgopola, motho a ikhutša dilo tše di diragalago matšatši a. (Lentsoane, 1992:49)

(These children are really doing strange things. We recently talked about a Tsonga person and today is a Xhosa girl. I don't know what to say. I think the best thing is to die and rest because of the mysterious things which are happening nowadays.)

From the extract above it is clear that there is no difference between Kgoteledi and Seporo. Seporo is also a staunch supporter of traditional laws and tribalism. The derogatory word 'Lethosa' shows that Seporo thinks that his tribe is superior to others.

The word 'Lethosa' shows, without doubt, that Seporo despises the Xhosa tribe. That is why he doesn't even want to see a Xhosa girl in his home.

Mihloti and Dikgoneng don't have peace of mind because of Dikgoneng's mother, Kgoteledi, and her younger sister Thola. They are verbally and psychologically abused. What they are experiencing is in line with Briere (1992:9) who maintains, concerning psychological abuse that:

- Rejecting: A child is avoided or pushed away, he or she is made to feel unworthy, unacceptable, and the like.
- Degrading/devaluing: A child is criticized stigmatized, deprived of dignity, humiliated, made to feel inferior, and so on.
- Terrorizing: A child is verbally assaulted, frightened, threatened with physical or psychological harm.

There is no doubt that Mihloti and Dikgoneng are experiencing tribalism on account of being lovers across tribal lines. They are verbally assaulted, threatened with psychological harm, criticized, stigmatized, humiliated and made to feel inferior. The following words as uttered by Thola who buttresses this viewpoint:

Dikgoneng o ntlogele, segwaela tena! Ge o dira tšeo o di dirago gona bjale o tlogele leina la ka. O ntebelele gabotse, nna ke nna Thola. Nna ke Thola, gomme ge o nyaka go ntseba, o tla ntseba gabotse mo pele ga mothwana yo o mmeilego pele. Ke a bona ke yena a go foraforetšago ebile a go hlakanyago hlogo gore o se hlwe o re bona bjalo ka batho. *My dear*, o ntebelele gabotse. *I am very normal. Do not think* gore o tla dira dilo *the way* o ratago ka gona gomme ra go lesa. *Be very careful otherwise you will find yourself in a mess.* O bolele o fela o gomela polelo. O nagana gore *you are clever. Next time* o tla re ke *rude* ke se bjalo. (Lentsoane:1992:29)

(Dikgoneng leave me alone, you fool! If you are doing these things leave my name out. Look at me very well, I am Thola. I am Thola, and if you want to know me, you will know me, you will know me well in front of this useless person whom you trust very much. I think she is the one who lies to you and makes you mad that you cannot see us as people. My dear you must look at me well. Do not think you will do things the way you like and think that we will keep quiet. Be very careful otherwise you will find yourself in a mess. Talk, but be careful of your words. You think you are clever. Next time you will say I am rude but am not.)

When Kgoteledi notices that Thola supports her, instead of calling her to order, she starts to make unusual noises looking at Mihloti. That is why the author says:

Mašata a mohuta wo ke ao Mihloti a bego a se a a tlwaela. (Lentsoane: 1992:29)

(Mihloti was not used to such noises.)

Sometimes words do hurt people's feelings. They act like a poisoned arrow whose purpose is to destroy life. The above-cited extract also hurts Dikgoneng. Dikgoneng is a very gentle boy. Instead of keeping quiet, he utters the following words to his mother:

Mme, Mihloti ke a mo rata, gomme ge lena le sa mo rate, ga ke tsebe. Le ge le ka bolela bjang ka yena, nka se mo tlogele. Ke re nka se mo tlogele, ke a mo rata, ga le mo rate. O a le rata, ga le mo rate. Ga ka mo ratele lena, ke ithatela yena. Yo le nthatelago yena, le tla inyalela yena, ya ba setseketsake sa lena. (Lentsoane: 1992:30)

(Mother, I love Mihloti, and if you don't love her, I really don't know. Even if you can talk in many ways about her, I will never leave her. I love her, you don't love her. She loves you, you don't love her. I don't love her for you, I love her for myself. You will marry the one you love for me, and she will be your idiot.)

The abovementioned extract shows clearly that Dikgoneng and Mihloti are deeply in love. Nobody can separate them. Dikgoneng, having already chosen a lover for himself, protests vehemently against his mother's imposition of her will over him. In other words,

Dikgoneng does not subscribe to the idea that parents have the sole right of choosing grooms or brides for their daughters and sons, respectively.

Ultimately, Dikgoneng won the struggle for he and Mihloti got married to each other. Kgoteledi dies of heart attack. But while Kgoteledi was still fighting for her life at Barragwanath hospital she uttered the last words thus:

Mosadi ke mosadi kae goba kae. O ntshwarele. Ngwanaka o ntshwarele. O mpontšhitše nnete yeo ke bego ke sa e bone. Ke mo lehono o a mphutha. O nkokile ka lerato leo le makatšago. Dikgoneng, ngwanaka, le wena o ntshwarele go tšeo ke go dirilego tšona. O hlokomele ngwetši ya ka, Mihloti. Mihloti ke ngwetši ya ka. Ke re Mihloti ke ngwetši ya ka ke mosadi wa basadi. O mo hlokomele, o tla go hlokomela. O tla go bontšha nnete ya bophelo. Thola ngwanaka, o swarane le Dikgoneng le Mihloti. Le be ngata. Tšeo di diragetšego di lebalwe, di ribegwe. Ke duma gore go tloga lehono le phele bjalo ka bana ba letswele. Le thekganeng go tšohle tšeo le di dirago bophelong. Le boteng Modimo. Le Lehlagare ke tla mmegele tšeo ke di bonego tša nnete ya bophelo.

Megokgo yeo ke e tšhollago ke ya lethabo. Ke megokgo ya lethabo yeo le lego dihlatse tša yona. Ke megokgo ya lethabo. Megokgo ya lethabo. (Lentsoane 1992:69)

(A woman will always be a woman everywhere. Forgive me my child, forgive me. You showed me the truth which I was not aware of. Today you take care of me. You nursed me with wonderful love.



Dikgoneng, my child, and you too forgive me for those things I did to you. Look after my daughter-in-law, Mihloti, Mihloti is my daughter-in-law. I say Mihloti is my daughter-in-law, she is a woman amongst women. Take care of her, and she will also take care of you. She will show the truth of life. Thola, my child, live happily with Dikgoneng and Mihloti. Be one thing. Anything that took place before, forget about them, throw them away. Today you live like children from the same parents. Respect one another in all that you do in life. Respect God. Even Lehlagare, I will tell him the truth of life. Tears that are falling down are tears of joy that you witness now. These are tears of joy, Tears of joy.)

Kgoteledi realised that tribalism is nothing but a human folly. Tribalism can be equated to evil, and evil things are not for keeps.

Tribal discrimination in *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987) is also noticed between two tribes, namely, the Barolong and the Swazis, who are fighting and mocking each other without valid reasons. Rre Hau's son utters the following words:

Ge go dutše go betšanwa ka maswika bjalo,  
dihlopha tše pedi tše di be di hlapišana ka  
mahlapa a go šiiša Mokriste. "Dimpša tena,  
ebile borakgolo ba lena ba mpolaetše mma!"  
(Rafapa, 1987:41)

(When they were still throwing stones at one another, the two tribes were swearing at each other. The words were too much for a Christian to handle. "... You dogs, even your grandfathers killed my mother.").

The Swazi boy answered using the following insulting words:

“Re ra lena dinakedi towe! Mmu wo ke wa borakgolokhukhu gomme le šetše le o dira wa lena? (Rafapa, 1987:41)

(“We mean you polecats! This ground belongs to our great grandfathers, and yet you turned it into yours?”)

The two tribes continue mocking each other using tribal words which are imbued with emotive aspect of hatred. They are exchanging words in the following manner:

“Ga gabolena ke Swatseng!”  
“Ga gabolena ke Freistata!”  
(Rafapa, 1987:41)

(“Your place of birth is Swaziland!”  
“Your place of birth is Orange Free State!”)

It is clear from the above given three extracts that the two tribes, the Barolong and the Swazis, hate each other given the way they are swearing at each other.



People who discriminate against one another find it impossible to stay happily together. Otherwise they will fight and kill one another, like the Barolong and the Swazis in this novel.

### 2.5.2 **Racial discrimination**

In *Bowelakalana* (1987) we meet three boys, namely Mpitiki, Mogofe and Magoši who are neglected and physically abused by their relatives. Ditedu and Ditsebe (white people) meet them at Moletlane. The two white men are on their way to Orange Free State when they meet these three black boys. They force them to herd their cattle without getting permission from their relatives.

On the way, the abovementioned African young boys are not allowed to use the dishes that are used by the whites, not even to touch them. Mrs Ditsebe tells them to use their own dishes:

Ge le eja ke tlo le solela mo dibjaneng tša  
lena tše ke tlogo di ntšha ka noši ka gare ga  
tše. (Rafapa, 1987:32)

(When you eat I will put your food on your  
own plates that I would have selected from  
all the other plates.)

From the above cited extract it is clear that some whites despise Blacks and look down at them as inferior people because Mrs Ditsebe does not even allow the poor little black boys to touch their dishes. They are forced to wait until she arrives and it is then that they will be given food to eat. One would also understand from this that racism is first and foremost a cultural assumption. One may also think the same of apartheid, which caused racial discrimination. Bowser (1995:xviii) maintains that this point might lead one to say that, indeed racism is permanent because culture cannot be changed by passing a law and then enforcing it, nor can racism be changed simply by recognizing a corporation and branch of government.

Despite the advent of democracy in South Africa, racism and tribalism are still experienced. The problem is that our cultures are not the same. Racism in *Bowelakalana* (1987) is seen again when blacks are not given proper education. Educated people are found among the Whites. It is true because the author wrote this novel during the apartheid era:

E be e le mehleng yela lesedi le sa kokota lefaseng. Bathongbaso thuto e be e akelwa ke thorwana di se kae. Dirutegi tša Bašweu le tšona e be e sa le fela baruti, barutiši, dingaka le baoki ba mmalwa. (Rafapa, 1987:41)

(It was that time when the light was scares. For black people, few were educated. White people who were educated were those who were just priests, educators, doctors, and few nurses.)

The extract given above shows that the white government was less concerned about educating Blacks. Blacks were discriminated from having better education. The author does not even disclose how far were poor Blacks educated at that time. Only Whites were educated as priests, teachers, doctors and some few nurses. As for the African boy Mpitiki, he stayed in hospital for 13 years without attending school.

In the waggon, Ditedu, Ditsebe and Ditsebe's wife do not allow the three African boys to sit next to them. The three white people just eat in front of them without giving them anything. Only Ditsebe's wife gives them a share so that they can be able to herd their cattle, otherwise she also could have not given food to them. This discrimination is emphasized by the author thus:

Bana ba bararo ba ba lešoka ba be ba na le  
khutlwana ka koloing kua kgole le ba bagolo  
mo yo mongwe a bego a re ge a khutšisitšwe  
teu a khutše fao. Le go ja ba be ba jela fao.  
Mohumagadi wa Ditsebe o be a re ge a seno  
ja le banna bale ba babedi, a ba nee dijo ka  
o tee ka o tee gore teu e se hloke moswari.

(Rafapa, 1987:41)

(The three jungle boys had their own corner there. They were staying in a waggon far away from their superiors. It was a place where they went when they needed to rest from leading the cattle. It was also their eating place. Ditsebe's wife used to give those children food, one after the other, after she had eaten with those two men so that the rope for leading the cattle will have someone to hold.)

The abovementioned extract shows clearly that Black children were given hard labour irrespective of their age. Whites do not even care about their education. These white people do not go for small White children to herd their cattle. One may even think of the long journeys they have undertaken. They are footing, leading the cows from Moletlane to Orange Free State. This is pure racial discrimination which is merciless to the three orphaned boys, namely Mpitiki, Magoši and Mogofe.

Bowser (1995:xiv) defines cultural racism as the belief that one's own people and ways are categorically superior and that other people, things and ways are categorically inferior as compared to one's.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

*Megokgo ya Lethabo* and *Molato Mpeng* reflect a continuous struggle between traditional laws and the rights of an individual. Lentsoane and Matlala have successfully portrayed life-like and interesting characters. Mihloti, Dikgoneng and Matete, as Protagonists, are representative of women and men as we know them in real life. Steadfastness is a major feature of human character. It is displayed in abundance by Dikgoneng and Mihloti.

Dikgoneng sticks to his decision that come high water or hell, he would marry Mihloti. Although Dikgoneng and Matete protested so strongly against their parents' decision, they still regarded them as their parents who deserved their respect. The characters of Dikgoneng and Matete are clearly revealed to us.

In this case, one may even conclude by giving a Northern Sotho proverb that says 'Mmapelo o ja serati senyakelwa ga a se rate.' This proverb simply means that in life a person should be able to choose things on his/her own. Matete and Dikgoneng's parents are having unreliable and inconsistent parenting.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine sexual harassment on children as depicted in *Moloto Mpeng* (1992). As already stated in the first chapter, sexual harassment entails many things. One can add that sexual harassment does not only mean to have sexual intercourse by force. It can mean many things, like when a man talks to a woman about sex when she does not want it, when a man asks for sex from a woman in exchange for a job or a passmark at school. It is usually done by someone with more power, like a boss or a teacher.

#### **3.2 THE DEPICTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

There are several events in *Moloto Mpeng* (Matlala, 1982) that are related to sexual harassment. One of them is observed when Seopela promised to hand over his daughter, Matete, for marriage to Thamaga's in exchange of the money that he borrowed. Seopela does this without informing Matete at all. This point is emphasized by Seopela when he states that:

Thamaga ntswale ke tla go fa mosadi.  
(Matlala: 1992:2)

(Thamaga, help me I shall give you a wife.)

Without much delay, Thamaga lends Seopela R200,00. On account of this, Thamaga keeps an eye over Matete so that nobody could marry her. Things do not go as planned. This is the case because Matete falls in love with Phure (a secretary at the chief's kraal) who also wanted to marry her. On this matter the author says:

Go ratana ga Matete le Phure go be go dutše  
go le gona, gomme Matete a file Phure tsebe  
ka gore o be a sa tsebe seo papagwe a bego  
a se rerile le Thamaga. (Matlala, 1992:4)

(The love between Matete and Phure was still there, again Matete listened to Phure because she did not know that her father had already promised Thamaga that she would become his daughter-in-law.)

When she discovered that she was supposed to get married to Maphutha, Matete was totally against the idea. That was why she refused to wear clothes that were bought for her by the Thamagas.

Apart from Maphutha, Mashosho (another Thamaga's son) is also interested in marrying Matete. This idea is also found unpalatable by Matete. To her, Mashosho is a moron that she could never dream of marrying:

Ke a bo tseba boso fela bja go swana le bja  
Mashosho e sa le ke tswalwa. Ka ntle ga  
bokobo le go se re tshakadi, Mashosho o be  
a ntshofetše tšeo o ka rego o loilwe. Gantši  
o be o bona ka meno gore ke motho.

(Matlala, 1982:33)

(I know dark appearance, but since I was  
born I have never seen anyone as dark as  
Mashosho. Except the darkness and  
stupidness, Mashosho was as dark as if he  
was bewitched. Sometimes the only thing to  
show he was a person were his teeth.)

Many people use their culture or religion as an excuse to control women. They say that women belong to men and men should discipline them. Men again think that they have the right to control and hurt women. This point becomes evident in the following extract:

Ke šetše ke feditše le morwedi, gape ebile  
taba ya go bitša ngwana e sepela le magadi,  
gomme ka gore nna ga ke nyake magadi,  
molomo wa ngwana ga o nyakege.  
(Matlala, 1982:33)



(I have already finished with my daughter and again the issue of calling her goes hand in hand with lobola, but I don't want lobola, therefore I don't want my child to say anything.)

It is really unfair, unacceptable and unreasonable to allow a young girl like Matete to get married to Mashosho who is not psychologically sound. This is nothing but sexual harassment. Matete, having already chosen a lover for herself, protests vehemently against her father's imposition of his will over her. In other words, Matete did not subscribe to the idea that parents have the sole right of choosing grooms or brides for their daughters and sons, respectively. Matters are aggravated by the fact that Matete's father forces the issue by saying:

O dutše o išitše kae ditsebe ge ke go botša  
bjale ba gaThamaga ba phethile ditshwanelo  
tša bona ka moka, ebile lesogana leo la bona  
le swanetše go tla ntlong. (Matlala,  
1982:38)

(Did you not understand me when I said the  
Thamagas have finalised everything  
regarding your marriage, and moreover, you  
are supposed to marry their son.)

From the above discussion, it is evident that Seopela is ignorant of the abovementioned Northern Sotho proverb that says, 'Mmapelo o ja serati senyakelwa ga a se rate', which means people should always choose what is suitable for themselves.

Furthermore, on account of the above-stated words, one may feel pity for Matete because her father continues to insist that she gets married to Mashosho as he knows that he has already taken R200,00 from Thamaga and promised him the only daughter in exchange:

Matete o swanetše go nyalana le Mashosho,  
ka swele, le gona e sebang neng? Ka  
Mošupulogo. Ga ke nyake molomo wa  
gago, sepela o yo itokiša. (Matlala, 1982:7)

(Matete you must get married to Mashosho,  
like it or not, and not when, on Monday. I  
don't want any of your say in this matter, go  
and prepare yourself.)

All the time when Seopela utters abusive words to her daughter, Matete always thinks of Phure her lover. Matete is denied a basic right of freedom of choice. This is a profound need for human beings and that is why Essop et. al., (1994:1) contend that:

Every person has an innate desire to enjoy  
certain basic needs. The most profound  
need is the burning desire to be free,  
emancipated from servitudes and  
deprivation and oppression, and rescued  
from persecution and atrocities.

Matete does have an innate desire to enjoy certain basic needs. What one deduces is that there is a revelation of the clash between traditional laws and the freedom of an individual (which is promised by Western culture). On the other hand, according to African custom, what a man says is always right and his decisions must be abided by. On the other hand,

we have modern thinking that advocates independent thinking and decision making. In this novel, Seopela and Thamaga make decisions for Matete without her knowledge. She sees nothing wonderful in Mashosho and this is revealed by the way in which she describes him:

Ke iša kae mošidi wa pitša.  
(Matlala:1982:34)

(What use do I have for the soot of a pot)

The above extract reveals to us that Matete totally does not love Mashosho. If she looks at him, she doesn't see a person but rather a soot of a pot. By using this metaphor, Matete exaggerates the blackness of Mashosho by comparing him to a soot of a pot. The extract also reveals that Matete will never ever one day allow Mashosho to marry her.

Mashosho is crippled as he is injured by a tiger. He cannot move well any more. When her father persists that she should marry him, Matete decides to run away from home. She writes a small note which reads as follows:

Lehono ke tseleng! Ntlhakanetše.  
(Matlala: 1982: 84)

(Today I am on the way, come and meet me)

On the way she is injured by a car and is admitted to hospital. At the end, Matete is married to Phure, the beloved one.

### 3.3 CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion one is able to deduce that traditional laws are sometimes a stumbling block to the youth. The author also portrays a life-like character (Matete) who sticks to her promise that she will get married to Phure, the beloved one.

Parents should also know that to force issues sometimes can cause harm to their children. Matete nearly died since when she ran away from home, she was involved in a car accident, but fortunately she survived. The author provided us with satisfying solution, for Matete won the struggle given that, as she promised before, she ultimately got married to Phure.

## CHAPTER 4

### PHYSICAL ABUSE, CHILD NEGLECT, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with physical abuse, child neglect, psychological abuse and emotional abuse of children and women. Daily, media reports remind us of the epidemic of child abuse and physical abuse. An alarming high number of children in the world are victims of family violence. Unfortunately, many children are also being victimized by their exposure to widespread inter-parental violence.

In our society, we typically look at abuse and neglect as we do at all other problems. Physical abuse, child neglect, psychological abuse and emotional abuse will be discussed as depicted in the following novels: *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987), *Megokgo Ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968), *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (Lentsoane, 1992) and *Molato Mpeng* (Matlala, 1982).

#### 4.2 PHYSICAL ABUSE

In *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987), a small boy called Mpitiki, who is 13 years old, has been neglected by his relatives after his mother's death. Mpitiki does not even know his

parents. Mpitiki's mother is killed by her uncle because he beats her until she dies just because of the dead calf that is killed by a snake. He tells her that she does not care about his cattle and sheep when he is out visiting some relatives.

Physical abuse is explained by many scholars as the most dangerous of all forms of abuse because it leaves deeper wounds that take much longer to heal. Makobe, Mmaahwile's uncle, does not waste time when he finds her sleeping on the goat skin in the court yard. He takes a knobkierie and severely beats her all over the body. Remember that the poor lady is pregnant and again she is an orphan. The author emphasizes the cruelty of Makobe as follows:

Pele Mmaahwile a ka mo fetola gabedi a be a šetše a mo kwele legetla ka molamo. A napa a iša pele go neša pula ya melamo le diramphašana godimo ga mogolelamogolo yola. A mo rothotha ka thoka le go mo raga ka diramphašana gore a be a šale a lla sepudi. (Rafapa, 1987:60)

(Before Mmaahwile can respond for the second time, he was already beating her with a knobkierie. He then continued kicking her several times by using shoes on that pregnant woman. He severely beat her and started to kick her with shoes until she started crying like a goat.)

Mmaahwile dies when she arrives at hospital because she has bad wounds all over her body. This is abuse of the worst and most cruel kind. Nothing is as precious as life on this earth. Makobe did this because the Northern Sotho culture encourages men to beat up women.

Makobe is a very bad character who does not have mercy even on small boys. His cruelty is seen again when he beats up a herd-boy who is helping him to herd his cattle. The small boy is helping him when he is trying to heal cracks on the feet.

“Mošaa!” Makobe a kgadimotša a setše a rathile sešemanyana sela magetlana a a go ponapona ka patla. Mošemanyana a thanya a pshikologela kua kgojana le mokgalabe a inyokanyoka a bile a sekhumula. “Ke re etla le legala lela o tšwela o lekeletša mekonoto? Akgofiša!” Ge a realo ke ge a mo bukunya ka patla mmoetša. (Rafapa, 1987:23)

(“You boy!” Makobe shouted and beat the boy on his naked shoulders. The boy jumped up and rolled up and down and he cried. “I said bring me that cinder you come here with nothing? Be quick” He started beating him again.)

The little boy runs away and Makobe cannot catch up with him again.

In the other incident, Mpitiki is also beaten up by a white man called Ditedu. This point is narrated in the following words:

Ditedu a mo rutla gore a re a šalela a tšhaba  
e be mmele wo wa gagwe e dio ba nama ya  
dihlabi le marurugo fela. (Rafapa, 1987:33)

(Ditedu beat him so hard that when he  
started running away, his body was full of  
pains and swells.)

From the abovementioned extract, it shows clearly that Ditedu is not different from Makobe. Ditedu does this because he realises that Mpitiki does not have parents. He finds him roaming on the way with Magoši and Mogofe. This is true because Mpitiki has been raised since birth in orphanages.

In *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968) one notices another physical abuse that is perpetrated by Leilane. Leilane is also cruel since he beats up his wife and she sustains serious injuries. This is prompted by his wife, Mohlatša, who vomits in front of him because of the type of food her husband is eating. This is captured in the following extract:

Leilane ga a ka senya sebaka sa go mo thiba  
lehlatšo ka lepara. O ile a mo itia gore le be  
le tsharoge, mosadi yoo gwa se be ka moo a  
ka se tšhabelego ka lapeng le lengwe, fela



gwa se thuše selo ka gore o ile a mo latelela. Mosadi ge a itšatšara a ilale, ke ge le yena a llela godimo ga gagwe mo nkego o lwa le monna, etšwe go itia mosadi go swana le go itia ngwana. (Matsepe, 1968:11).

(Leilane did not waste time but beat her up with a knobkierie. He beat her until she stopped vomiting, she ran away to the neighbouring house, but in vain because he followed her. When the woman was crying, the man was also crying as if he was fighting with a man, but to beat a woman is like beating a small baby.)

Mohlatša's wounds took a long time to heal because she was beaten severely. Her father, Morara, takes her to the traditional doctors for treatment. Matsepe on this point emphasizes that:

Morara o tšere Mohlatša a mo iša banneng gore ba mo alafe dintho tšeo di bego di šetše di senyega ka ge e be e le selemo. Ba hlakile nae kudu, ba di hlatswa ka se le sela ba di tlema ka morobadigale o borutho le lehwama, ba di oretša boya bja kome le tše dingwe, aowa kgoši - ba ile ba mo emaemela e le ruri gobane morago ga kgwedi ke ge di šetše di roka legogo. (Matsepe, 1968:22)

(Morara took Mohlatša and consulted traditional doctors so that they could heal her wounds because they started to be septic

as it was summer. They went up and down trying to heal her with many things, they bound them with warm, 'morobadigale' and 'lehwama', they warmed them by using kome's fur and others, Alas! They went up and down, tried by all means, and she became better after a month.)

The extract above shows clearly that men are expected to be tough and take charge of the family. Many men like Leilane believe that they must be in control of their families. Maybe Leilane follows the Northern Sotho proverb that says, 'monna ge e se rrago o dula ka wena.' That means 'if a person is not your parent, he will beat you badly.' This can lead to violence against women. Some men think that they have the right to beat up women. Violence against women is bad for their health. Women are hit, punched, kicked, shot at and stabbed. Pregnant women, like Mpitiki's mother, Mmaahwile, may miscarry or die instantly after delivery. Many women are disabled or may even die from their injuries. As already mentioned above, Mmaahwile dies immediately after she is beaten up by her uncle.

Kilgore (1992:2), unlike other scholars, stresses the issue of physical abuse as:

Pushing, scratching, slapping, hitting, punching, choking, kicking, holding, biting or throwing, locking one out of the house.

From the abovementioned extract, Kilgore is correct because Maphuthe's son in *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968) is scratched by his own cat and dies instantly. Leilane hits his wife and she sustains bad wounds all over her body. In *Bowelakana* (Rafapa, 1987), Makobe pushes, slaps, hits, punches and kicks her granddaughter, Mmaahwile, and she dies instantly in hospital.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:7) maintains that:

Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

The abusers should know that in the new democracy men and women are equal before the law. Men are no more allowed to hit women the way they like because both have the right to equal protection.

Leilane, the protagonist of *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968) badly treats every one, even his friends. His best friend, Maphutha, rescues him from the bad hands of Nthumule and they disappear from Nthumule's kraal, and Leilane's cruelty is seen when he throws Maphuthe into a huge precipice. Fortunately he does not die, except for his broken foot but he manages to escape from the precipice.

Most types of abuse and neglect existing in this world, have been linked to alcohol intoxicated parents. It has been estimated that most children live in families where one or both parents are alcoholics, and that many of these individuals suffer a variety of problems related to the alcoholism of a parent that was never labelled as such. With regard to this matter, Matsepe (1968:63) talks of a man who is drunk and burns his child. His wife refuses to give him the child but as the man is cruel and fond of beating her, she reluctantly gives him the little child. The man sometimes staggers from side to side in a drunken state and starts to strike his wife during violent arguments:

Mosadi yo o bolela bjang bathong? Ngwana  
ya ba wa ka a gana ka yena a re ke gamotše?  
Na go gamola go dira gore se e lego sa ka se  
nthona? Ka ge monna yoo a be a na le  
letsogo, ba ile ba ketaketišana bogolobobe  
mafelelong mosadi yola a mo neela ngwana  
- anthe! (Matsepe, 1968:63)

(What is this woman saying? This is my  
own child but she refuses to give it to me  
because she says I am drunk? Does my  
drinking make you refuse to give me my  
own thing? As the man was fond of beating  
her they struggled severely, until the woman  
gave him the child - and then!)

As the man is sitting next to the traditional fire place drunk, he slumbers and the child falls on the fire. The child is roasted like meat. When the woman arrives at home she cries bitterly:

Mosadi o ile go tsena ka sefero sebakeng sa go botšiša gore o tšere kae nama, baagelane ba kwa a hlaba mokgoši a hlakantše le go lla sa masetlapelo. Diketapele ge di fihla tša hwetša a budule diatla, mollo o phatlaletše motho wa batho a sa tsebe gore a ka ba botša eng ka gore pelo e be e mo kgamile e le ruri. Ka ge mollo o be o phatlaletše, e le leswiswi, ba se tsebe gore molato ke eng. Monna o ile ge a tsošwa ke ditšhaba le dillo a tlabega gannyane. Yena ba mo hweditše a robotše gona moo hleng ga wona. (Matsepe:1968:63)

(When the woman entered the yard, instead of asking him where he took the meat, neighbours heard her shouting and she was crying bitterly. Those who entered first, found the child's hand roasted, the fire was spreading all over and it was dark, they could not know the cause of the problem. When the man was awoken by the crowd and shoutings, he was puzzled and wondered a bit. They found him sleeping next to it.)

From the above-stated extract one could see that parental alcoholism or drug addiction can cause havoc in most families. This is another abuse of the worst and most cruel kind wherein a small baby is roasted like meat.

Sometimes, some forms of traditional healing can be one type of physical abuse as mentioned by Matsepe (1968:61). This type of abuse is caused by traditional doctors that need money due to poverty. Maphutha and his son go to Nthumule's kraal to heal a certain lady who is terribly ill:

Ba ile go fihla ntshe, morwa wa Maphuthe a itia katsekatse yela ka molamo, ka go kwa bohloko ya thoma go ngapa le go loma molwetsi yo le yena a ilego go kwa bohloko, a thoma go tšhaba a tšame a hunolla thari yela, mongake le yena a mo šetše morago. (Matsepe, 1968:61)

(When they arrived there, Maphuthe's son beat the cat with a knobkierie until it felt pains and started to scratch the patient and she also felt the terrible pains and she ran away and started to untie the cradle, and the traditional doctor also followed her.)

Traditional healing in some cases could be dangerous in such a way that a patient could also die if a doctor is not careful. From the above stated extract, the patient is healed after she is scratched by the cat. On another incident, Maphuthe's son is killed by a cat when he is trying to heal another patient. That day the cat killed Maphuthe's son and it ran away. It scratches and bites him and he dies instantly. The Northern Sotho proverb says, 'pitšana ya maano ga e apee gabedi.' This means that one cannot try luck for the second time and succeed.

#### 4.3 CHILD NEGLECT

Ammerman (1992:124) maintains that child neglect involves maltreatment due to chronic, pervasive acts of omission, with a parent failing to meet a child's physical, nutritional, medical, educational, and emotional needs.

According to Ammerman, examples of neglect include unsafe home environment, allowing dangerous or unsafe child behaviours to occur, refusal or delay of health or psychological care, abandonment, inadequate supervision, permitted chronic truancy, and inattention to a special educational need (1992:124).

What has been highlighted in the first paragraphs of this section also obtains in *Bowelakana* (1987). One says this because Mpitiki, in *Bowelakana* (1987), has been neglected by his relatives after his mother's death. He grows up in hospital until he is 13 years of age. He does not know his parents and his place of birth. His relatives left him there until when he started to look for his place of birth and parents. Although Dr Matšato adopts and offers him good care, Mpitiki is not satisfied. This should not come as a surprise because Briere (1992:11) confirms that:

These children, although receiving reasonable physical and medical attention, were rarely spoken to, played with, or interacted with in any way beyond what was minimally necessary for their physical care.

Physical well being does not equal mental happiness. That is why Mpitiki asks himself many heavy questions such as the following:

Ga gešo ke kae? Mma le papa ba sa phela?  
Na ge ba sa phela ke go reng ge ke sa ba  
tsebe? Afa ke na le borakgadi, malome  
mogatšamalome, bomotswala le baratho le  
dikgaetšedi? Mo ke gokae, ka baka la eng?  
Ruri, le ge ke na le batho mo, gabotsebotse  
ke nnošinoši mo lefaseng le le legologolo  
mo motho a sa tsebego gore ka mathoko le  
gotše go fihla kae, ka godimo, ka fase gona.  
(Rafapa, 1987:1)

(Where is my home? Are my parents still  
alive? If they are still alive why should I not  
know them? Do I really have aunts, an  
uncle, niece and nephews and younger  
sisters and brothers? Where am I, and why?  
Even if I have people here am I really alone  
in such a big world where a person does not  
know how big it is on its sides, up and  
down).

The above words explain that Mpitiki is neglected and would like to go home, but the place is unknown to him. The boy is brain-damaged by his grandfather while he is still in his mother's womb, who dies immediately after his birth. Although he receives tender care in hospital from doctors and nurses, his wish is to see his parents and relatives.

Ke nyaka go ya gae, nna ke ya gae. Ke ya  
gae! A lla a realo ebile a phoša matsogwana  
a masese kua le kua ebile a binabina mmu  
wo wa go mo tena ka mabinakošana a go  
gwamela. Ke re ke a ya! Ke a ya! Nkišeng!  
Ijoo-o-o-o, ke a ya! Ga ke sa nyaka go dula  
mo! Ke ya gae! (Rafapa, 1987:2)



(I want to go home, myself. I am going home. I am going home! He cried and at the same time he threw his thin hands all around and he was jumping on the ground which he does not want with his feet. I say I am going home! I am going! Take me there! Alas, I am going! I don't want to stay here anymore! I am going!)

The above extract shows the distress, confusion and frustration that Mpitiki experiences by being both an orphan and an abused child. This is contrary to what psychology experts say when they state that:

Neglected and rejected children do not show distress and do not protest when they are separated from their parents. They tend to go with anybody and do not discriminate between known and unknown persons while in hospital or in a foster-home, they tend to relate in a similar way to a nurse or a foster-mother. However they appear to be insecure and unable to move freely to explore the environment in an organised and purposeful way. They either cling to the parents or aimlessly run about in a disruptive fashion. They also appear to be frightened and anxious. (Iwaniec, 1995:53).

Later, however, Mpitiki displays some of the behavioural patterns outlined by Iwaniec (1995). He did not discriminate between known and unknown persons because on the way

he meets two boys, Mogofe and Magoši who are also neglected by their parents. He also meets white people who are travelling to Orange Free State.

Mogofe also is a young boy who is abused by his grandfather because he is always beating him with a knopkierie without any valid reason. His mother died while he was still young.

Magoši is also neglected by his mother. His mother neglected him and roamed around with different men who were only passing by. The boy also does not tolerate it and decides to run away. Magoši is neglected by his mother and at the same time physically abused by his father and mother-in-law.”

Tša go dula le mogadikane wa mmago mola mmago ka bogafanayane a tšhabetše tatago le banna ba bafetakatsela? O ka dula le yena tatago yoo wa go go phediša boima a go thikile le mogadikane wa mmago mo nkego ke wena yena mmago yoo wa sehvirihwiri (Rafapa, 1987: 19)

(To stay with your mother-in-law whilst your biological mother ran away from home with other men? Can you stay with your father who abused you heavily together with your mother-in-law as if you were the one who did all those wrong deeds?)

Mpitiki, Magoši and Mogofe are neglected, physically abused and at the same time psychologically abused. Ammerman et.al., (1992:254) maintain that psychological or emotional maltreatment is the underlying issue spanning every form of abuse and neglect.

They go on to say that extreme cases of physical abuse (acts of commission) or neglect (acts of omission) clearly threaten the biological integrity of children.

The above statement illustrates the fact that it is more likely to be psychological maltreatment that takes place in an abusive or neglecting home. One may think that these three boys are abused in such a way that is shocking, as clearly explained under physical and child neglect. The way the white men abuse them is unbelievable. The three boys herd the cattle on their way to Orange Free State without being given permission from their cruel relatives and parents. On the way to Orange Free State, Magoši is beaten up and treated like a slave and is also killed by a tiger. The author overemphasizes the way Magoši is killed by a tiger thus:

Lebakeng leo selemo e be e šetše e le  
ngwagola, nkwe yela ya go gobala e ri  
bolotše Magoši hlogo ye e ntšhitše tše pedi  
bjoko bja go hlakana le madi bo ponapona  
nyanyeng bo garola leihlo bjalo ka thipa ya  
magalemabedi (Rafapa, 1987:210)

(At that time Magoši was dead, and that injured tiger scratched Magoši on the head until his head was in two pieces, and the brain was mixed with blood, and it was a really shocking sight like a double-edged knife.)

This incident damages Mpitiki and Mogofe's psyche. They cry bitterly and become afraid of any wild animal that approached them. Ammerman et al., (1992:254) stress that although physical abuse and neglect need not accompany psychological maltreatment, it is questionable whether any form of abuse or neglect can occur in the absence of psychological maltreatment. They maintain that it is the psychological integrity of a child that is jeopardized.

Mpitiki searches for his place of birth for two years. He roams around searching for it. For one not knowing where to sleep and where to get food from, is nothing but psychological torture. At Rre Hau, he sometimes stays alone because Rre Hau does not want to see his children playing with him. He also works like a slave, without being helped by anybody. This is emphasized by the author's words that:

Gape le bana ba gagwe o be a ba laile gore  
ba se itlwaetše yena kudu. (Rafapa,  
1987:38)

(Even his children were ordered never to  
play with him.)

On the above matter, Briere (1992:9) explains the features of a psychologically abused child:

The child is deprived of social contacts beyond the family, not allowed friends, kept in a limited area for long periods of time without social interaction.

When Mpitiki is roaming around looking for his place of birth, he meets two tribes fighting and their houses are burnt. Mpitiki is shivering and frightened . He does not know what to do and what not to do. He asks himself many questions without getting answers:

Mpitiki ngwana' batho o noši o bogetše marumo ka letšhogo le legolo. Letswalwana le re ruthuruthu. Pelo ye nngwe e re a tsene lešoka e be ge a ile; ye nngwe e re a tsene ka ga moruti le barutiši. Ge a gopola dibatakgomo tša ka lešokeng gare ga maswiswi a, ka ge le šetše le sobetše a fšega. Ge a re kgane a ka ya ga moruti le barutiši le gona o kwa a ititwa ke letswalo. O bone ba phadimiša dithunya lebakeng la ge mpherefere o huduega. (Rafapa, 1987:42)

(Poor Mpitiki is alone looking at the spears with terrible fright. His heart is beating fast. He thinks of running away and disappear,

another mind told him to go to the priest and the teachers' place. When he thinks of wild animals in this darkness he started to get frightened. When he thinks of going to the priest and teachers' homes he started to get frightened. He saw them holding guns the time when the fight started.

Mpitiki, the protagonist, won this struggle of searching for his place of birth and relatives because at the end his aunt Moipati finds him at the chief's kraal. She stays with him and they are happy. Mpitiki finds what he looked for, for more than two years.

Psychological maltreatment should never be taken for granted because its consequences are too ghastly to contemplate. In this regard, Ammerman et. al., (1992:255) state that:

Psychological maltreatment, in other words, attacks the very core of a young child's development foundation - his or her sense of self and relationship security. With respect to both occurrence and outcome, then, psychological maltreatment may be and should be considered a core issue in child maltreatment.

As noted by Navarre (1987) and others in Briere (1992:10), psychological abuse is probably on inherent or core part of all forms of child maltreatment, since the majority of enduring effects of such behaviour are on a child's psyche. Such a situation abounds in

*Molato Mpeng* (Matlala, 1982). For instance, Matete is psychologically abused by her father when he forces her to get married to Mashosho:

Matete ke papago ge ke boletše ke boletše.  
Lesogana leo le swanetše go tla ntlong. Ge  
o ka gana ka lemati o tla be o nyaka nna  
papago, gomme ke tla go fa se o se nyakago.  
(Matlala, 1982:38)

(Matete I am your father, my word is final.  
If you cannot open that door, I shall be cross  
with you as I am your father, and I shall give  
you what you want.)

To show that Matete is psychologically disturbed, she ends up making unusual things. It is as if her mind is not working well. Out of frustration, she cuts papers into pieces. In fact, she is angry:

Mo fase go be go tletše maratharatha go  
rathantšhitšwe dipampiri e bile e re ke ge go  
dutšwe go rathathelwa mabetlelo. Fase go  
be go tletše dikgetlwakgetlwana go gwaša e  
bile o ka re go thenthilwe mohlakola ka  
gohle go be go tletše ditsekana tša dipampiri  
gomme go šupa gore pelo ye e šomilego fao  
e be e se e thakgale e be e šuletšwe. Tšohle  
di be di feretlhantšhitšwe go se se se dutšego  
madulong a sona. (Matlala, 1982:80)

(The floor was full of pieces of paper as if bottles were broken into pieces. The floor was full of pieces and it was not smooth as if traditional bones were thrown on the ground. In all directions were full of pieces of papers to show that the person who was doing this filthy work was not happy and she was sad. Things were mixed and upside down.)

The above extract shows that Matete is angry and this makes her to run away to a strange place. Her psyche is disturbed and she could no longer concentrate; subsequently, she is knocked down by a car.

This is a good lesson to parents who force their daughters to get married to men whom they do not want. On this matter, Matete's father learned a very good lesson because Matete nearly gets killed by a car. Again, there are Northern Sotho proverbs that say 'namakgapeletšwa e phuma pitša' and 'mmapelo o ja serati senyakelwa ga a se rate.' The two proverbs mean that no one should be forced into something he/she don't like because this can cause havoc at the end.

In *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (Lentsoane, 1992), Mihloti, as the protagonist, is psychologically abused by Kgoteledi. Kgoteledi uses abusive language against Mihloti concerning her culture. She hates her and tells her that she cannot get married to her son Dikgoneng because she belongs to the Tsonga tribe.



Psychological and physical abuse usually go together. This is the case well as in *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (Matsepe, 1968). The psychological abuse that Mohlatša experiences is also accompanied by physical abuse. The following extract proves this satisfactorily:

Leilane ga a ka a senya sebaka sa go mo thiba lehlato ka lepara. O ile a mo itia gore le be le tsharoge, mosadi yoo gwa se be ka moo a ka se tšhabelego ka lapeng le lengwe, fela gwa se thuše selo ka gore o ile a mo latelela. (Matsepe, 1968:11)

(Leilane did not waste time but beat her up with a knobkierie. He beat her until she stopped vomiting, she ran away to the neighbouring house, but in vain because he followed her).

Unpleasant as this situation may be, it does however last, that is why Ammerman et. al., (1992:292) contend that:

Psychological maltreatment frequently, if not almost always accompanies physical maltreatment. Theoretically psychological maltreatment can be viewed as functionally equivalent to physical abuse (i.e., both function to establish dominance and control over another person).

Emotional abuse is defined by Dean (1979), in Briere (1992:11), as:

An act of omission, frequently the result of parental ignorance or indifference. As a result, the child is not given positive emotional support and stimulation. Parents may give adequate physical care to their child but leave him or her alone in a crib for long periods of time, seldom cuddle or talk to the child, or fail to give him or her encouragement and recognition.

From the extract mentioned above, one may think of Mpitiki, Magoši and Mogofe in *Bowelakalana* (Rafapa, 1987), as they do not receive positive emotional support from birth. They both receive seldom cuddle or talk because they are neglected by their parents.

With Matete, in *Molato Mpeng* (Matlala, 1982), her mother dies while she is still a new born baby. Her father abuses her emotionally by forcing her to get married to an abnormal man. As a result, Matete is not given positive emotional support and stimulation.

Mpitiki, in *Bowelakalana*, is left alone in hospital for most of his first 13 years of life, and later disappears and tries to look for his parents. During his stay in hospital he is taken care of by Dr Matšato but this cannot replace the desire that he feels concerning meeting with his parents.

From the foregoing discussion, one could deduce that people who were abused were protagonists. What is interesting and exciting is that protagonists always win their struggles.

In *Bowelakalana* (1987), Mpitiki is the protagonist. He roamed around the country because he was searching for his parents and was thus abused by whites and black people. He was ultimately able to find what he had been concerned with and worried about since his childhood. He did not know his parents until he was thirteen years old. There is a saying, in Northern Sotho, that ‘Kgotlelelo e tswala katlego’, which means that perseverance is the mother of success. Mpitiki’s character is well understood and satisfactory because many children don’t want to be separated from their parents. It is just a few children who run away from home to streets yet they come from well-to-do families. Some run away because of the abuse they get from their parents.

In *Molato Mpeng* (1982), the main character is Matete. She was abused by her father by way of forcing her to get married to Mashosho, even though she did not love him. Seopela did that because he wanted his daughter to finish with her studies and by so doing he took a wrong decision. Matete did not want to impress her father because she completely denied his decision. She had a backbone and she did not shake because she knew what she wanted.

What is fascinating about this whole situation is that Matete still had a lot of respect for her father even after he did that to her. She ran away because his father was forcing her to get married to Mashosho. The author gave us the character who showed that she could stand for what she believed in, and as such she did win the war she was fighting.

In *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (1992), we clearly noticed that tribal discrimination does not pay because Kgoteledi tried to deny her son to get married to Mihloti but her refusal was all in vain because Mihloti and Dikgoneng, who are protagonists, were able to show the truth of life. Just like Matete, they stood for their rights and it ultimately made Kgoteledi to regret and realise that tribalism does not pay. She saw just how Mihloti was taking care of her in hospital. The author provided us with a satisfactory conclusion because the two were eventually married and lived happily together.

In *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (1968), Leilane is the protagonist. He was the one who was abusing people all around. This novel is different from all the other novels explained above because Leilane, as the protagonist, was the one who abused other people. After abusing his wife he got punished because he beat his wife badly. He was fined three cows, one for his wife's injuries, the other for beating Morara, and the last one was for his case at the chief's kraal.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the summary of the previous chapters. It also looks into the recommendations concerning child and woman abuse, the aim being to find solutions that will ensure the safety of victims or potential victims and treatment or prosecution and detention of perpetrators.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY**

The purpose of this research was to examine abuse as reflected in some Northern Sotho novels.

Chapter 1 deals with the background to the problem, significance of the study and research methods such as qualitative, primary and secondary research methods.

The first chapter also includes the work of different scholars on abuse. Scholars whose works have been consulted in this study include, inter alia, Mokgoatšana (1996), Mogale (1993), Motubatse (1994), Moloisi (1989), Mphahlele (1992) and Goodman (1995).

It also deals with the definition of the concepts related to abuse, summary of the novels to be discussed in the next chapters and the organization of the study.

Chapter 2 concentrates on the following types of abuse, tribal discrimination, racial discrimination and verbal aggression. These types of abuse were discussed based on the following novels: *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (1992) and *Bowelakalana* (1987). From the discussion in Chapter Two, it is obvious that racism and tribalism have been shown in a form of verbal aggression. What one deduces from this chapter is that racism and tribalism are still a major problem in South Africa.

In *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (1992), one realises that tribalism does not always emerge victorious despite powerful forces at its disposal. The results in this novel were good at the end because Mihloti was ultimately able to get married to Dikgoneng. The freedom of an individual in this case has triumphed over restrictive and oppressive culture.

Chapter 3 deals with sexual harassment. *Molato Mpeng* (1982) is a novel that shows children sexual harassment. In this novel, Seopela ordered his daughter to get married to someone she does not love and that is regarded as sexual abuse. Seopela was compelled to take this decision because he wanted his daughter to finish her studies. He therefore went to borrow R200,00 from Thamaga and as he would not repay it he promised to give Thamaga a wife. Seopela tortured his daughter verbally and insisted that she got married to Mashosho as originally promised.

In this chapter the consequences are the same as in Chapter 2 because the young individual (Matete) manages to overcome her problems. Matete ends up getting married to Phure, a man she loves and chose for herself.

Chapter 4 examines the following types of abuse: child neglect, physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, as depicted in the following novels: *Bowelakalana* (1987), *Megokgo ya Bjoko*, (1968), *Megokgo ya Lethabo* (1992) and *Molato Mpeng* (1982). All these types of abuse in the above mentioned novels have been explained in detail. The causes and the consequences of these types have also been discussed. From Chapter One up to Chapter Four, one can deduce that psychological abuse is embedded in all major forms of child and woman abuse and neglect. Ecological factors such as racism, tribalism, sexism and the conflict between vice and virtue are also included in psychological maltreatment.

Mpitiki, as the protagonist in *Bowelakalana* (1987), was neglected by his relatives and physically abused by whites, and was again racially against discriminated and at the same time psychologically and emotionally assaulted. Such types of abuse are not only confined to the above mentioned novels, they are also prevalent in *Megokgo ya Bjoko* wherein Mohlatša was physically, psychologically and emotionally abused by her husband, Leilane.

Miller (1991: 178) emphasizes that additional physical behaviours carried out by parents such as sexual abuse, or physical neglect that results in negative psychological outcomes, would also be considered as psychological maltreatment. This is also applicable to *Molato Mpeng* (1982). Matete, as the protagonist in *Molato Mpeng*, was sexually and verbally abused by her father, Seopela. The consequences of such abuse resulted in her feeling emotionally and psychologically unstable.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Of all forms of violence, child and woman abuse, is the most invidious. It demands an immediate response as its consequences are too ghastly to contemplate.

5.3.1 The dependent status of children requires the society to intervene because the most important part of treatment to all forms of child and woman abuse is stopping the abuse. Stopping the abuse often requires some form of intervention by the community or powers that be;

5.3.2 Reconstruction services should be rendered to families of the abused children and women;

5.3.3 For the abuse of children and women to come to end, even neighbours must break the silence;



- 5.3.4 Children and women must be taught to know their rights;
- 5.3.5 Parents should avoid debts as it can lead into misery;
- 5.3.6 Parents should again avoid choosing brides or grooms for their children because it can cause havoc to them;
- 5.3.7 Child care forums should be established in communities in order to identify orphans, abused women and vulnerable children. All stakeholders like teachers, nurses, social workers, traditional leaders, business people etc., should be involved in order to form support groups to assist those who are abused;
- 5.3.8 Sexuality education should be taught at schools from Grade R so that the learners can know themselves;
- 5.3.9 The abusers also, on the other hand, need to be rehabilitated so that they can change or modify their bad behaviours. They also need psychological intervention. If they do not reform legal steps must be taken against them. They may be arrested and sentenced to stay in jail for many years; and
- 5.3.10 The concept 'abuse' should also be put into sharp focus as far as the curriculum of literary studies is concerned.

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