

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL NAMES  
AMONG THE NORTHERN SOTHO SPEAKING PEOPLE  
RESIDING WITHIN THE GREATER  
BAPHALABORWA MUNICIPALITY IN THE  
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**BY**

**MATSATSI GRACE MAKHUBEDU**

**8804983**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE MASTERS DEGREE IN FOLKLORE STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

**YEAR: 2009**

**SUPERVISOR: DR. A.V. DHLIWAYO**

**Declaration**

I, Matsatsi Grace Makhubedu, hereby declare that the Topic: “The Significance of Traditional Names among Northern Sotho speaking People Residing Within the Greater BaPhalaborwa Municipality in the Limpopo Province”, submitted to the University of Limpopo, is my own original work in design and execution, has not been submitted to any other educational institution for any degree. All the sources used have been duly acknowledged.

---

Signature

---

Date

**Dedication**

I am very proud to dedicate this dissertation to my family.

- My Daughters,
  1. Tloubatla Katlego Precious
  2. Makhubedu Karabo Penelope Muriel
  
- My only son,

Makhubedu Molakase James.

### **Acknowledgements**

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the following:

Prof. S.T Kgatla and Dr. A.V Dhliwayo, my promoters, for their expert advice, encouragement, patience and critical comments during the course of study. To my promoters I say may God shower you with blessings;

My colleagues, Malesa T.P., Shai T.C, and to my principal, M.E. Pilusa, for their moral support and encouragement during the course of my study;

Above all, I give thanks to our Almighty God who gave me strength and made it possible for me to complete this research project;

My sincere thanks also go to Mrs Mailula S.J and Mrs Maredi, for their best wishes; and

I would also like to express my appreciation to the typists, Irene Phalane, Moses Nkoana, who patiently typed the bulk of this work. To them I say “God bless you”.

## Summary of the study

The main objective of this research is actually to highlight the importance of the meanings of the indigenous names among the Basotho ba Leboa in the area of Phalaborwa as against the ideas planted by western culture among these communities.

The research will show that although Phalaborwa is a multi-racial area, people who are born and bred there are still following the norms and values of their community by their forefathers, despite other people diverging from these norms and values as the majority of the African people in this area have lost their life style due to the influence of European culture.

The advent of Western culture has negative effects in the indigenous African naming system. Christianity names as well were some of the methods, which Western culture is transmitted to the Sotho people and the most effective system which is destroying the indigenous names.

The research would show that the people who claim to be educated are the ones who have a tendency of giving their children, western names which have little or no significance regarding their culture.

The researchers' findings would further illustrate that despite the people of Phalaborwa moving away from their norms and values, there are still people who believe in their norms and values and who still believe that traditional names have an impact on the life of an individual and his or her family. There are still people in Phalaborwa who believe that traditional names bestow have identity and that all African names have meanings rooted in culture and history.

## Table of Contents

	<b>Pages</b>
Declaration	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Summary of the study	iv
<b>CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the problem	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	2
1.3 Operational Definitions and Indicators	3
1.3.1 Religion	3
1.3.2 Rituals	3
1.3.3 Culture	3
1.3.4 Name	4
1.3.5 Phalaborwa	4
1.3.6 Ceremony	4
1.3.7 Practices	4
1.3.8 Basotho	5
1.4 Significance of the study	5
1.5 Aims and objectives of the study	5
1.5.1 Aim	5
1.5.2 Objectives	5
1.6 Research Questions	6
1.7 Assumptions	6
1.8 Theoretical Framework	7
1.9 Research Design and Methodology	8
1.9.1 Data collection method	8
1.9.2 Data Analysis	8
1.9.3 Sampling	9
1.10 Ethical Consideration	9
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>10-14</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: OVERVIEWING OF NAME GIVING</b>	
3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 Names Given at Birth	16
3.3 Family Names	16
3.4 Character Names (Maina a Semelo)	17
3.5 Praise/Tortem names (Mainatheto)	18
3.6 Nicknames	20

3.6.1	Nicknames based on physical characteristics	21
3.6.2	Nicknames based on the behaviour/habit of a person	21
3.6.3	Names given when getting married	22
3.6.4	Names given for a reason of some kind/name based on circumstances that took place during the child's birth	23
3.6.5	Names based on belief	25
3.6.6	Names given at the initiation school	26
3.7	Conclusion	28
 <b>CHAPTER 4: THE NAMING CEREMONIES AND THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS</b>		 29
4.1	Introduction	29
4.2	Birth ceremony	29
4.2.1	Namegiving	29
4.2.2	Protection rituals	30
4.2.3	The child's special meal	31
4.2.4	Tattoo making	31
4.3	Initiation ceremony	32
4.4	Marriage ceremony	34
4.5	Death ceremony	35
4.6	The role of the ancestors	37
4.7	Conclusion	38
 <b>CHAPTER 5: FINDING OF THE STUDY</b>		 39
5.1	Introduction	39
5.2	Interviews	39
5.2.1	How do people get names	39
5.2.2	What are the significance of giving names	44
5.2.3	The importance of name giving rituals	46
5.3	Conclusion	48
 <b>CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING REMARKS</b>		 49
6.1	Introduction	49
6.2	Research Finding	49
6.3	Recommendations	49
6.4	Future research	52
 <b>REFERENCES</b>		 53-56

# CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Du Toit (1968:185) observed that Phalaborwa in the North Eastern Transvaal was known for the production of iron ore that gave wealth to the neighbouring people. Phalaborwa today is residence for several different ethnic groups, among whom are the Basotho (Northern Sotho) people who are the subject of this research. The majority of the African people in this area have lost their culture because of the influence of European culture. Today, it is a common practice among the Basotho ba Leboa in Phalaborwa to give their children European names, such as Arthur, Hitler or Botha, whose meanings they do not know.

Traditionally, among the Northern Sotho speaking communities, when a baby was born he or she was kept indoors in a secluded hut until he or she was three months old. Immediately a baby is born, a message is sent out to close relatives. Parents and close relatives give an appropriate name to the child. In some instances, a meeting of the elderly members of a clan is convened to name the child (Barbara & Jurgens, 1986: 108).

Children who, for instance, were born after the family had lost children, due to death and/or miscarriages, were given names associated with this misfortune. The name given at birth was only a beginning that would be followed by another name when a man or woman graduates from an initiation school. When he or she got married she could get another one. This research focuses on the meaning of names given after birth.

The advent of western culture had negative impact on the indigenous African naming system. The indigenous names came to be undermined and regarded of low status. Christianity is one of the creeds by which western culture was transmitted to the Sotho people, and this was the most effective system of destroying the indigenous system of naming.

The European missionaries could pronounce the newly awarded European names with ease when compared to the indigenous names such as “Matome, Mokgadi, Mmamolatela etc’’, even though these Christian names were hardly meaningful to the Africans. Indigenous African names were associated with non-Christianity or what the converts used to refer to as ‘Baditšhaba’ (heathens, or more radical term ‘Kaffir’). A new name given after conversion to Christianity showed that the African had become a convert.

The researcher is aware of the fact that, for some Northern Sotho speaking; among the Basotho in Phalaborwa, the indigenous name is still regarded as ‘leina la bonnyane’ (a childhood name).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Mbiti (1990:115) correctly observed that almost all African names have meanings rooted in culture and history. Names bestow identity. A name has an impact on the life of an individual and his/her family. The naming of children was an important occasion that was often marked by ceremonies in many African societies. In many societies, it was a common custom to name children after their grandparents. The use of traditional names tightened family bonds. According to Matsimela (1997:31), it is important to give a child a traditional name because of the belief that the name would guide and protect the life of the child. The child would live by imitating the person he or she was named after, and this influenced and directed the future development of the child.

This system of naming children, which was meant to preserve the culture and the identity of the Northern Sotho people, has been progressively undermined by European cultural imperialism. This study seeks to determine the extent of the cultural dislocation of the people through the investigation of the current naming practices.

## **1.3 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS**

### **1.3.1 Religion**

Van der Zanden (1963:348) observes that religions are those socially shared ways of thinking, feelings and actions, which have, as their focus the realm of the supernatural or 'beyond' and that are centred in beliefs and practices related to sacred things.

Giddens (1993:124) defines religion as a kind of human behaviour, which can be classified as beliefs and rituals concerned with supernatural things, powers and faces. Haralambos (1985:453) defines religion, as belief in the existence of supernatural beings which has a governing effect on life. In this research, religion is regarded as beliefs and practices with reference to more or less "personalized" spiritual beings such as gods, ghosts and spirits.

### **1.3.2 Rituals**

A ritual is an institution comprising a set of religious or magical actions. Usually, these are designed to obtain access to, or assistance from, or protection against the influence and wrath of the supernatural (Spiro, 1966:77). In this research, a ritual is defined as a set of religious ceremonies performed to effectuate a designed goal.

### **1.3.3 Culture**

Van der Zanden (1993:3) observes that culture is the social heritage of a people. These are learned patterns for thinking, feeling and actions that are transmitted from one generation to the next, including the embodiment of these patterns in material items. He further says that culture can be defined as the total accumulation of beliefs, norms, activities, institutions and communication patterns of an identifiable group of people.

In this research, culture is defined as a way of life and behaviour of members of a particular society. It determines how members of a society think and feel. Culture directs their actions and defines the outlook on life.

### **1.3.4 Name**

According to Johnson (1973:6), a name is more than a label or a mere arrangement of sounds and letters. Bound up with name, there is history, legend, and fact. A name may be defined broadly as a word or small group of words indicating a particular entity in its entirety without necessarily or essentially indicating any special quality of the entity (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1968:1156). According to Tullock (1993:40), a name is the word by which an individual person, animal, or thing is known or spoken of. In other words, a name is a word or words by which something is known. This is how this term is used in this research.

### **1.3.5 Phalaborwa**

Phalaborwa is a small town situated in the eastern part of the Limpopo Province bordering with the central part of the Kruger National Park. The town is a residence for various multilingual and multicultural communities such as the Afrikaners, the Northern Sotho speakers, Vatsonga, and to a lesser extent the English and the Venda speaking communities. The name Phalaborwa literally means 'better than the South'. The town is the headquarters of the Greater BaPhalaborwa Municipal area, which is the area comprising villages and townships like Mashishimale, Maseke, Makhushane, Selwane, Namakgale, Lulekane, Mica, Gravelote, Mbaula Ranch, etc. Phalaborwa, in this research, refers to all the areas within the borders of the Greater BaPhalaborwa municipal area.

### **1.3.6 Ceremony**

The word ceremony is used in this research to refer to a formal event, such as wedding, and it consists of special things that are performed on formal occasions observed by the people.

### **1.3.7 Practices**

Practices refer to all what the Phalaborwa people do regularly as part of their life. These include rituals, religious, observations, and ceremonial practices that are done as part of daily activities.

### **1.3.8 Basotho**

The term Northern Sotho speakers refers to all Sotho-speaking communities in Southern Africa, i.e, Southern Sotho (Basotho) communities in the Free State and Lesotho, the Western Sotho communities (Batswana) found mostly in Botswana and the North West Province and the BaPedi (Basotho ba Leboa) communities found mostly in the Limpopo Province.

In this research, the word Basotho refers to the Northern Sotho communities or Basotho ba Leboa. The Sesotho language will mean the Northern Sotho language or Sesotho sa Leboa. The Basotho communities in Phalaborwa refers to the indigenous Baroka communities; usually known as BaPhalaborwa, who reside in Mashishimale, Selwane, Makhushane, and Maseke villages as well as the Basotho community who are residents of Namakgale, Phalaborwa town, Lulekani and surrounding areas mostly derived from various dialects of Northern Sotho.

## **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Naming of children is significant culturally. Names bestow identity. They preserve history and culture. In a formerly colonized country like South Africa, where cultural imperialism is still strong and there is talk of an African Renaissance, naming becomes part of the struggle for socio-cultural development. The African Renaissance is meaningless if people do not relocate themselves within their culture. This study is conceived as a very humble contribution to the on-going struggle to preserve the rich culture of the Northern Sotho speaking people.

## **1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.5.1 Aim**

The aim of this study is to provide an understanding of the significance of, and to promote the practice of giving traditional names among the Northern Sotho speaking people residing within the BaPhalaborwa Municipal area.

### **1.5.2 Objectives**

The following are objectives of this research:

- To identify traditional names among the Basotho communities in the area of BaPhalaborwa;
- To give etymological analysis of the Basotho names in Phalaborwa area;
- To analyse the reasons for the preservation of traditional African names among the Basotho communities in this region;
- To analyse the reasons why other Basotho people no longer giving traditional names to their children; and
- To analyse the reasons why most Basotho people in Phalaborwa have both Christian or European names and indigenous Sotho names.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following are the questions that guided this study:

- What are some of the significant traditional names among the Basotho in the study area?
- What cultural meanings are associated with these names?
- Why have some people preserved traditional names against the forces of cultural imperialism?
- Why have some people abandoned traditional names?
- Why are some of the Basotho individuals reverting to traditional indigenous names today?

## **1.7 ASSUMPTIONS**

The following are assumptions of the research:

- Those who have been subjected to European colonial education and who claim to be educated tend to give European names to their children- the so-called Christian names;
- Those who are converted to Christianity give Christian names to their children;
- Those who have remained rooted in their culture continue to give traditional indigenous names to their children especially those who are educated; and
- The majority of the Basotho communities have both European names and indigenous Sotho names.

## 1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of Afrocentricity is used as a framework to guide this study. This theory has been developed since the 1970s by African scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante, and Ama Mazama, to mention only two (Asante, 1980; 1982 & Mazama 2001). The theory of Afrocentricity begins with the premise that the most serious crisis confronting Africans on the continent, as well as in the diaspora, is the pressure exerted by foreign culture.

The European slave trade, slavery, as well as colonialism, have all removed Africans from their cultural footing and history. Africans have been pushed to the margins of European history where they exist as objects rather than agents of their own destiny. According to Asante (1980), the only way in which this cultural crisis can be resolved is for Africans to relocate and reposition themselves within their own culture and history. Epistemologically, Afrocentricity places African values and interests at the centre of any analysis involving African phenomena. Afrocentricity is an orientation to data. It is a perspective that does not claim universality like Eurocentrism. Afrocentricity has nothing to do with biological characteristics such as the colour of ones skin.

Afrocentricity, as a mode of thought and behaviour, is made up of the following basic elements (Asante 2001):

- an intense interest in psychological location as determined by symbols, motifs, rituals, and signs;
- a commitment to finding the subject-place of Africans in any social, political, economic, or religious phenomenon, with implications for questions of sex, gender, and class;
- a defence of African cultural elements as historically valid in the context of art, music and literature; and
- a celebration of centredness and agency, and a commitment to lexical refinement that eliminates pejoratives about Africans or other people.

To conclude this section on the theoretical framework, it is necessary to quote Asante himself:

I see Afrocentricity as a paradigmatic quality of thought with implications for analysis and practice where Africans are subjects/agents of phenomena acting in the context of their own historical reality, cultural image and human interest. Now to claim this definition is not to assail Europe or Asia. It is a statement of African consciousness within the context of historical experiences. The answer to dislocation may very well be relocation within the centre of one's own history. Afrocentricity is not the reverse of Eurocentricity as some eager critics have claimed (Asante, 1980:14).

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.9.1 Data Collection Method**

The participant observation method was used in this study. White (2000:35) says that participant observation refers to the techniques whereby the researcher becomes completely involved in the situation that is being researched. This type of research emphasizes the interpretation of events and the interaction with the people involved. By using this method, the present researcher observed the practices of the Basotho community in Phalaborwa for four months. The participants consisted of different sex and age groups.

The other method that was used for data collection is the interview. Haralambos (1989:507) observes that the interview method is one of the most widely used methods of gathering data in qualitative research. The researcher used personal interviews. White (2000:32) observes that the advantage of personal interview techniques is that the researcher can conduct a large number of interviews since the data collected is easier to interpret. This type of interview provides a great deal of information. Such interviews are excellent where the aim is to understand the perspective of the interviewees and the personal meanings they attach to different situations. The interviews included general questions about names, specific personal names and questions relating to the respondents' experience of naming.

### **1.9.2 Data Analysis**

After collecting data, the researcher organized the data according to themes. Themes related to the main issues are mentioned earlier on in the research questions. The Afrocentric theory was used to structure the analysis of all data collected.

### **1.9.3 Sampling**

Seaberg (1988:240) states that a sample is a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons that together comprise the study. The sample incorporated dimensions such as gender, age, and educational level. A purposive sample of 50 people was selected after an initial visit to the area to familiarize the researcher with the demographics of the study area.

### **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Human beings are the objects of study in the Social Sciences. They need to know that their privacy and humanity will be protected. They also have the right to know what is going to happen to the information they provide during data gathering (Henning, 2004: 73). The right of the respondents to anonymity, confidentiality, and dignity were respected. The researcher gave participants a pre-drafted letter of consent. Only respondents who signed the letter of consent participated in this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In terms of literature review, the researcher will consult African literature in order to understand and investigate the research problem. The researcher's aim is to compare the work already written by different authors on the subject.

Bakari (1981) mentioned that among the Swahili people, small nicknames such as mouse are applied to both girls and boys. Baraki also says that some people give their children regular names after seven days, some after forty and some are given their names after a year. He says that boys are named after their mother's family and girls after their father's family. Among the Swahili people, if a boy or a girl is born they will call him or her by such a name. The type of nicknames, as mentioned by Bakari, is not found among Basotho ba Leboa in Phalaborwa, instead, children are given real, meaningful names. In other words, a name should have envisaged effects. For example, a child could be given the name "Tshegofatšo" which means blessing, by parents in the belief and hope that their child would be a blessing to everyone.

Lombard (1997) states that it is interesting to know the origin of a name and when and how it became a definite family name. He says that family names are formed in different ways. They may be derived from a person's place of origin but, among the Basotho, a family name or surname is inherited from the father, grandfather, grand – grandfather etc. In other words, a name cannot be incorporated as a family name or surname. A family name cannot be changed. It is rather carried from one generation to another.

Democracy in South Africa has also brought in some changes, especially among women. Today, some married women prefer to retain their maiden names: something which did not exist among African women in the past. Such women use double-barreled surnames because they don't want to lose their identity. For example, Dr Manto Tshabalala Msimang, (the present Minister of Health in South Africa).

De Klerk (1999) mentions that naming is a specifically linguistic act intimately linked with values, traditions, hopes, fears and events in people's lives. Naming is concerned with the culture of people. He also observes that the name givers in both Xhosa and English cultures can be a father or mother or both. Naming among the Basotho is similar to that of Xhosa in that the main focus is on meaning. It is imperative among Basotho that a name should be meaningful. Among the Basotho a traditional healer can also give a name. This occurs when a newly born child cries and has sleepless nights.

According to the Basotho tradition or culture, this implies that the child is crying for a name. In such a case, a traditional healer will be consulted. He or she will throw the bones and predict a name that should be given to the child. Then the traditional healer will give the newly born child a name which is called 'leina la badimo' (name of gods/ancestors). Therefore, the child will be called by that name, it is believed that the persistent cry will stop.

Monnig (1967: 105) says the Pedi consider the name of a person to be much more than a mere appendage by which a person is addressed. It is an integrated part of the person, a reflection of his or her personality of his or her whole being, and is coloured with his or her spirit. When a person receives a new status he also receives a new name to signify that he or she is now a new person.

Du Preez (1997:68) confirms, by saying that "names of most black people have a specific meaning, usually related to something that happened, either when the mother was pregnant or during the birth of the child. These names are used by the family members and the people of that community, and are used mainly at home. When the child starts schooling, he or she is given a new name. Mbiti (1990: 115) observe that African names have meaning. Mbiti further says that some names may mark the occasion of the child's birth. For instance, the following female names are related to particular events:

- The name of Mmapula or Motlalepula-in seroka that literally means "mother" of rain or someone who comes with rain' denotes that the child was born on a rainy day.

- Mmataseleng or Mmatseleni-in seroka which literally means someone who is always on the road will denote that the child is born when the parents were on a journey.
- Mmatsie that means that the child was born during the time where there was a locust plague.

### **Female names related to bad events**

Dikeledi, which means 'tears' means that the child was born on or after a period of mourning. Mmasello, Mmalehu, Madimabe etc, are female names that relate to bad events. Most of the names among the Basotho people start with the prefix 'Mma' meaning mother. Names like Mmabotse, Mmabatho, Mmapelo and Mmakoma are examples of such names.

Matsimela (1997:31).Among the Northern Sotho speaking communities in the BaPhalaborwa area, the naming ceremony is not held on a specific day, but the name is given shortly after the child is born. The naming is done by grandparents and very rarely by parents (Barbara & Jurgens 1986: 105). The naming ceremony is sometimes done with the assistance of a traditional healer.

### **Literal names**

Some of the names given to children carry literal meaning. A child with the name Mona (jealous) carries a message to those who were jealous of the parents before the birth.

In Phalaborwa, a Sotho name like 'Molatela'(from the mother Mmamolatela) signifies second to the elder sister or also second wife, especially when the younger sister is married by the husband of the elder sister. Khomotso (console), Lethabo (joy) and Dipolelo (talks) are some of the names that have literal meanings (BBC News Africa, 2004). A name is an essential component of the spiritual anatomy of a human being. Without a name a human being does not exist. The name of a person is intimately tied to the purpose for which God or the ancestors have fashioned the owner. The

research investigates the validity of these statements with regard to the situations among Basotho or the Northern Sotho speaking people in Phalaborwa.

Neethling (2000: 58) emphasizes that a significant feature of the naming process is that generally speaking, naming is not restricted to certain gifted or possibly experienced individuals, but that it could rather be seen as an extremely common activity in which many individual groups in any given society participate. Any individual may name an entity and hence the possibility of creativity in naming is large. However the potential problem could be that many chosen names could at time be interpreted as inexplicable, inappropriate or in severe cases offensive. Given Neethling's framework, it comes as no surprise that the economical, sociological, and cultural importance of names will form the focal point of this research project.

In his work, Neethling (2000) concentrates on naming patterns. According to him naming can be influenced by personal considerations such as naming a place according to one's personal circumstances or naming it after an existing suburb, street or farm. Neethling also reveals that there are names that are inspired by view or location as well as those which are inspired by literature or films.

Jenkins, et al (1967:97) says that a personal name should not be given to geographical features unless such application is in the public interest. The person commemorated should have contributed significantly to the area where the feature is located, when such a name is applied, it should normally be given posthumously. The adoption of a personal name during the lifetime of the person concerned should only be made in exceptional circumstances.

Moog (2004) says a name without an emotional, non-verbal association is virtually useless, and that it will not be retained in the mind of the target audience. She maintains that there is a symbiotic relationship between a name and its non-verbal correlative. This refers to that which is evoked emotionally, visually and symbolically by a particular name. The sears battery brand name Diehard that is slang for someone who will never give up is a good example. A symbiotic relationship is immediately generated, linking the name, its being a stubborn, tenacious, alive person and the product. According to Moog (2004) a brand name is

dead in the water without that emotional connective tissue. If it is just a word floating out there nothing attached to it will not be remembered. It will not stand for or embody anything.

Erland (2001) also mentioned that a child could be given a name that is connected to the important happenings before or immediately after birth. He also indicates that sometimes children are given names related to serious diseases with the aim that the child would be protected from those diseases.

Mokgokong (2004) also provides that naming enables one to know and understand the word. She focused on the naming practices and patterns. Amongst others, the following formed the core of her study: commemorative or honorific names, historical names, telegraphical names and the names that have been influenced by religion.

Chao (1983) mentions that in his village Pai-tang, a child's father chooses a name for the baby that is traditionally known as his milk-name. For the first few years of a child's life, the young one bears a baby or milk name. He says that this is generally chosen with reference to the time of his birth or to personal peculiarity. He has given this own personal case as an example: the milk name ("Liu chin" (six pounds)) is chosen because this was his weight at birth. He also mentions that the milk name is retained until the boy or girl goes to school when his other personal name is chosen.

## CHAPTER 3

### OVERVIEWING OF NAME GIVING

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher dwells much on the overview of name giving and their meanings. Every society has its own culture and its own practices of name giving. People from different cultural or traditional perspectives use diverse patterns or approaches in naming their children. With regard to this, Mbiti (1990: 115) says that the naming of children is therefore an important occasion that is often marked by ceremonies in many societies. African names are not just given to a person or individual but are also meaningful. A name is a word or words by which something is known. Therefore, it is used for identification and classification purposes. Nothing exists unless it has a name. (Naba, <http://www.theearthcenter.com/ffarchivivesdento.html.15/11/2004>).

Names bring clarity during communication or when analyzed. Therefore, names are tools that are used during communication to distinguish individuals, as without names there would be communication breakdown. As such, human or personal names are important for identification purposes. Ntsan'wisi (1988: 57) supported the topic by saying that "Each and every person has a name that he or she is being called with so that all people can be able to differentiate him/her from other people".

On the other hand, Charles (1973: 81) stresses that "in Africa, African cultural life, the name that a person gets goes far beyond merely identifying and distinguishing that person from other people".

In this chapter, various aspects, such as names given at birth, family names, character names, praise names, nicknames and marital names, are discussed according to beliefs as well as names given at the initiation school and during or after marriage.

### 3.2 NAMES GIVEN AT BIRTH

Birth names are the names children receive immediately after birth. In the family, names are given after one another. Names are not just given randomly; hence, grandparents, aunts and uncles are the ones responsible for the giving of names. Mbiti (1990: 107) says the birth of a child is, therefore, the concern not only of the parents but of many relatives, including the living and the departed. Amongst the Ba-Phalaborwa, most children are given names at birth as it is a common practice in general. Every child is not born by mistake. Mbiti (1990) further says:

Nature brings the child into the world, but the society creates the child into a social being, for it is the family which must protect the child, feed them, bring them up, educate the child and in many ways incorporate the child into the wider community.

The Ba-Phalaborwa have a reason to name their children immediately after birth. They believe that the name will protect the child as she or he grows. Matsimela (1997: 31) mentioned that '*ngwana o phela go ya ka leina leo a reilwego lona*', meaning that a child lives according to the name he or she has been given. Another reason being that the child would thereby live under divine protection. Charles (1973: 10) says that a name is more than a label or a mere arrangement of sounds and letters. To give the child a name at birth is to prevent other people from being confused with others, and so, naming a child at birth becomes a serious business.

### 3.3 FAMILY NAMES (LEINA LA KGORO)

Family names are names that are suitable for that particular family. The family names were essentially a genealogical history of the family, where one generation was connected to another (<http://www.myrand.org/meaning-e.htm>). Amongst the Ba-Phalaborwa, there are also family names the following names are family names that are likely to be found in the family of Malatji:

#### **Male names:**

*Matome, Mogale, Masilo and Maile*

#### **Female names:**

*Mokgadi, Maite, Moore and Mosebudi*

Of utmost importance about family names is that the family wants to retain the names of their grandparents. It is the belief of the Ba-Phalaborwa that if you give your child the name of your ancestors, the grandparents who are dead will protect the life of the child. As Matsimela (1997) stresses that the child lives according to the name he or she has given. For example, if *Matome* bears children, in every family of his children the name *Matome* must be given to one of their children. The Ba-Phalaborwa concoct a method of giving names. The namegivers who are the ones to give names, know very well about the family names and the sequence usually is done in consultation with a traditional healer (sometimes the children cry for names). According to Matsimela (1997: 40), the choice of names is intricate. It is expected that an eldest son in the family should name his first son after his father and his first daughter after his mother. With regard to the naming pattern employed by the Ba-Phalaborwa, Sebashe (2007: 134) has this to say:

**Naming a boy:**

1 <sup>st</sup> son	=	Father's father
2 <sup>nd</sup> son	=	Mother's father
3 <sup>rd</sup> son	=	Father's oldest brother
4 <sup>th</sup> son	=	Father's second oldest brother
5 <sup>th</sup> son	=	Father's third oldest brother

**3.4 CHARACTER NAMES (*MAINA A SEMELO*)**

Character names are given to a person and are in concord with or portray his/her character or behaviour. These are names that are given after a certain character is shown by the child and also expresses the moral qualities of an individual. For example, the name '*Mantwa*' comes from the noun '*ntwa*' which means war thus the child is named *Mantwa*. The name *Mantwa* can be given to either a girl or a boy, as long as that child has a fighting character.

The following character names are pertinent amongst the Ba-Phalaborwa:

*Mathaithai* (Troublesome)

The person is named *Mathaithai* because of his or her character of being not faithful.

*Malobise* (Unfaithful)

The person is given this name that shows that he or she is of an unfaithful character or that she/ he is someone who does not honour promises or deals.

*Mponeng* (Show-off)

The person is given the name because of his or her show-off character.

*Mathata* (Problems)

The name is given to a person who is too problematic.

*Ditshego* (Eversmiling)

The person is given the name *Ditshego*, which means eversmiling, because of his or her behaviour of being smiling all the time.

Molefe (2001: 1-3) in the novel entitled *Ke Nako Yaka* describes a woman called *Dipherefere*, which means chillis or (hot one), because is a character name that refers to someone who emphasizes when talking, without considering other people's feelings. Such names are usually given to women because women are victims of such characters. Moswane (1997: 43-50) describes the man called '*Kgwara*' (problematic). The man was too problematic to his family; his behaviour was not acceptable to his family. Duckling (1983: 57) supports the above mentioned views by Molefe (2001) and Moswane (1997) when stressing that many people believe that everyone who bears a particular name will grow up to have the same characteristics. The names mentioned above describe the behaviour of the named. Unlike birth names, character names are not given immediately when the child is born, given that the character of the child can only be seen when the child is growing.

### **3.5 PRAISE NAMES/ TOTEM NAMES (*MAINATHETO*)**

Praise names are names given to children in the family in order to praise them, and also to express the feeling of beauty or greatness. Praise names refer to the names that are full of respect and dignity. These names are given to the child immediately when the child is born. Praise names are divided into two categories viz. praise

names for males and those for females. The following examples of praise names are prevalent amongst the Ba-Phalaborwa:

**Female praise names:**

*Mologadi*

The name *Mologadi* is a female praise name. The child is named after one of her grandmothers. The ancestors feel much respected by the living one.

**Male praise names:**

*Hlabirwa*

It is a male praise name, usually given to the boys at birth. It is common practice among Bapedi to name their children after their relatives. They want to keep someone's name alive. Such name is carried from one generation to another so that the person honoured can always be remembered.

*Phogole*

*Phogole* is also a praise name suitable for male. The name shows respect to the child, as the child is named after the grandparent who died long ago. This practice is still used amongst other cultures today, for example 'Bapedi' from Sekhukhuneland.

The meaning behind praise names is to respect the person whom the child is named after. Giving a person a poetic name is not the same as giving a person any other name. The older aunt, who is the one responsible for name giving, will also accompany the name by a poem so as to strengthen the name. The poetic (praise) name Serobane is relevant in this regard as an example:

*Serobane*

*'Ke nna Serobane sa Ramogale,*

*Sa go roba dingwe mekokotlo.*

*Ke nna mosesenyane,*

*A rego mošemane nna ke sa gola*

*Ke sa logelwa difoto.'*

'My name is *Serobane* from *Ramogale*,

The one who burns others spinal cord  
I am slender,  
Who says boys, I am still growing,  
They are still making me something to wear.'

### 3.6 NICKNAMES

A nickname is defined in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1996) as a familiar or humorous name given to a person instead of or as well as his real name. De Klerk and Bosch (1996: 95), as cited in Sebashe (2007: 160), have this to say with regard to nicknaming:

Nicknames are required informally, and they provide name-users and name givers with a far greater range of freedom in manipulating and binding the usual naming conventions of society. Such names offer rare examples of using language creatively in accordance with a logic that is not laid down from outside; they are a means of displaying linguistic license, of breaking the rules freely and getting away with it. They are an escape vent to creativity, and an avenue for the expression of some of the pure enjoyment that the sounds of words can give.

Nicknames are names given to an individual due to a habit he/she has formed or due to things he/she usually says or does or even because of his/her appearance. According to nicknaming, *The New Book of Knowledge* volume 13/n; 1992: 7), "The word nickname comes from an old English term 'an akename' which was shortened to 'nekename'. The word 'eke' meant additional, so, an akename, or nickname is an extra name".

A nickname is an extra name to the real name of a person (Nziyane, 2004). Nicknames can be positive or mockful.

It is an informal name that can be given to a person anytime. Children can be given nicknames at homes by parents or relatives, at school by his or her teachers or classmates, at work by his or her colleagues, in the community by his peers and friends. In some cases, nicknames can be a formal name for example, if a parent nickname his/her child 'Kgadi' and the child's real name is 'Mokgadi', and the two names appear on the birth certificate because names on the birth certificate are the formal names.

Nicknames are based on the following categories:

### **3.6.1 Nicknames based on physical characteristics**

These are names that children are given through their physical character. For example:

- *Raihlwana* (One eye)

The person is given this name because he has one eye.

- *Mantsho/Monyamane* (Blacky)

The name is given to a person who is pitch black in colour.

- *Ditsebe* (Big ears)

A person is given the name because of his/her big ears.

- *Nkhirikhisana/Mokopana* (Shorty)

A person is given the name because of his/her shortness stature.

- *Makhura* (Fats)

This nickname is also given to a person who is fat.

### **3.6.2 Nicknames based on the behaviour/ habit of a person**

- *Lenala* (thief) or *lenong* (black eagle)

A person is given the name because of his behaviour of stealing.

- *Mmatseleng/Lenawana* (foot)

A person is given this name because he/she likes to walk.

- *Mathinyane* (not attending school regularly)

A person is given this name because of the behaviour of not attending school regularly.

- *Maratahelele* (person who likes rumours)

This is also a nickname given to a person who likes gossiping about other people.

- *Kgwara* (Problematic person)

A person is given this name because of his problematic character. Moswane (1997: 53) says '*Kgwara*' is a nickname given to the son of a chief who did not want to obey the rules of his father.

- *Boleta* (soft person)

This name is given to a person who is soft by nature. Molefe (2001: 6), in his book talks about '*boleta*', which means soft, as a person who is soft to his family and even to the community at large.

### **3.6.3 Names given when getting married**

Marital names are names given to a woman when upon getting married. When woman get married is given new names due to the acquisition of her new status. In some cultures, like that of Ba-Phalaborwa, a bride is officially given a new name by the mother-in-law or sister-in-law (*kgadi*) during the wedding ceremony. The meaning behind the wedding name is to welcome the woman officially and to make her to be part and parcel of the family. Such names encourage the newly married woman to bear children, hence they start with the prefix '*Mma*', which means 'mother' in English. The following examples are evident in this regard:

*MmaMatome, MmaMolatela, MmaMokgadi, MmaMotšatši, MmaMoyagabo* and *MmaNgwako*.

Names that are mentioned above are wedding names. For example, when *MmaNgwako* bears a first child, if it is a boy, he will be named *Ngwako*. If it happens that a woman bears a girl instead of a boy, she will retain the name until *Ngwako* is born in the family. In some cases, wherein a woman cannot bear children, the woman will maintain the name. Regarding marriage, Mbiti (1990: 113) asserts that:

Marriage is not fully recognized until the wife has given birth. First pregnancy becomes the final seal of marriage, the sign of complete integration of woman into her husband's family and kinship circle.

Unhappy is the woman who fails to get children for whatever other qualities she might possess, the failure to get children is worse than committing genocide. She has become the dead of human life, not only for the genealogical line but also for herself. When the woman dies, there will be nobody for her own immediate blood to remember her; she will simply be forgotten.

### **3.6.4 Names given for a reason of some kind/ Names based on circumstances that took place during the child's birth**

#### **Females Names**

The following names are likely to be given under the following circumstances.

#### *Dikeledi* (Tears)

This name might be given to a child who was born when either the father or the mother passed away after birth or if the mother had miscarried the previous pregnancy. And the name could either be *Dikeledi* to signify that the family was still mourning the loss of the previous one/ pregnancy or be named *Khomotšo*, which means stop lamenting/ mourning, symbolizing that the newly born child has brought happiness in the family.

#### *Madimabe* (Bad Blood)

In this case, the child might have been born where there is death in the family or for some other kinds of misfortune.

#### *Mphapantši* (What kind of misfortune)

In this case, the named child is born when there is death in the family.

#### *Kedibone* (What kind of misfortune)

The mother might have experienced serious problems during pregnancy, such as being divorced while pregnant or having had poor health condition.

#### *Mmataseleng* (traveller)

The name is given to the child whose mother experienced some problems in her family during pregnancy, such as to be chased by the husband from time to time. Sometimes the mother gives birth on the way to the place of birth.

*Mapula* (Mother rain)

The child may be called 'Mapula' or 'Modupi' from *pula* which means rain or *modupi*, which means soft rain. The child is born when there is rain (Mönnig, 1988).

*Ngwanangwako* (child of the house)

The child born after the death of an elder brother or sister (Mönnig, 1988).

### **Male Names:**

*Sello* (Mourning)

In this case, the child is given the name 'Sello', which means mourning. The child might have been born when there was death in the family.

*Mohlolo* (miracles)

The family might have experienced a difficult situation, such as the mother having been involved in a car accident while pregnant, with the child surviving, or the mother having passed away during parturition.

*Mathata* (Problem)

The name is given to the child whose mother experience serious problems during pregnancy, such as being divorced while pregnant.

*Ganetšang* (Refuse)

The child is given the name because the father denied the pregnancy.

*Tšhegofatšo* (Blessing)

The parents wish and hope that the child will be a blessing to them and also for everyone in the community.

*Mpho* (Gift)

The parent has the belief that the child is a gift from God; usually if they are Christians, and a gift from the ancestors; if they fall for African Traditional Religion. They thank God/ ancestors for giving them a child.

*Thabang* (Rejoice)

The child is named '*Thabang*', which means Rejoice, because the parents waited for a long time looking for a child.

*Lerato* (Love)

The child brings love to the parents, as they have waited for a long time to have a child, but at last God has given them.

*Phetole* (Reply)

The parents, through prayer had God giving them a child and they name him/her *Phetolo*, which means 'Reply' or 'Answer'. This also happened to Sarah, the wife of Abraham, when God promised them a child. Sarah was full of joy and laughter (Gen 2:6).

### **3.6.5 Names based on beliefs**

These are the names that are based on the belief of people. Belief is to have the feeling that something is real and true (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*). There are names that people believe that if one names the child, the child will live. The Ba-Phalaborwa people believe that ancestors who are dead will protect the life of the child (Matsimela, 1997).

Most of the belief names are given after the animals. The tone must not be changed; it must be exactly the same as the one used when we call animals. The following serve as examples in this regard:

- *Nakedi* (Wild Mongoose)

The child is given the name '*Nakedi*', which means 'Wild Mongoose' for the reason that the parents had some miscarriages one after another. They believe that if they give him/her the name maybe the child will not die. The lives of Africans centred on belief system (Malegapuru, 1999: 16).

- *Tšhwene* (Baboon)

Ba-Phalaborwa believe that after experiencing several deaths of children, the surviving child should be named Tšhwene (Baboon). The name Tšhwene is an animal name. The belief is that the child will survive.

- *Kgabo* (Monkey)

Kgabo is a belief name given to a child. Parents give their children this kind of name not to mean that they do not love their children. It is believed that if you name your child something that is worthless, the child will survive. Matsepe (1982: 19) says that animal names are also names of people for some reasons. It is also the belief among parents around Phalaborwa to name their children after a venerated character of the past in the hope that the child will inherit the qualities of the namesake.

There is another belief that when the child cries several times more especially during the night, names of the living, the dead and also of animal names should be given to that child. The child will be called by different names, and if the child stops crying when a particular name is called out, then the child receives that name.

### **3.6.6 Names given at the initiation school**

*Leina la koma*/ initiation name is given to a child when she/he returns from the initiation school. Ba-Phalaborwa boys or girls adopt new names in the initiation school. They claim that '*koma*' is part and parcel of their culture or the children are newly born or welcomed into another phase/ stage of life where they will gain certain treatment that is different from that of '*mašoboro*' le '*mathumaša*'. From that time onwards, they are also expected to play or talk like responsible person.

The following initiation names are pertinent amongst Ba-Phalaborwa:

#### **Males**

- *Maripane* (Good cutter)

The name signifies that the person is good at cutting.

- *Timang* (To avoid argument)

The name signifies that the person is a peace maker where there is an argument.

- *Modiša* (Shepherd)

The name signifies that the person is good at looking after people, more especially to people who are disabled.

### **Females**

- *Sethadi* (Decorator)

The name is given to a female initiate who is good at decorating. For example, decorating the houses with cow dung and also using different colours of soil.

- *Mmapitša* (Pot)

The name signifies that the person is good at cooking.

- *Sešomi* (Worker)

The name signifies that the person is a hard worker.

The Ba-Phalaborwa still believe that their children will gain '*bonna*', which means manhood, or '*bosadi*', which means womanhood. During this time, girls are taught how to fetch water and wood; and how to sweep and clean the surrounding. The initiates are called '*dikgopa*.' Boys are taught how to hunt and fight. In this school, they are also given names that signify the bearer's adulthood stage. On the third day, activities involved in include giving each of the circumcised boys a secret name. The name the initiate receives from the initiation school would be only called by those from the same '*Mphato*' (class). The initiates are called by their new names all the time, especially by the uncircumcised. The name is kept forever. All boys or girls who are in the same '*mphato*', meaning 'class', are called '*dithaka*', meaning peers. Attendance is compulsory for all youths of the appropriate age (Mönnig, 1988: 66).

If the child had not gone through initiation school, he/she cannot participate fully in the life of the community. For example, the child is not allowed to assist in the burials and other duties in the community. The belief behind initiation school is that the child is ready to be incorporated into the activities and responsibilities of incorporated manhood or womanhood; Mbiti (1990: 117) affirms this stage when he states that "it now passes from the period of ignorance to one of knowledge, from the

state of being a passive member of the community, to the new state of being an active and responsible member of the corporate society”.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

It is a common practice among Ba-Phalaborwa that children should be given names immediately after birth. Names are very much important as people will be able to differentiate one from others. Traditionally, children are given names by their grandparents, aunts and uncles, several aspects are considered before a name is given to the child. African names are not just for identification but are also meaningful.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE NAMING CEREMONIES AND THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher focuses much on the naming ceremonies and the role of the ancestors. The ceremonies refer to the formal event performed with dignity and solemnity. Chidester (1992: 12) regards ancestors as relatives who had died; yet continue to show interest in their surviving descendants. Ceremonies are performed to unite the living and the dead. In the African context, the ancestors are powerful because they have the power to bless the family with children and food, and to protect them from sickness and other evil powers.

#### 4.2 BIRTH CEREMONY

During this ceremony, elderly people gather and give the child a name. The ritual that is performed in that ceremony is called namegiving. Ceremony at birth of a child is very much important. This is the reason why, for a specific period immediately after birth, not everybody is allowed into the room where the mother and the baby are. It is a common practice among the Ba-Phalaborwa people that during this ceremony they slaughter a goat or cow. They also use blood to inform the ancestors that the child is born in the family.

At this ceremony, they inform their ancestors to protect them and also to bless them. According to Monnig (1988: 99), says that during the ceremony, the child is washed with cool water, which contains certain healing and purifying herbs. This is performed immediately after birth as a token of welcoming the newly born baby. He further says all men and impure women, i.e., pregnant, sexually active and menstruating women, are not allowed to enter as they endanger themselves, the mother and the baby.

##### 4.2.1 Namegiving

Namegiving is the ritual that is performed in that ceremony. Normally in Phalaborwa, the birth of a child occurs at home. Grandparents and relatives are invited to come and rejoice with the parents of the child. By so doing, the Ba-Phalaborwa are

celebrating the arrival of the child including the ceremony of '*go reela leina*' meaning naming the child. During that ceremony, a cow is slaughtered. The blood of those animals will serve as a way of informing the ancestors that the child is born.

The details of what follows immediately after childbirth vary widely from one society to the other. Mbiti (1990: 110) stresses that in some societies the child may not be given its mother's milk until rituals of purification have been performed. Mbiti (1990: 111) goes on to say that "among the Akamba, when a child is born, the parents slaughter a goat or bull on child is now belonging to the entire community and is no longer the property of one person".

The methods of giving names to children differ from one different part of Africa to the other. Mbiti (1990: 114) says the Wolof name their children one week after birth. For that occasion, friends and relatives of the family concerned are informed beforehand, and if it is the first child a large gathering takes place. The ceremony is performed where the birth occurred, and starts just before noon. Visitors and guests bring presents, women given present to the child's mother and men to the father. According to Mbiti (1990:111), the Shona of Zimbabwe have no special ceremony for naming their children. The Ba-Phalaborwa believe much in the naming ceremony, the reason being that the child is joined together with the ancestors. Monning (1967: 116) emphasizes that ceremonies join both the living and the dead or ancestors.

#### **4.2.2 Protection rituals**

Protection ritual is done before the child is seen outside the house. Protection ritual is done on the body of the child. Monning (1967: 118) says the Pedi people use (*serokolo*) medicine to rub their hands before carrying the child. He goes onto say that this medicine must be also used by those that lost their loved ones before carrying the child. The abovementioned views are supported by Matsimela (1997: 118) when he confirms thus:

Before the child is seen outside the house the ritual (*go aga ngwana*) meaning to built or protects the child is performed. In this case, a traditional healer is called to come and do the duty. The parents of the child slaughter a cow or goat and its blood is used to inform their ancestors to protect the child.

This is also stressed by Van Wyk (1999: 116) when he says that ancestors protect their people against evil and destructive forces.

The favour of the ancestors can be regained through sacrifices, rituals and offerings. Traditional African people believe that illness and misfortune can be caused by malevolent people, such as witches and sorcerers. Ba-Phalaborwa believe that protection ritual will protect their children against evil things. Ba-Phalaborwa use razor-blade to cut the skin of the child and put muti which means medicine, by so doing the child will be protected

#### **4.2.3 The child's special meal ceremony**

In this ceremony, a child's first meal is mixed with 'muti', which means medicine, to help the child not to have constipation. The Ba-Phalaborwa people also practice the ceremony that is known as the child special meal. The parents of the child visit the herbalist, who will give them the relevant medicine or muti to the child. The mother will cook '*motepa*' that is soft porridge, and mix with muti and give it to the child. The mother also will eat the very same meal with the child. The belief that the muti will help them to be connected because the child is sucking the milk from the mother. Mbiti (1990: 115) emphasises that the Akan people, before the child is given the first meal, the traditional healer give them the muti and mix with the soft porridge.

#### **4.2.4 Tatoo making**

Tatoo making is the last ceremony from birth of the child. Ba-Phalaborwa believes in protecting the child against illness that can disturb the life of the child. According to Mönning (1967: 122) a traditional healer is called in the family to vaccinate the child against illnesses that are caused by the witches. The parents of the child will hand the child to *ngaka* (traditional healer) and thereafter the traditional healer will cut the skin of the child, putting muti inside. At that moment, the parents will be having '*kgogo ye tshweu*' which means white chicken. The traditional healer, whom the family believes can see into the future, will slaughter the chicken and use the blood to inform the ancestors to protect the child against illness. Parents will be given some orders that the child should not bathe for the period of three days.

### 4.3 INITIATION CEREMONY

This is the ritual that marks the movement into adult status. Goetz (1990: 112) defines puberty stage as the stage period of life when a child transforms into an adult, normally capable of procreation. Initiation at the same time marks the passage to adulthood and invests the initiate with the citizenship of the community, and in the case of males, they have the right to participate in political and jural functions.

Traditionally, a woman in Ba-Phalaborwa culture becomes dignified by passing the initiation school that played an important role in instructing mannerism. Monnig (1967: 64) defines initiation ceremony as rites of passage underlying an important change in life. When the girls reach puberty stage, they undergo '*kgopha*' ritual in order to prepare them for womanhood. The initiation of the girls takes place after the girl's first menstruation. *Kgopha*, which denotes the initiates, is a ritual ceremony for the girls who reach puberty stage. The *kgopha*, which means initiation for girls, is done inside the village wherein everybody in the village can see them while going to fetch some firewood. The child may undergo hardships and difficulties of some kind. Kgatla (2003: 11) says some children do not survive during this period, but those who survive are regarded as full adults of the society and acquire new names.

On the side of the boys, the Ba-Phalaborwa, generally have initiation ceremony that comprises two stages, a circumcision school called "*bodika*" and another school called '*bogwera*', which is no longer practiced among the Ba-Phalaborwa. The boys are circumcised according to rank or status in *koma ya bodika* which means school for circumcision. Monnig (1967: 67) says *koma* (initiation school) is arranged by the chief and his councilors, including the traditional healers who oversee the school in a spiritual manner. The traditional healer is responsible for the healing of the initiates and their protection thereof.

Initiation presents another form of cleansing to both men and women. The initiation school in the Ba-Phalaborwa is done far from the villages, sometimes is in the mountains or in the confluence of two rivers. The one to be initiated first is the chief's son. With regard to this practice Mönning (1988: 14) agrees thus "that is a normal practice that the young chief should always be the first in a line of boys to be circumcised, which is a sign that he is a future leader".

Before the end of '*bodika*', they receive names. After the naming process is finalised, the chief and the traditional healer will announce the date when the '*bodika*' will end. On the final morning, the initiates wash off the white colouring with which they were decorated throughout the process. The importance of the white colouring or ash is to keep the initiates warm during the night. The day before the initiation is over, all fathers of the initiates are invited to come and prepare their boys. This is emphasized by Chedester (1992: 21) that each father cuts his son's hair and give him a loincloth in recognition of his newly acquired manhood.

The boy's bodies are covered with a mixture of fat and '*letsoku*', which means red ochre. This is also practiced amongst the Ba-Phalaborwa, boys and girls bodies are covered with red ochre. At this stage, they are known as '*dialoga*', which means survivors. As Kgatla (2003: 11) stresses, some children are not lucky or skilled enough to survive this period. They are lined up in rank order and ceremonially lashed for the last time. After this, all the initiates march off without looking back while the traditional healer sets fire on the '*koma*' initiation compound. All the initiates arrive at the chief's place and thereafter they will split to their respective homes. Every family will be preparing for this ceremony. A cow or goat is slaughtered and also a traditional beer is prepared for the arrival of the initiate. Relatives and people from the community will come and rejoice with the family for the survival of their child. Chedester (1992: 36) says that "if a person wants to talk with the initiate, he or she must give him a certain amount of money or present of some sort and kneel down so that the initiate will bit you at the back; it is a sign of acceptance".

Food and traditional beer are prepared for every person who attends that ceremony. People will dance and sing and celebrate with them.

It is the tradition of the Ba-Phalaborwa that the initiate should remain with red ochre at least two to three days. After that, the initiates will go to the river to wash themselves and come out from the river wearing new clothes and also with new names. Again a goat is slaughtered at home to welcome the initiates, and with the blood of the animal they will give thanks to their ancestors for protecting their child.

#### 4.4 MARRIAGE CEREMONY

The marriage ceremony can be viewed as one event among others in the sacramental life of each spouse. It is the rite of passage that places the young man in position to establish his heart, to become master of the house (De Coppet, 1992: 63). The marriage ceremonies display separation, transition and incorporation. For example, marriage ceremonies in Phalaborwa, relatives and friends of the couples mingle together, symbolizing the restructuring of the relationship about their marriages.

Traditionally among Ba-Phalaborwa, a date is set on which the bride will be taken to her bridegroom's home. It is the custom of the Ba-Phalaborwa that the hosting family will slaughter a cow and prepare African beer to welcome the visitors. In the morning, the bride will sit inside the hut. At that moment, a bridal name will be announced to her and after that the present will be given to her. The paternal parents and relatives will call her by the new name.

De Beer (1994: 154) stresses that marriage is accompanied by a religious ceremony during which they slaughter a goat and offer a prayer to the ancestors on behalf of the bride. Ancestors are informed by pouring some blood, the members of the two families and the community at large gather to witness the marriage. Marriage is more than a relationship between individuals. Marriage (*lenyalo*) among Ba-Phalaborwa is not an individual affair, but a group's concern, legalizing a relationship between two groups of relatives. Magubane (1998: 129) says that marriage is a legal act in which the relatives of the groom publicly transfer certain material goods (*magadi*) to the relative of the bride.

All societies have certain requirements that the individuals must follow in order to qualify for marriage. In addition, all societies recognize certain restrictions concerning the choosing of marriage partners. Chedester (1992: 44) says that among the Pedis, parents often arrange for the future marriage of their children. Another example is given by Mbiti (1990: 135) when saying that "in some other society the bridegroom and his party must fight the bride's in order to get her. This fight may only be symbolic, but blood is at times shed in course of the struggle".

Mbiti further says that in other societies, the boy takes the girl so that they live together until she bears a child, and thereafter the wedding rites are performed.

The traditional ceremony is still practised by the Ba-Phalaborwa. At the girl's departure from her home, a sacrifice is made, and she formally takes leave of her family and their ancestral spirits. After a marriage feast at the bridegroom's place, the couple are considered formally married. According to Magubane (1998: 96) marriage ceremony cements relationships between the two families. Among Ba-Phalaborwa, choosing a partner is straightforward. The man and a woman will first agree to each other. The man will give the woman a ring or something tangible as a proof that she agreed with the man. Thereafter, the man will talk to his father and arrange someone to deliver the message to the family of the woman, where the man will be charged with '*lobola*'. This time the '*lobola*' can be in the form of money. After all this process is finished, it is then that they will arrange for the marriage ceremony. The aim of the marriage ceremony is to bring the two families together in a mutual agreement.

The bride will stay with her mother-in-law until such time, the husband's younger brother gets married. Magubane (1998: 97) stresses that after her marriage, she stays with her mother-in-law, to help her mother-in-law with her daily duties and with cooking the food. She sometimes moves into her own place after the birth of the first child. Before they begin with their own homestead, some rituals need to be performed. They will slaughter a white chicken, and by its blood, ancestors will be informed and a plea to made them to protect them and also the new house.

#### **4.5 DEATH CEREMONY**

In most societies, death is marked by elaborate ritual. Kgatla (2003: 15) points out that the passage at death is, like wise, given the attention of rituals, at the time of death, during and sometimes after the funeral. The death of one member of the family causes all relatives to become ritually unclean and hence a cleansing ritual is performed at different times of the day, over a number of months. When supporting the abovementioned view, Mönnig (1988: 141) says that:

All the relatives affected by the death are considered to be in condition of darkness. According to the culture of Ba-Phalaborwa, when someone dies in the family, all the affected members gather together and slaughter a white chicken to inform the ancestor to accept the soul of their members who died.

The woman whose husband passed away will be called by the new name '*mohlologadi*', which means 'widow'. In case of a woman, the man will be named '*mohlolo*', which means 'widower'.

Most Africans believe that whenever death occurs, an enemy has caused it. There is no natural death in the African culture. Mbiti (1975: 11) says when someone dies, people often go to find out who used sorcery, witchcraft or magic against the dead person. Even today, death ceremony is also practiced in Phalaborwa. For example, if a woman loses her husband, she is expected to cut her hair off immediately after the burial. This is the first stage of cleansing that applies to the whole family. Another thing is the washing of hands after a funeral service. The Ba-Phalaborwa, today still practice the ceremony of washing hands before entering the deceased's homestead after burial.

In some religions, instead of washing hands, the mourners are sprinkled with holy water. Myburg (1981: 122) mention that the cleansing rite is necessary to remove the dangerous powers, often represented as impurity, released by contact with the corpse. The woman is culturally regarded as one of darkness and ritual impurity. The widow wears black clothes throughout her mourning period. It sometimes takes a year or one year six months. People in the community will regard her as '*o silafetse*', meaning that she is defiled, and can thus contaminate other with '*makgoma*', which means contamination. The elderly people in the family will tell the widow what to do and what not to do during her period of mourning.

Death rituals start when a person is in a critical condition, relatives would be on his/her bedside. For example, the Ndebele speaking people kill an ox if someone is seriously ill to hasten death. After burial, another ox is killed as a farewell to the dead person and for food on the way (Mbiti, 1990: 145). Ba-Phalaborwa kill an ox for the funeral rites, the meat is cooked and eaten without salt. After the funeral, the widow and the children are taken to the river. Washing in the river is a ritual act of cleansing

from the pollution caused by death. At that ceremony, children are given protective medicine to drink by the traditional healer. The widow wears black clothes. A year later another ceremony is performed, which is known as '*go apola*', meaning to take off dark clothes. At that ceremony, all relatives and friends are gathered for a big festival and dancing. An ox is killed and also the traditional beer is made. The clothes of the dead person are distributed amongst the relatives of the deceased. Thereafter, presents are given to the widow. With regard to the abovementioned practices, the Ndebele speaking people differs from the Ba-Phalaborwa, as Mbiti (1990: 147) asserts that "for the Ndebele, personal belongings are buried with the body to accompany the deceased man, so that he does not find himself poor in thereafter, and he must not be robbed by the surviving relatives".

There are many, and often complicated, ceremonies connected with death. Death stands between the world of human beings and the world of spirits; between the visible and the invisible. Death is something that concerns everybody, partly because sooner or later everyone personally faces it, and partly because it brings loss and sorrows to every family and community.

#### **4.6 THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS**

Hornby (1995: 113) defines ancestor as any of the people from whom somebody is descended. Africans show much respect to their ancestors. In case of misfortunes that affect the family, such as sicknesses, the Ba-Phalaborwa people will consult a diviner or traditional healer for protection. They believe that diseases may be caused by disharmony between a person and the ancestors.

People sometimes say they see departed members of their family coming and appearing to them. In some cases, sacrifices and offerings are directed to the living dead. As Mbiti (1990: 58) mentioned, sacrifices and offerings constitute one of the commonest acts of worship among the African people. He says 'sacrifices' refer to cases where animal life is destroyed in order to present the animal to the living dead, whereas 'offerings' refer to the remaining cases that do not involve the killing of animal. For example, if a child cries extremely high for some days, it is a sign that something is wrong with the child. The members of the family will consult a diviner, who will throw his or her bones to verify the problem of the child. The diviner will

inform the family whether it is the problem of sicknesses or the child will be crying for a name. The diviner will advise the family if the child is to be named after his or her grandparents. In case of '*leina la badimo*', which means ancestral name, the family will arrange a day, and invite the closest relatives and make African beer and also buy '*badimo*' clothes. As Stearns (1981: 222) states, the name must be formally assumed by giving a feast to the ancestors.

The diviner will advise the family on who is to conduct the ancestral rites. Among the Ba-Phalaborwa '*rakgadi*', i.e., aunt is the one to conduct the ancestral rites. Ba-Phalaborwa usually performs their ancestral rites in the morning where there is nobody awake. At that time, the aunt will be busy talking to the ancestors. De Beer, (1994) says that other members of the family would respond by clapping hands together. From that day, the family will call the child by the ancestor's name.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

For the African culture, ceremonies play an important role in shaping the lives of the living ones. The ancestors protect the living ones against diseases and the witches. People give offerings to the ancestors as a sacrifice.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the interviewing of Northern Sotho speaking people residing within the Ba-Phalaborwa area. The researcher identified parents who have information about the giving of traditional names regardless of age, experience or sex. The main aim was to communicate with parents on how do people get names, and also on why people are no longer giving their children traditional names.

#### 5.2 INTERVIEWS

Dobson (1996:13) says an interview is a spoken exchange of information, usually between two people or between one person and a small group. An interview is different from an everyday 'chit-chat' type of conversation, in that it should be structured with a definite aim in mind. This exchange of information involves speaking and listening on both sides. At an interview, an interaction of ideas takes place, true feeling can be expressed and both the interviewer and the interviewee should be able to achieve their objectives before the interview ends. The researcher interviewed 10 (ten) people who are knowledgeable on the topic.

##### 5.2.1 How do people get names?

People differ according to how they get names. The researcher interviewed people who are knowledgeable about how people are given names around the Ba-Phalaborwa area. According to informants, there are differences with regard to the way they are giving names to their children. Ba-Phalaborwa people have names that have meaning. They use names as a tool to identify people from one another. Even though Ba-Phalaborwa is a multi-cultural area, people who are born and bred there are still following the norms and values of their society.

- *Motlalepula* or *Mmapula*

The name '*Motlalepula*' or '*Mmapula*' is a traditional name. It is composed of the prefix (*Mo-*), verb (*-tla*) and noun (*-pula*). It means the person comes with rain or

maybe the person was delivered during a rainy day. The name usually belongs to the females only.

- *Mmatšatši*

The name '*Mmatšatši*' is a situational name that is very common around the Ba-Phalaborwa. Ba-Phalaborwa is situated in the far east, people are experiencing very hot days during summer and less rain. Most of the girls born during summer are named '*Mmatšatši*'. The noun '*mma*' means 'mother', '*tšatši*' comes from '*letšatši*' meaning 'sun'. If the child is a male, he will be given the name '*Raletšatši*', which also signifies that the person was born during sunny day.

- *Dikeledi*

The Ba-Phalaborwa people have the belief that when something good or bad happens to them, they must do something that will always remind them. The informants reveal that '*Dikeledi*', which means 'tears', is given to children who are born when either the mother or father passes away. For boys, it will be '*Sello*', which also means 'tears'.

- *Mohlolo*

The informants said that a child is given this name when his or her mother has experienced some difficulties during pregnancy or the mother has experienced some problems with her husband during pregnancy that ended up in a divorce. The name '*Mohlolo*' means danger. After the researcher finished talking to the informants, she went home.

The next visit was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2005, whereby the researcher met two middle aged women and three old aged women. It was on Friday, and she spent the whole day communicating with them about the namegiving, more especially traditional names. The informants said that names in Phalaborwa are classified in the following ways; character names, marriage names, initiation names, praise names, family names, and they also stated that children are given names referring to circumstances that took place during the birth of the child.

The respondents also said that it is a common practice among parents to embody in name expectations they might have for that child in future. Most of the names that the

informants gave me were character names, and the names that the informants gave me are as follows:

- *Mmalenala*

Some people in the Ba-Phalaborwa area are given character names. This name is given to a person who steals. '*Lenala*' is a noun meaning 'nails'. The person uses nails to steal. The name comes after her behaviour of stealing. The name usually belongs to women, for men it will be '*Ralenala*'. He uses his nails to steal, that is why the person is called *Ralenala*'.

- *Malobiše*

The informants stated that the name '*Malobiše*' is a character name, which is given to a person who is not faithful. They said this kind of a name is given to a person who used to borrow things, more especially money, and did not return it. The informants said that the name can be given either to a male or a female.

- *Dipherefere*

The name *Dipherefere* is also a character name given to a person who is stubborn. *Pherefere* means 'chillis', which is a vegetable that is not tasty because of its bitterness. They compare the person who is stubborn with chillis. People with a bitter character always do not have peace with other people.

- *Mmantwa*

The informants also mentioned the name '*Mmantwa*' as an example of character name. They said the name is also given to a female who has a fighting character. The name '*Mmantwa*' comes from the noun '*ntwa*', which means to fight. The respondents also reveal that most of the people given the name *Mmantwa* use to separate themselves from other people. The researcher did not finish the interviews because some of them were to attend the night vigil at their neighbours. The researcher promised to see them again on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2005.

The third visit was on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2005. The researcher asked them about marriage names. One of my respondents said marriage names are strictly given to a woman who is married. According to the informants, marriage names have meaning

at Phalaborwa area. The meaning is that when the woman bears a child, he or she will be named after the mother's marriage name. They presented the following marriage names:

- *Mmamolatela*

The informants said '*Mmamolatela*' is a marriage name that is given to a woman who is married. They said '*Mmamolatela*' is not an ordinary marriage name. It has a meaning because the name itself means 'the follower'. '*Mmamolatela*' is given to a woman who followed one of her relative's married in that family. They also explained that if the woman bears the child, she would be named '*Mamolatela*'. According to the knowledge of the informants, the name is suitable for girls only.

- *Mmangwako*

The informants came with another marriage name called '*Mmangwako*'. The informants stressed that it is the culture of the Ba-Phalaborwa that married women be given new names because they are new people in that particular family. In this case, the first-born to the mother, if it is a boy, will be named '*Ngwako*'. They stated that most of the women are blessed with girls. The informants said they will reserve the name until the boy is born in that family.

- *Mmamogale*

The informants stated that '*Mmamogale*' is a marriage name that is very common in Phalaborwa. Even though many married women like the name '*Mmamogale*', the meaning behind the name is that their first born boy will be named '*Mogale*'. The informants reveal that during the marriage ceremony, different names will be called, and the woman will rise up when they call the name she likes.

It was on the 04<sup>th</sup> of December 2005 when the researcher visited the nearby village around Phalaborwa called Ga-Maseke. In this area, the researcher interviewed two old aged women who are born and bred there. The researcher visited them early in the morning, as most of the old aged people used to wake up early in the morning. The informants told the researcher about the belief names. They said Ba-Phalaborwa people use to give their children animal names, thus believing that the child will survive, for example:

- *Tšhwene*

The informants said this kind of name is given to children whose mother experienced several deaths or miscarriages, one after another. They said belief names are suitable for males and females. In the real sense, the name '*Tšhwene*' is the name of an animal, i.e., baboon. According to the old woman, the name is not suitable for human beings, but they had believed that the child will survive. So, according to the informants the name, '*Tšhwene*' can be either male or female.

- *Nakedi*

The informants explained why people name their children after animal names. They said '*Nakedi*' is also the name of an animal, i.e., wild cat. The informants said most people around Phalaborwa do not like the animal because of its smell. The informants also stressed that the name is given to human beings, hoping that they will avoid several deaths in the family. They stressed that the articulation of the name should not change, but must be pronounced the way they are pronouncing the wild cat. During the day, the informants also explained to the researcher nicknames and the praise name. They mentioned the following names as examples:

- *Ditsebe*

The informants stipulated that most of the nicknames around Phalaborwa are based on physical character. The name '*Ditsebe*', meaning big ears, is also a nickname, which is based on the physical character of a human being. In actual fact '*Ditsebe*' is not a real name, a child acquires nickname as they are growing. The informants reveal that most of the nicknames sometimes become more popular than real names. They mentioned that people with nicknames sometimes have those nicknames disappearing immediately they enter into adulthood. They said the peer group is mostly the one that popularizes nicknames.

- *Raihlwana*

The informants said that a child is given the nickname '*Raihlwana*' meaning one eye. They said the name is given to person for having one eye. In most cases, the nickname '*Raihlwana*' is suitable for males.

- *Hlogokgolo*

The informants stated the person, while growing, acquires that nickname. The informants dwell much on the nicknames that are based on the physical character of a human being. They gave an example of '*Hlogokgolo*', so called because of his or her big head. They also stressed that most people feel offended when they are called by nicknames.

- *Mologadi*

According to the informants, '*Mologadi*' is a praise name given to the children in the family, just to praise them. They stressed that praise names are full of respect and dignity. They mentioned that if a person is named '*Mologadi*', all members of the family and the relatives would respect her. *Mologadi* is a praise name given to females.

- *Hlabirwa*

The informants stressed that Ba-Phalaborwa do not call each other by their praise names. Instead they use totem names. They gave an example of '*Hlabirwa*', which is a praise name suitable for males. People who are staying at Ga-Sekhukhune area, mostly use this kind of praise name. They are praise names in order to honour their people. The informants emphasized that in Phalaborwa for most of people, their totem is '*Noko*', which is porcupine. All people where the totem is '*Noko*', they use to greet each by their totem. They also mentioned that when people are called by their totem, they feel honoured and respected. They also said that, that kind of animal should be respected and they should not eat the meat of that animal. They said that there is a belief that eating porcupine will be like eating themselves.

### **5.2.2 What are the significance of giving names?**

Normally, it is the culture of Ba-Phalaborwa that immediately a child is born, he/she must be accompanied by a name. The importance of giving names is that people should be known and differentiated from other people. The giving of names differs from one culture to the other. A person without a name means that the person does not exist. Names are important and therefore have meaning.

People are given names with meaning in them. For example, names like *Maruping*, *Mokgadi*, *Marwale*, *Molahlegi* and others have got meaning attached to them. No name is given to a person without a purpose. Some families give their children the ancestral names. They give them names of people who are dead with the aim of retaining those names. If the person is given the name of his/her ancestor, when they see the person, he or she will remind them about the person who passed long ago. The other important thing of giving names of grandparents who passed away is that ancestors have all the powers to protect the child.

There are names that people acquire when they are still growing, such names are referred to as nicknames, initiation names, and marriage names. These names are regarded as additional names to people's real names. Even if they are additional names, they have meaning. For example, the name '*Matšhipisane*' is a nickname given to a person who sells goods at low prices. According to informants, this kind of a name cannot be given at birth but at the same time that it has got meaning that is attached to a person.

According to informants, family names are very important to the life of the child. The day the child receives a name, there is a connection between the living and the dead. The connection is done through performing rituals to strengthen the name. For example:

- *Matome*

Around Phalaborwa, the name '*Matome*' is an inheritance name. It is given from one generation to the other, and according to the order in which the family is represented. The name belongs only to a specific family. In Phalaborwa, the name '*Matome*' belongs to the Malatji family and is for males.

- *Mokgadi*

*Mokgadi* is a real name, it is found only in the Pilusa family. When the person is named '*Mokgadi*' it is accompanied by the following poem:

*'Ke Mokgadi letapa go lema*

*'Go ja a phala le basomi*

*'She eats more than those who work*

The name '*Mokgadi*' is from the word '*kgadi*'. *Kgadi* has got major responsibilities in the family, such as giving children names, and to perform rituals. In any of the traditional ceremonies, if '*Kgadi*' is not available, nothing will be done. Most of the children born in the family, if the child is a girl, is named after '*kgadi*'.

### **5.2.3 The importance of name-giving rituals**

Name-giving ritual is performed after one has acquired a name. It is the custom of the Ba-Phalaborwa that a ritual should accompany name giving. Ceremonies are categorised as follows: i.e., birth ceremony, initiation ceremony and marriage ceremony.

#### **Birth Ceremony**

According to the informants, birth ceremony is still practiced amongst families in Ba-Phalaborwa. The ritual that is performed in that ceremony is called name giving. The informants stress that ceremonies at birth are very much important because the child is introduced to the ancestors at an early stage. Given that ancestors are regarded as superiors, the aim is thus to inform them that the child is born, so they should accept his/her as part of them.

Some children around Ba-Phalaborwa are given ancestral name. In this case, the child receives the name after crying for a long time. The family will visit a traditional healer to find out the problem of the child. The traditional healer will talk to his bones and come out with an answer to the parents. Some traditional healers will tell you exactly the name of your ancestors whom the child should be named after. In most cases, the traditional healer comes with an advice to the parents before throwing the bones that they should name the child after one of those who helped when coming to this kind of a problem. From the informant's information, this kind of a problem is experienced by the family who ignore the names of their parents who passes away. The belief of the Ba-Phalaborwa is that when a person passed away, his or her name should remain alive, as long as that person has got relatives who are still alive.

### **Initiation Ceremony**

Boys and girls undergo initiation school (“koma”) around Phalaborwa. Boys undergo ‘*bodika*’ and girls undergo ‘*kgopha*’. All the initiates receive the names during process of ‘*koma*’. According to the informants, boys and girls are prepared for adulthood inside the initiation school. Hence names are given to the initiates to signify the bearer’s adulthood stage.

The informants emphasize that girls undergo initiation after the first menstruation. The ceremony is performed inside ‘*koma*’ wherein the traditional healer is invited to protect the initiates by his/her muti. The chief and the traditional healer are the ones responsible for the initiates. They must see to it that children come back home being safe. After the completion of ‘*bodika*’, they come back home and they are known as ‘*dialoga*’, which means the survivors. The ceremony is still continuing, wherein most families welcome their children by slaughtering a cow or goat and invite their families to rejoice with them. At the same time, they will be making ‘*mephaso*’. In this case, the family will be thanking their ancestors for protecting their children inside the initiation school.

### **Marriage Ceremony**

It is the culture of the Ba-Phalaborwa that a woman should receive marriage name. The process of name giving is accompanied by a ceremony that is performed by elderly people. This process differs from one family to another. In some families two families, gather together when the bride receives a name. They gather around the place where they use to ‘*phasa badimo*’. The so called ‘*kgadi ya lapa*’ or any elderly people in the family will first announce the name to the bride. Names will be called one after another until the bride accepts the name. After the bride accepted the name, they all gather at the place of ‘*go phasa badimo*’ where the so called ‘*Rakgadi*’ will start talking with the ancestors while others respond by clapping hands to show that they agree with everything.

The informants also showed the importance of the name giving ritual and the danger of not informing the ancestors of the new member in the family i.e., the (bride). The danger part of it is that the bride will experience problems that may sometimes cause her to end up not blessed with children. Ba-Phalaborwa people believe that children

are blessings from the ancestors. By conducting all the process of naming rituals, they gain favour from the ancestors.

The aim of performing this ceremony of naming will help their children, who are still young, not to forget their ancestors. People ignoring the ancestors will experience some difficulties in their families. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach their children things that the ancestors need from us as human beings. This knowledge must go from one generation to the other generation.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, people should know how people are given names, the significance of name giving and the importance of name giving rituals. According to the culture of Ba-Phalaborwa, names can be given to children, but meaning should be attached. People should be encouraged to give their children traditional names.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, the researcher investigated the giving of traditional names among Ba-Phalaborwa of the Limpopo Province. In the course of this study, the researcher discovered that people are given traditional names for a purpose. It is the aim of this chapter to highlight the findings and also make some recommendations. From the beginning of the discussion of the topic, names are seen as a tool to identify people.

#### 6.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study disclosed that a name is of utmost importance as it is used for identification purposes. The researcher found that majority of people no longer give their children traditional names. It also reveals that naming involves every aspect of life, generally the approach used in naming of people varies from society to the other.

Throughout the study, one comes to the realization that traditional names are not seen as important aspect in the families around Ba-Phalaborwa. From this study, it has been discovered that respect is no more there, because when you give your child an ancestral name it means you respect them. Respect is also seen as a tool for binding the living ones together with the people who are dead. By giving children an ancestral name, the spirit of harmony will be expected to prevail in the community. Respect is, therefore, the value concept that is perceived as one of the ingredients of '*ubuntu*'.

The study reached the following findings:

- Education and religion make people to undermine their norms and standards.
- The practice of giving situational names still prevails around the Ba-Phalaborwa;
- The cause of the dying of the initiation schools is the conception that everything that is cultural is regarded as anti-christianity. From the study, it has been discovered that people are no longer interested in initiation schools, which form part of their culture. Generally, the findings reveal that most people are negative about some practices in the initiation schools; the assertion

being that there is too much brutality. Boys and girls are taught the norms and values of their culture. Norms and values prepare boys and girls for adulthood. They also acquire new names in the initiation school;

- Ba-Phalaborwa people still practise the giving of marriage names, those who do not have marriage names are the ones whose husbands did not pay *lobola* for or those that are not officially married. Phaswana shares the same view when he says that through initiation, youth in general are prepared for marriage in their tender age. Youth are thus made to understand that marriage is not a simple adventure; and
- The Ba-Phalaborwa people do not give their children praise name, instead they give them totem names. One should realize that a praise name plays an important role in the life of a human being. Some praise names motivate the bearers. For example, a nickname can be used at all times in formal and informal situation. Some people reject nicknames, but as long as a name is rejected, it sticks to the bearer.

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to the research findings, it is recommended that:

- It is important for every member of the society to follow the norms and standards of the society, regardless of education or religion;
- The concept of retaining traditional norm and values should be taken into consideration. Each society is what it is because of its norms and values. People should live according to the norms and standards of their culture. By so doing, their children will automatically be cultured and become responsible citizens;
- The spirit of *ubuntu* should prevail amongst the Ba-Phalaborwa community. *Ubuntu* gives access to a new identity for South Africans. To a large extent therefore, the whole life of the Ba-Phalaborwa is dependent upon their ancestors;
- It is important for people to acknowledge the initiation school as government encourages and support the initiation school. Initiation contributed a lot towards the maintenance and moulding of marital life. It would be to the benefit of the society for the Department of Education to take initiation school into consideration; it should be revised and modified so as to be included in

the school programme. This is also emphasized by Phaswana when stating that it is very important that girls be initiated into proper adulthood. The importance of initiation can be seen in the fact that, when it was still a standard procedure for every girl or boy to be initiated, it was very rare to find people doing what they are practicing today;

- The Ba-Phalaborwa people must be made aware that before Christianity came to this part of the continent, children were given traditional names;
- People should follow the right procedure of '*lobola*' proceedings for them to have marriage names. It is also important for them to acquire new names in their marriages. This is the reason why whenever a person experiences severe and continuous problems in the family or suffers persisting and incurable illness, he or she suspects the ancestral spirits' involvement in the situation. The Ba-Phalaborwa should be made aware that ancestral spirits have more power than living people and, as such, deserve to be respected and feared to a larger degree. This idea was also observed by Junod.
- Conferences must be held, especially for the youth, to explain to them the importance of traditional names and their meanings. This will help to make the Ba-Phalaborwa culture remain strong. There are people who are not encouraged to give their children traditional names. When a person is given a traditional name, he or she is regarded to be 'heathen'. People separate themselves from such as person. But people must, however, be encouraged to give their children traditional names. My recommendation on this is that all people should be treated equally; it should be known that stratification of any kind is bad. Free as this country is today, it should make a point that equality is maintained;
- The elderly people in the Ba-Phalaborwa area should go on with the process of naming their grandchildren their names;
- Groups or organization of young adults should be formed so that they should help each other in naming their children traditional names;
- Administration in the initiation school should be improved in order for people to get new names. The state of the schools shows that there is some kind of discrimination. People should be treated equally and a person is to go to the initiation school by choice. It should be an offer to each and every person regardless of the person's financial state; and

- People in the Ba-Phalaborwa communities should involve themselves in the ceremonies. One other valuable role played by ceremonial possessions is that it provide entertainment. During such ceremonies, people have a chance to laugh, enjoy and entertain themselves. It is in those ceremonies where people are getting names at the same time they are making their gods happy and are thus doubly blessed.

#### **6.4 FUTURE RESEARCH**

Topics that still need to be researched in future are the following:

- The naming practices amongst the selected areas of Ba-Phalaborwa;
- The role of the traditional healers in naming in the Ba-Phalaborwa.

## REFERENCES

- Asante, M.K. 2001. *The Painful Demise of Eurocentrism*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Asante, M.K. 2004. *In Search of an Afrocentric Historiography*. Paper Presented at Congress Internacional d'Estudis African, Barcelona, Spain January 12-15, 2004. Unpublished.
- Babbie, E. 1995. *The Practice of Social Research* 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Mexico City: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Barbara, T and Jurgens, P. 1986. *African Heritage*. Bramfontein: MacMillan.
- Bakari, M.M. 1981. *The customs of the Swahili people*. London: University of California Press.
- Cartwright, A.P. 1972. *Phalaborwa Mining City of the Future*. Cape Town: Purnel.
- Chao, P. 1983. *Chinese Kinship*. London: Routledge.
- Charles, J and Linwood, S. 1973. *Boys and Girls Names*. London: Harrap.
- Chidester, D. 1992. *Religious of South Africa*. USA and Canada: Routledge.
- De Beer, F.C. 1994. *Social Cultural Anthropology*. Pretoria: UNISA.
- De Coppet. 1992. *Understanding Rituals*. London and New York: Routledge
- De Klerk, V. 1999. *Beauty or Buhle? On changing one's name*. Nomina Africana, Volume 13 (1 & 2).
- Dobson, J.F. 1963. *Ancient Education and its meaning to us*. New York: Cooper Square Publishers.
- Duckling, L.A. 1983. *The Guinness Book Names*. London: Guinness Superlative Ltd.
- Durant, W. 1944. *Caesar and Christ*. New York: Simon and Shooter.
- Du Preez, H. 1997. *Meet the rainbow nation*. South Africa: Kagiso Tertiary.
- Du Toit, A.P. 1968. *Die plek van die in hul koneteretiele skepping van die Ba-Phalaborwa in hul kultuur*. Suid Afrika: UNISA.
- Erland, H.H. 2001. *The Social use of Personal Names among the Kyrgyz contemporary South Asia*, Volume 20 No.1.
- Giddens, A. 1993. *Sociology*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
- Goetz, W.P. 1990. *The New Encyclopedia*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Haralambos, M. 1989. *Sociology, Themes and Perspective*. London: Unwin Hyman.

- Hockett, C.F. 1958. *A Course in Modern Linguistics*. New York: MacMillian.
- Hornby, A.S. 1995. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- John. A. and Sleigh, L. 1973. *The Harrap Book of Boys and Girls names*. Britain: Harrap & Co.Ltd.
- Junod, H. 1966. *The life of a South African Tribe*. New York: University Books.
- Kgatla, S.T. 2003. *Myth, Ritual and Folk Beliefs*. UNIN: School of Social Sciences: Folklore 804.
- Lane, T.A. 1983. *Beginning Social Work Research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Lombard, R.J.J. 1977. *Handbook for Geneological Research*. Pretoria: Printing Works (Pty) Ltd.
- Magubane, P. 1998. *Vanishing Cultures of South Africa*. South Africa: Struik Publishers.
- Malegapuru, W.M. 1999. *African Renaissance*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers.
- Matsepe, O.K. 1982. *Sebatakgomo*. Johannesburg: Educum Publishers.
- Matsimela, A.M. 1997. *Sefuledišo*. Republic of South Africa: Creda Press.
- Mbiti, S. 1990. *African Religion and Philosophy*. USA: Heinemann Educational Books Inc.
- Mokgokong, S.R. 2004. *Knowing and Understanding the world through naming*. Sovenga: University of the North Press.
- Molefe, M.J. 2001. *Ke Nako ya ka*. Pietersburg: Lobelia.
- Mönnig, H.O. 1967. *The Pedi*. Pretoria: J.L van Schaik Publishers.
- Moswane, J.M. 1997. *Sebego*. Pretoria: J.L van Schaik Publishers.
- Mouton, J. 2000. *How to succeed in your masters and doctoral studies: A South African guide and resource*. Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Moyo, C.T. 2002. Sources of Tumbuka Nicknames, *South African Journal for Folklore Studies*. Volume 12(2): South African Folklore Society (SAFOS) RSA.
- Myburgh, A.C. 1991. *Anthropology for Southern Africa*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Neethling, S.J. 1994. *The developer's Dilemma: Finding the right name*. *Nomina Africana*, Volume 14(1) <http://www.namingnewsletter.com/article.asp>.
- Neethling, S.J. 1994. *Xhosa Nicknames in South African Journal of African languages*. Vol. 4. No.2 88-92.
- Niel, J. 1991. *Sociology*. USA: Printers Hall Inc.

- Ntsan'wisi, H.W.E. 1999. *African Religion and Philosophy*. USA: Heineman Educational Book Inc.
- Nziyane, G.T. 2004. *Naming Practice and Patterns*. MA dissertation. Sovenga: University of the North Press.
- Rubin, A and Babbie, E. 1997. *Research Methods for Social Work*. England: London.
- Seaberg, J.R. 1988. *Utilizing sampling procedures*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.
- Sebashe, S.S. 2007. *An analysis of naming practices amongst Ba-Phalaborwa a historical perspectives*. PhD Thesis. Sovenga: University of Limpopo Press.
- Smelik, A. Buikema, R.1993. *Woman Studies and Culture*. London Copyright.
- Stearns, M.L. 1981. *Halda Culture in Custody*. USA: University of Washington Press
- Spiro, M.E. 1966. *Problems of Definition and Explanation in Anthropology Approaches to the study of religion*. USA: London Press.
- The Holy Bible NIV*. 1999. RSA: Society of South Africa.
- The Oxford English Dictionary Volume VII N-Poy. 1970. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Tulloch, S. 1993. *The Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder*. New York: The Reader's Digest Associated Limited.
- Van der Zanden, J.W. 1963. *Sociology the Core*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill- Inc.
- Van Wyk, A. 1999. *AIDS Care and Counselling*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- White, B. 2000. *Dissertation skills for Business and Management students*. London: New York.

## **INTERNET**

Naba, M. **Akan Naming Ceremony**.

<http://www.theearthcenter.com/ffarchiresdento.html.15/11/2004>(nd).

Kwesi Ra Nhum,. 2004. **Akan Naming Ceremony**.

[www.theearthcenter.com/ffarchivesdento.html](http://www.theearthcenter.com/ffarchivesdento.html)(nd).

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR/TVReed/interp.htm>