

WOMEN ABUSE AS EXPRESSED IN *TSHIVENDA* FEMALE SONGS

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that *women abuse as expressed in Tshivenda female songs* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this thesis was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another institution.

T.T. RABOTHATA

DATE

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This work is dedicated to the following people:

My late father, Vho-Balangani Mashau

My late mother, Vho-Nyamadala Mashau

My late daughter, Ngwakwana Rabothata

My grandson, Thabang.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the expression of women abuse through female songs. Groups of singers from twenty-two communities were listened to during the study. A qualitative analysis was undertaken. Songs obtained from secondary sources, were compared and analysed in the same way in which those obtained from the singers themselves were analysed. In particular, the usefulness of these singing groups was examined. It was found that most of the women who are experiencing abuse of some kind, derive perceived social support from fellow singers. All the women in the different singing groups declared that they were not singing for the sake of singing but that they were sending messages to the perpetrators of abuse in the expectation that a change will be realized. Singing groups were found to be effectively providing assistance in dealing with emotional abuse. The study thus illuminates the subjective use of referential expressions in expressing abuse. This emphasizes the challenge for singers to check whether or not the manner in which they present their pleas is appropriate.

SUMMARY

WOMEN ABUSE AS EXPRESSED IN *TSHIVENDA* FEMALE SONGS

This study comprises five chapters which deal with the ways in which the topic was approached as a way of trying to examine the research problem.

Chapter 1 outlines the background to the problem as a way of exposing what necessitates women to sing abuse songs. This chapter will also reveal how prevalent abuse is in every society. The nature of the problem reveals that *Vhavenda* women have always been abused, but could not openly voice their discontentment. These women started to air their grievances through songs even though the perpetrators of abuse have disregarded such songs. The aim of this study is thus to analyse *Tshivenda* female songs to establish how much protest they contain against women abuse. The methodology to be used in this study is identified in this chapter while the scope is delimited to cover those songs sung in initiation schools for mature and immature girls, those used during recreation as well as those used while doing work. The significance of the study highlights women's accountability in exposing abusive tendencies.

Terms which encourage men and mothers-in-law to continue with abusive acts in relationships are defined as well.

Chapter 2. This chapter presents views of different researchers who studied folk songs. Researchers were classified according to the similarity of the research undertaken. This chapter reveals that the male researchers failed to identify the abuse contained in female songs while the female researchers picked it up. The issue of transcribing oral texts into written ones indicates how researchers are sometimes misled.

Chapter 3 deals with the role of socio-cultural context in performing and understanding female songs. In essence, the chapter aims at discussing how songs serve as a communicative vehicle within a speech community. In this chapter the use of directness and indirectness will be discussed. The relationship between setting, participants, and goals will be shown as well. It has been indicated that performers prefer to use referential expressions as a means of achieving their goals in certain settings.

Chapter 4 shows the effect of referential meanings of abuse expressions in songs. Two or more songs have been analysed as a way of revealing some themes as used in various contexts. The use of referential expressions also brings about directness or indirectness when exposing power relations in relationships.

In Chapter 5 the researcher re-examined the first four chapters to establish if the problem posed in the first chapter has been solved. It has been found that women tend to abuse themselves and do not want to express their rights as outlined in the constitution of this country. This chapter reveals that the expression of abuse

through female songs cannot be denied. The study was able to cover its scope and the research question was answered. This concluding chapter presented its findings, limitations, and recommendations.

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