

**THE IMPORTANCE OF RITUAL INITIATION (KGOPHA) AS A PASSAGE
FOR WOMANHOOD AND THE MAINTENANCE OF MARITAL LIFE**

by

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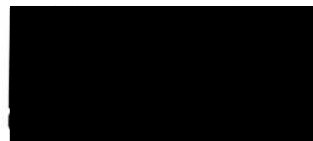
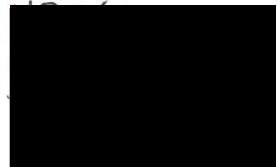
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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother MMAPHUTI BETTY KOMAPE
who instilled the love of studying and writing in me.

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SUMMARY

Chapter one deals with the background to the problem; aim of the study; literature review; rationale for the study; methodology and significance of the study.

Chapter two deals with the 'kgopa' initiation rite.

Chapter three deals with the 'kgopha' initiation songs.

Chapter four deals with the role of 'kgopa' initiation in moulding family life.

Chapter five deals with conclusion and recommendations.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Every society belongs or emerges from a particular culture. Culture is a system of symbols shared by a group of humans and transmitted by them to upcoming generations (Downs, 1975: 45). Culture develops within the process of people wrestling with their natural and social environment. They evolve a way of life embodied in their institutions and certain practices. Culture becomes a carrier of their moral, aesthetic and ethical values (Makgoba, 1999: 190).

Makgoba (1999: 196) states that the organized education of the youth of a community is part and parcel of the culture of the community, without culture, there is no education; and without education... no culture and no community.

The above quotations do not only give the explanation of culture but may also contribute to understanding, explaining and assessing the importance of ritual initiation (kgopha) as a passage for womanhood and the sustenance of martial life. De Coppet (1992: 18) defines rituals as:

Formulaic spatiality carried out by groups of people who are conscious of its imperative or compulsory nature and who may or may not further inform this spatiality with spoken words.

The commonly recurrent rites of passage are those connected with the normal but critical events in the human life-span- birth, attainment of physical maturity, mating and reproduction and death (Gwinn 1992: 802)

The ritual is a ritual and is supposed to follow some time-hallowed precedent in order to be effective or simply to be a proper performance (De Coppet 1992: 15). One could say that man cannot do away with rituals as they are part and parcel of life.

Traditionally, a woman in the Northern Sotho culture became dignified by passing the initiation schools that played a vital role in instructing mannerism. There were three stages of human growth for a woman to undergo before becoming married; baby (ngwana), girl (mosetsana) and matured girls (kgarebe); and level of initiation, namely, initiation for all girls while still young, 'kgopha' initiation which takes place after the girl's first menstruation, and 'go fora' initiation which takes place before the girl's marriage ceremony. Each of the above mentioned stages has its specific attire, for example, young girls wear a short string apron (mosese) in front and a triangular skin apron (ntepana) at the back to cover buttocks, their hair was fashioned in a characteristic manner (leetse) in long separate strings treated with fat and graphite. (Monnig 1967: 107). A woman who mistakenly omitted to attend these schools would feel inferior.

The concise Oxford English Dictionary (2001:729) defines initiation as formal admission into a society or group, typically with a ritual. Thus the concept 'initiation' refers to the introduction of a person into a new group. Van Gennep (1960: iv) maintains that initiation rites occupy a particular important place because they are typical and very pure transaction rituals. And those rites are celebrated in the attainment of social, not physical puberty. This implies that the celebration of rituals is for social and not for physical development.

Among Basotho ba Lebowa, a woman is considered an important figure in the development of a healthy society. Since she plays an important role in the family, therefore the family is seen as the heart of the nation. Goetz (1990: 110) defines a family as the union of a

man and a woman along with their offspring, usually living in a private and separate dwelling. What one deduces from the above definition is that a family may serve to promote order and stability within the society as a whole. With a stable society, a healthy nation can be built. Van Gennep (1960: xiii) states that the critical problem of becoming male and female of relations within the family, and of passing into old age are directly related to the devices, which the society offers the individual to help him achieve the new adjustment.

This indicates that the relationship of a man and a woman in the family is to apply the norms and values of the society in order to maintain a stable family. These norms and values of their society are acquired during different initiations, 'kgopha' initiation, being one of them.

'Kgopha' ritual is the ritual ceremony held for the girls who reached puberty stage, that is after the first sign of menstruation. Monnig (1967: 124) defines puberty ceremonies as rites of passage underlining an important change of life.

When the girls reach the puberty stage, they undergo 'kgopha' ritual in order to prepare them for womanhood. Goetz (1990: 120) defines puberty stage as the stage period of life when a child transforms into an adult normally capable of procreation.

The definitions above imply that puberty ceremonies mark a change in the life of a girl and serve as a bridge to womanhood. Paulme (1963: 220) states that usually before her marriage a girl has to undergo a physiological change that occurs with the beginning of menstruation, and this has been marked by the ceremonial bath required by custom. This depicts the impurity of a girl during menstruation.

'Kgopha' ritual is a course of transitional rites which serve as a bridge from childhood to adulthood. Girls should learn to become tough women of tomorrow, who can face harsh situations. This is done through tough, physical, emotional and social exercises. All these aim at helping them to resist hard life which will lead to the healthy and strong marriages since divorce for Basotho ba Lebowa is a taboo. It is during 'kgopha' ritual where the girls are taught that 'lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi' (the grave of a woman is at the home of the husband).

1.2. AIM OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study is to critically study and examine the role of 'kgopha' ritual in the Basotho ba Lebowa. In order to accomplish this task, the following questions need to be answered:

- How 'kgopha' ritual contributed towards the sustenance of traditional norms and values.
- How it contributed towards the prevention of divorce.
- How it helped in the moulding of the traditional marital life.

1.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various scholars have embarked extensively upon the study of ritual initiation, including 'kgopha'.

1.3.1. Monnig (1967)

Monnig states that the puberty ceremony which is equivalent to 'kgopha' with Basotho ba Lebowa is a social recognition only for girls into socio-political maturity. This explanation deduces the importance of a woman as a socio-political being in the society.

1.3.2. Stayt (1931)

Stayt looked at the puberty ceremony from Tshivenda perspective. He states that the initiates are taken to the kraal in the public hut and

remained there for six days. The cultural activities which the girls were exposed include interalia:

- ◆ Taught the tribal rules of etiquette and obedience.
- ◆ Receive a certain amount of dancing instructions more in the nature of hard physical exercises through actual dancing.
- ◆ Sexual teaching, e.g. are warned against becoming deflowered before marriage and taught how to have sexual intercourse without this occurring.
- ◆ To stretch the labia minora.
- ◆ Are often subjected to further humiliations e.g to force them to travel a long distance from the river to the kraal lying flat on the ground, wriggling along with extreme difficulty and discomfort.
- ◆ Soaking in water.

After six days the girls were escorted to their homes; after which they were to lie down with their heads on the ground when greeting a superior, instead of simply kneeling and putting their hands together, and were in every way comport themselves with submission and humility.

1.3.3. Van Gennep (1960)

Van Gennep states that puberty ceremonies started long ago by people around the world. The puberty ceremonies of girls among the Thomson Indians were performed far from the village in a special hut and which included taboos, washings, sympathetic rites, et cetera. The girls were considered ready for marriage only after they had undergone the ceremonies attended upon reaching the age of puberty.

1.3.4. Magubane (2001)

Magubane writes about puberty ceremonies as initiation ceremonies associated with girls among the Bantwane from Mpumalanga province that include mock circumcision practices. These rites of passage, however, are aimed primarily at preparing woman for their future roles as wives and mothers. As such, initiation practices generally stress the importance of appropriate social and sexual behaviour in adult life.

1.3.5. Mathabane (1994)

Mathabane states that during puberty ceremonies the girls are kept in 'khomba' house for four weeks and various women teachers come and teach them about men, about what it means to be a woman, about the importance of respect, and the crucial role women play in family life. Most of the lessons, in summary are about knowing how to be obedient, subservient, compliant and a man pleasing woman.

Daily routine:

- ◆ Singing special tribal songs.
- ◆ Listening to stories and
- ◆ Doing gymnastic - like exercises, which involve mainly stretching.

The exercises loosen the limbs and make the inner vagina muscles tight, which is supposed to make them fantastic in bed and therefore irresistible to men. The teachers tell the girls that a complete woman has to be fully limbered so as to be ready for love making, pregnancy and childbirth. They are also taught about unconditional obedience to the will of men.

1.3.6 Krige and Krige (1943)

Krige and Krige looked at 'kgopa' ritual from Bolebedu perspective. On the arrival in her hut of seclusion, the girls is 'strengthened' (go thušwa) by old women. Ground herbs mixed

with ochre and some with the girls' own menstrual blood are smeared on various parts of the body- in a circle round the wrists, on the head, nose, mouth, neck, arms, etc. This is done to prevent the girls from becoming ill (ku khuma) when entering the village of other people. Initiation at puberty includes the following.

- Instruction in rules connected with the new stage of life the girl is entering, e.g. she is warned that she has reached maturity and must be careful, of sex play with boys, to avoid becoming pregnant.
- The girls are taught the rules connected with menstruation: not to enter a sick-room while menstruating, not to enter a cattle kraal, not to sleep with men during their menstruation.
- If the girl has not enlarged her labia minora properly, she is severely scolded.
- The girl must be respectful to her elders; that is, respect older people, obey her parents.
- Bath in the river.

1.3.7 Hammond-Tooke (1993)

Hammond -Tooke states that during the puberty ceremony, the girl is subjected to hardships such as being forced to sit in icy water for long periods, eating porridge without relish. Girls are also given a certain amount of sex instruction at this time, mainly precautions against becoming pregnant.

Associated activities.

- ❖ Daily dancing to the drums.
- ❖ Learning rules of etiquette and, perhaps most importantly, considerable sexual teaching. The latter was accompanied by

a daily gathering at the river where the initiatives were instructed in the technique of lengthening the labia.

- ❖ Submerged for long periods in the cold river water.

From the views of the above scholars one deduces that during 'kgopha' initiation the girls were offered education which would help them in the future as mothers in their families. The lessons revolved around sex, as it is very important in maintaining a healthy and normal marriage.

1.4. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale behind this study is to show the role of the 'kgopha' ritual in the sustenance of traditional norms and values and how these helped in the marital life.

1.5. METHODOLOGY

In this study, various research methodologies will be used. The following research methods will therefore be applied in this study:

1.5.1. The qualitative research method

Creswell (1994:2) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in natural setting.

This research method is usually used by the researcher who aims at understanding the human being in totality, that is his/her behaviour and reaction in the environment in which he/she finds himself/herself and the meaning that they attach to the events and their own experiences in life. It is also used when the researcher wants to probe into a person's attitudes, feelings, fears, biases, ideas, hopes and aspirations.

1.5.2. Data collection

In the collection of information the researcher intends using the following methods.

1.5.2.1. The primary research method

This method is when firsthand information is obtained from respondents. Interviews are tools used to collect information.

Cohen and Manion (1989: 307) define an interview as:

‘A two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation’.

It is unusual method in that it involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. Unstructured interview will be used.

1.5.2.1.1. Unstructured interview

In this case, the researcher merely has a conversation with the respondent and allows the conversation to develop naturally. Only when the conversation fails to cover an area that the researcher requires certain information on that, he/she starts to ask direct questions. This may be between the researcher and individuals or if possible a group or groups.

1.5.2.2. Secondary research method

The secondary research method will also be used in this study, as it helps to establish as accurately as possible the importance and relevance of the subject-matter already used by a variety of scholars. This method entails the collection of data from articles, newspapers, academic books, magazines, Internet and dissertations.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The fundamental significance of this study lies in highlighting the following:

- The importance of 'kgopha' ritual towards the stability of marriages.
- The importance of traditional norms and values in the moulding of society.

1.7 Interview Questions

1. What does the term 'kgopha' mean?
2. At what age should the girls undergo this ceremony?
3. Why is menstruation associated with the moon (kgwedi)?
4. Who should take care of the girls during the 'kgopha' initiation?
5. How long does the ceremony take?
6. Which laws and practices are the girls taught during seclusion period?
7. What is the main aim of 'kgopha' ritual?

CHAPTER 2

2. THE 'KGOPHA' INITIATION RITE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, initiation and ritual practices have been a common practice since time immemorial. The importance of ritual initiation 'kgopha' as a passage to womanhood lies in the promotion of health, respect, and responsibility.

Van Gennep 1960 in Morris (1997: 246-247) states that the life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another. In the majority of human communities the primary transitions, or what have been termed the life crises - birth, puberty, marriage and death - are the focus of elaborate rites. All these transition rituals exemplified a typical form, consisting of the three essential ritual phases, firstly, there were rites of separation, a preliminal phase indicated by such ceremonies as purification rites, the removal of hair, and scarification or cutting . Next there was the liminal period, the rite of transition, in which a person undergoing the rite is symbolically placed "outside society" and frequently has to observe certain taboos or restrictions. During this period, the normal rules of the community may be suspended, or the rite may be seen as a symbolic death, leading to a new rebirth. And finally, there is a postliminal phase, rites of incorporation that complete the transit to a new status. The lifting of restrictions, the wearing of new insignia and the sharing of a meal signify this phase of the rite of passage.

2.2 'KGOPHA' INITIATION

Beals and Hoijer (1971: 563) state that the puberty ceremony, among other things, is an announcement of the girls' readiness for marriage. After the ceremony she is carefully guarded until her marriage takes place. Mafenya (2002: 68-69) states that the 'vhusha' ritual is the

school entered by a girl after she has matured, i.e. when she has had her first menstruation. Stayt (1931; 106) adds by stating that the school marks a passage from childhood to adolescence.

Ranoto (2003) stated that after the first menstruation, the girl would tell her sister who in turn would tell their mother. The mother would go and tell other women and late in the afternoon the women would gather and shout 'thakadu e ragile' (an ant-bear has kicked). The women would take the girl together with other graduates to the river to go and fetch some water with a big calabash. The water would be used by 'kgopha' (matured girl) and 'dikgophana' (small matured girls) for cooking in the seclusion hut. 'Dikgophana' (small matured girls) would remain and sleep with 'kgopha' (matured girl) in the seclusion hut. The initiation would take seven days and what was entailed in the initiation was to teach the girls tribal rules of etiquette and obedience to prepare them for later life among others which is womanhood. On the seventh day the girls would be taken to the river to be soaked in water.

Ranoto, Kgabi and Mohlaba (2003) in an interview stated that after the initiation the girl would be smeared with red ochre and her hair cut. The girl would wear skins, a frontal covering, a rear covering and over the shoulders; and she was not supposed to wear beads or talk to men as she was still mourning. The girl would be ordered not to wash until she menstruated the following month. When the girl menstruated for the second time, her hair would be cut and she would be told to start talking to men.

Mohlaba (2003) stated that the girl received formulae (melao) of being a woman in 'kgopha' initiation. The girl would be ordered to hide menstruation from men, not to sleep with men while menstruating, not to sweep the dirt towards the back of the hut, not to cross the broom, as all these would cause her complications during her

menstruation even when she gives birth. If she plays with boys she will lose virginity. Old people should be respected. According to the above views, the girl was being prepared for all spheres of life as a woman so that in future she might be able to maintain marital life.

2.3 KGOPHA CEREMONIES

Different ceremonies were performed during 'kgopha' initiation.

The ceremonies are arranged as follows:

2.3.1 Smearing the girls with ochre

Monnig (1967:125) states that at first signs of menstruation, usually between the ages of 12 and 16, a girl is secluded in her hut together with one or two other girls who are called 'dikgophana' (small matured girls). During this period of seclusion, the girl would be under the care of her mother, and the elder sister, and one or two female relatives who have past the child-bearing stage.

Krige & Krige (1943:112) state that on arrival in the hut of seclusion, the girls are 'strengthened' (go thušwa) by the old women. This is done by mixing ground herbs with ochre and some with the girls' own menstruation blood. This mixture is smeared on various parts of the body-around the wrists, on the head, nose, mouth, neck, arms, et cetera. The medicine is 'go fa pitsi mebala' (to give the zebra its stripes) and is said to prevent the girls from becoming ill (ku khuma) when entering the villages of other people. The ochre serves as a prevention against diseases.

The views of the above scholars are supplemented by Sathekge (2003) by saying that the first night the girls enter the seclusion hut, the old women ordered them to take off their clothes and sit in a squatting position, in a line against the wall. The old women would bring the pieces of a broken clay pot (mangeta)

and put them in front of each girl. Each piece of the broken pot contains herbs in it, and the girls would be ordered to urinate in them in order to make a mixture. The mixture would be smeared on each part of their bodies. This was done to strengthen (thuša) the initiates so that they might not be bewitched during the initiation.

Mohlaba (2003) stated that it is during 'kgopha' initiation that the girls are taught the importance of menstruation. The girls are taught that no one should be aware that they are menstruating and that they should wash the pads (mengato) after menstruation, as menstruation may be used to tie (bofa) a person so that one can be barren.

From the above discussion we learn that the smearing of the girls with ochre is very important as the girls are strengthened (thušwa) against ailments and witchcraft.

2.3.2 The elongation of the labia minora

Mafenya (2002:65) states that from an early age girls are taught to be ready for sex. And the custom of elongation starts during 'bjale' which is the initiation rite for young girls between ages 7 and 13. The elongation of the labia minora is done so that men can be gratified during sexual intercourse.

Hammond-Tooke (1993:136) states that during 'kgopha' initiation, sexual teaching was offered and it was accompanied by a daily gathering at the river where the initiates were instructed in the technique of lengthening the labia. Sathekge (2003) stated that the elongation of the labia minora starts at an early age, and the process continues during 'kgopha' initiation. The elongated labia is important for a man to play with.

Kgabi (2003) said that the elongation of the labia minora was for the romance and for the prevention of the penetration of the penis during the women's menstruation period, as she would use the elongated labia to tie a knot (go bofa lehuto). From the above discussion the elongation of the labia was very important for the married women, as one of the main functions of the woman in the family is to satisfy the husband sexually. This will therefore help in maintenance of marital life.

2.3.3. Sex Education

Mathabane (1994: 210) states that 'kgopha' initiation prepared the girls for sex long before experience could teach them anything, as they married while virgins and often in their teens. The teachers told the girls that a complete woman had to be fully limbered so as to be ready for love making, pregnancy and childbirth. The exercises loosened the limbs and made the inner vagina muscles tight, which is suppose to make them fantastic in bed and therefore irresistible to men.

Mathabane (1994: 210) continues by saying that the gymnastic-like exercises prepared the girls to be energetic in bed as this is important to maintain healthy relationship between husband and wife. The exercises were not to end during the initiation period but continue since they were also going to be used as weapon in future when they are married women, in order to secure their marriages (Kgabi: 2003).

Bascon and Herskovits (1962:120) state that discussions were frequently preoccupied with sex and ritual intercourse is important in almost every crisis faced by clan or family. The lessons prevail the importance of sex in marital life, as they all revolved mainly around sex.

Mathabane (1994: 210) states that the teachers taught the girls about men, about what is meant to be a woman, about the importance of respect, and the crucial role women play in the family. This statement puts it straight on how important women are in marital life. It should not be forgotten that the most important role of the woman in the family is to satisfy her husband sexually, in order to maintain marital life.

Van Gennep (1960: V) states that the girls were considered ready for marriage only after they have attended all the ceremonies after reaching the stage of puberty. Magubane (1998:86) argues that the girls were given extensive education on sex, sexual behaviour, betrothal and marriage, and avoiding pregnancy outside marriage. At the end of the ceremony the girls would have been empowered with sex skills.

Kgabi (2003) stated that the girls were taught that if their husbands wanted to have sex during their menstruation, it would be done between thighs. This was considered an alternative method to be used in order to keep the husband at home, while the wife is still on her menstruation. The girls were also taught how to react during sexual intercourse, i.e the movement of the body.

Nong (2003) argues that the exercises which were full of stretching, made the bodies of the girls tough and strong. The girls were told to continue with exercises even after 'kgopha' initiation so that their bodies should not be soft, as men enjoy the tough and strong bodies. The above views highlight the fact that during 'kgopha' initiation the girls were taught and prepared for sex. The older women knew that the most important tool for marital life is to satisfy men in bed.

2.3.4. Soaking in water

Monnig (1967: 125) highlights that during the seclusion the girls were secretly let out every morning, before sunrise, to be ritually bathed in a river- 'ke go hlapa lerole' (to wash off the dust). The cool water reacted beneficially against the heat caused by menstruation. They are said to be hot (fiša) when menstruating, and are therefore warned not to have sex while in that state.

Hammond- Tooke (1993: 136) states that on the last night of the seclusion, the girls were taken to the river to sub-merge in cold river water for long periods. The main aim of 'kgopha' ritual to be celebrated during winter was to prepare the girls to be tough women who could work for their families irrespective of the seasons and to withstand any situation.

Kgabi (2003) stated that the soaking in water was done according to different clans 'dikgoro'. In her 'kgoro', Kgabi stated that the initiates were taken to a deep well where 'mamogašwa' (a big hored-snake) dwells. They would take goat along with them.

When they arrive at the well all the women together with the initiates would take off their clothes and enter the well. They would start singing:

'Motsomi batalala, lejapela le e tla'.

(The hunter crouch, the rock-rabbit-eater is coming).

The goat would bleat and immediately the snake would emerge from the water and suck the goat. After that, the snake would lie down and the women would show the initiates how to cut the flesh from the snake. After that, they would leave the well unhurt with the goat still alive.

When they arrived at the seclusion hut, the meat would be roasted until it was gunpowder. The powder would be mixed with oil and the older women would smear the bodies of the girls with it. The mixture would cause the bodies of the initiates to excrete too much sweat. According to the older women the process prepared the girls to be tough and brave enough to face any situation in life with boldness. The main aim for this was to implant bravery in the girls lives that would enable them to face any situation in life.

In other 'kgoro' (clan) Kgabi (2003) stated that the initiates were taken to the river and when they arrived, they were ordered to stand in a line. The girls would enter the river one by one while the women were signing for them:

Nke o tshele

1. Nke o tshele matshelane
2. Noka a tletše
3. Nke o tshele

1. Cross over one who crosses
2. The river is full
3. Cross over

The initiatives would cross the river to the other side one by one and they would come back the same way. The soaking in water was to prepare the girls to be used to hardship, for example, performing the woman duties with ease. By doing this the girls were going to be able to maintain marital life.

2.3.5. Keeping of secrets (Dikoma)

'Kgopha' initiation was characterized by secrets. Krige & Krige (1943:113) state that some of the dances in puberty ceremonies were associated with the lessons of the initiation. For example,

two girls, one with a cloth passed between the legs to represent the loin covering of a man, dance facing each other; the 'man' dances with a lightened fire-brand between the legs, the girl wears a cloth which makes her look pregnant. Another dance consisted of movements in which legs are held close together and sometimes crossed, symbolic of the manner in which male advances can be prevented from becoming. By these movements the girls were empowered with the skills of self-defence.

Mohlaba (2003) said that secrets (dikoma) were done during the night in the seclusion hut, most of which were done through singing. For example the girls were ordered to sit in squatting position and their buttocks being lifted above the heels while their hands were on their heads. The older women would come one by one slapping the thighs of the girls with their hands. Another one is that the girls spent most of the time sitting in line close to each other while their legs were stretched. Sathekge (2003) continued to say that this was done so that the girls had to be fully limbered as to be ready for love making, pregnancy, and childbirth. As the limbs are loosened the inner vagina walls become tight, this would make them fantastic in bed.

From the above views we realize that in secrets (dikoma) the exercises involved the hips, legs and thighs. These enlightened the importance of the lower limbs, pelvis and lumber. These parts of human body are very important in carrying of the body weight; especially during pregnancy, during sex and when giving birth. All these were main functions to be performed by a married woman in order to maintain marital life.

2.3.6. 'Kgopha' formulae (melao)

During 'kgopha' ritual initiates were taught formulae (melao), norms and values that prepare them to be organised future women. Mafenya (2002:70) states that the language used for

these formulae was figurative in nature. It was full of imagery with the use of symbols. Popenoe (1998) in Mafenya (2002:60) defines symbols as anything that meaningfully represents something else. This means that something is not directly called by its name.

Sathekge (2003) gave the following formulae

- The entrance/gate 'kgoro' refers to the pool of water.
- Open gate is the birth of a child.
- Closed gate is pregnancy.
- Half-open gate is miscarriage.
- The entrance of the hut is threshold- meaning that it traps big girls only not infants.
- The beer-pots refer to pregnant.
- Pouring of beer is called untie, i.e. to give birth.
- The mouth of the beer-pot is the baby's gums.
- The coals are referred to as old woman in menopause.
- The red ashes as young women in menstruation.
- The ashes as old men.
- The main roof pole as men's penis.
- The thatch as pubic hair.
- Anthill as pregnancy.

Just like in every place or within a particular time there are different languages or registers, for different occasions. By the usage of symbols, the initiates together with the graduates, communicated among themselves without being understood by the uninitiated. The language may be used among themselves even after the initiation. The language also helps the young men to identify the girls who are from 'kgopha' initiation. The men go for these girls as they know that they are suitable for marital life.

2.2.7 Mounting the anthills

Sathekge (2003) argued that mounting the anthills is the ceremony which involves extremely tough exercises. Mounting of anthills takes place outside the village. As the 'kgopha' initiation takes place during winter and during full moon, the ceremony takes place in the moonlight.

Lamola (2003) stated that the main exercise in the mounting of anthills is to mount the anthills, for example on bending position, walking with one leg while both hands are put on the head. The girls will be ordered to run in that position from one anthill to another singing the song.

Sa nkobela

1. Sekgotwana wee sa nkobela
2. Ke godile bagolo ba ka
3. Sekgotwana se nkobetše
4. Letswele le tšwile
5. Le tšwetše banna

1. The small rump brought hardship
2. I am grown up my elders
3. The small rump brought for me hardship
4. The breast emerged.
5. It emerged for men

The exercise takes place more than three hours and thereafter they went back to the seclusion hut, where they would continue with singing and dancing to the drums until midnight.

Kgabi (2003) said that the exercise of mounting the anthills is for body-building because after the initiation the girls would be fit and strong to do any job in the family. As the anthill represents pregnancy,

the girls are told how hard it is to be pregnant but they should know that life in the family should go on normally as usual, i.e. satisfying the husband sexually, going to fetch wood, going to draw water and cooking for the family members.

From the above views, during the mounting of anthills the girls are advised or told about the importance of pregnancy as a married woman. And that to be a pregnant does not mean that one is sick. This really prepares and equip the girls with the knowledge of running and maintaining the marital life without obstacles.

2.3.8 Mašilo a Mmatlou

The significance of this ceremony is to take out all the stubbornness out of the girls. Lamola (2003) stated that Mašilo a Mmatlou ceremony takes place on the last night of the initiation. Krige & Krige (1943: 114) state that this night was devoted to dancing and showing of many 'dikoma'. The night is the hardest of all for the girls, as they have to start dancing soon after dark, and continue with very little rest until the sun comes up. The dancing was performed through squatting position while the hands are folded.

Lamola (2003) stated that in the middle of the night the initiates together with the other graduates, except for the older women, were ordered to stand in one row. They were then asked to put their hands together, and the older women would put sticks between their fingers. The older women would also make a row and pass one by one pressing the fingers of the girls. The process would take more than three hours, and this would be so painful that is hurt and wounded the girls' fingers.

During this period they would all be singing the song:

Holahola

1. Holahola re lekane
2. Holahola
3. Mašilo a Mmatlou
4. Holahola
5. Kgophana ge e le tsweya
6. Holahola
7. Re tla e ntšha botsweya
8. Holahola

1. Grow up-grow up so that we must be equal
2. Grow up-grow up
3. Mašilo of Mmatlou
4. Grow up-grow up
5. If a small matured girl is quarrelsome
6. Grow up-grow up
7. We shall take stubbornness out of her.
8. Grow up-grow up

Lamola (2003) stated that the aim of this ceremony was to take out all the stubbornness from the girls. By doing this the girls were being prepared to be submissive to the older people in the community and their husbands when married. To be submissive to the men was an important tool to be used in order to maintain a marital life.

CHAPTER 3

3. 'KGOPHA' INITIATION SONGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In traditional African communities singing accompanied important periods or turning-points in the life of an individual. Coon (1963:89) states that once the children come to puberty, changes in endocrine balance exposed them to new and violent stresses, which required a special schedule of indoctrination, if order was to be maintained in the camp. Without a puberty ceremony it was difficult to see how the transition from expulsion to incorporation of the young could have been managed.

In 'kgopha' initiation nearly every ceremony celebrated was done through singing. 'Kgopha' ritual songs fall under folksongs. Krappe (1965:53) defines a folksong, as a lyric poem with melody, which originated anonymously among unlettered folk in times past, and which has remained in currency for a considerable time as a rule for centuries. The songs are always accompanied dancing and other movements of the body.

3.2 CLASSIFICATION OF THE SONGS

'Kgopha' initiation songs may be classified into three categories,

- Introductory songs.
- Songs sung during the initiation.
- Termination songs

3.2.1 Introductory songs

Introductory songs are songs which are sung by the women to introduce the initiates into the initiation school. Example

Mmankgodu

1. Nkgodu wee...!
2. Kgodu sa ngwale mauwela kgetlwa
3. Mmakgodu papago ngwanaka leina ke mang, mauwe
4. Nkabe ke tseba nkabe ke reta, nkgodu wee
5. Nkgodu wee...!
6. Kgodu sa ngwale mauwela kgetlwa
7. Ke Mahata a hata meboto dihlogo, mauwe
8. Nkgodu wee...!
9. Kgodu sa ngwale mauwela kgetlwa
10. Mankgodu malome a ngwana leina ke mang, mauwe
11. Nkabe ke tseba nkabe ke reta, nkgodu wee
12. Nkgodu wee..!
13. Kgodu sa ngwale mauwela kgetlwa
14. Ke Peiši a'bo Kgabo, serurubele sa mabala, mauwe
15. Nkgodu wee.!
16. Kgodu sa ngwale mauwela kgetlwa

1. Nkgodu wee...!
2. Kgodu of the initiate of mauwela kgetlwa
3. Mankgodu who is the father of my child, mauwe.
4. If I know I could praise, nkgodu wee
5. Nkgodu wee...!
6. Kgodu of the initiate of mauwela kgetlwa
7. He is Mahata who stamps hills' heads, mauwe
8. Nkgodu wee..!
9. Kgodu of the initiate of mauwela kgetlwa
10. Mankgodu who is the uncle of my child, mauwe
11. If I know I could praise, nkgodu wee
12. Nkgodu wee...!
13. Kgodu of the initiate of mauwela kgetlwa
14. He is Peiši a'bo Kgabo, the butterfly of many colours, mauwe
15. Nkgodu wee...!

16. Kgodu of the initiate of mauwela kgetlwa.

In this song each initiate was urged to give the name of the father and of the uncle of her child. This did not lead to the reality as it was just naming any boy, even if the boy is still small. The parents of the boy would then bring presents for the initiate (Lamola: 2003).

3.2.2 The songs sung during the initiation.

The songs sung during the initiation were the songs which were sung during different ceremonies of 'kgopha' initiation. Songs like

Seilele

1. Seilele wee eee
2. Mosese'a kgopha lešoba
3. Seilele wee eee
4. Kgopha nkadime lehabe
5. Seilele wee eee
6. Ke tle ke tsoge ke raola
7. Seilele wee eee
8. Ke tsoge ke roga basadi
9. Seilele wee eee

1. Seilele wee eee
2. The string apron of a matured girl has a hole
3. Seilele wee eee
4. The matured girl borrow me a bead
5. Seilele wee eee
6. So that I can menstruate tomorrow
7. Seilele wee eee
8. So that I can swear the women
9. Seilele wee eee

The image of 'lešoba' (a hole) stands for a menstruating vagina of a matured girl. The song taught the girls to avoid having sexual intercourse with men while menstruating.

Mosesethu

1. Jele -jele mosesethu
2. Mosesethu koma di aloma
3. Jele-jele mosesethu koma di a loma
4. Di a loma koma tša basadi
5. Jele-jele mosesethu di a loma koma tša basadi

1. Jele-jele mosesethu
2. Mosesethu the secrets bite
3. Jele-jele mosesethu the secrets bite
4. They bite the secrets of the women
5. Jele-jele mosesethu they bite the secrets of the women

The initiates in this song were taught about the secrets of women that bite. The girls were told that to be a woman is not easy and they had to be brave to face the situations which they would go through in future.

Sa nkobela molato

1. Sekgotwana wee sa nkobela
 2. Ke godile bagolo ba ka
 3. Sekgotwana se nkobetše
 4. Letswele le tšwile
 5. Le tšwetše banna
-
1. The small ramp brought hardship for me
 2. I am a grown up my elders
 3. The small ramp brought hardship
 4. The breast emerged

5. It emerged for men

The song is sung during the mounting of the anthills. The initiates were taught that it is hard to be a woman, that after menstruation the pregnancy is emanating.

O nnyatšang

1. O nnyatšang
 2. O nnyatša ke le mogoloa'go
 3. O nyatša batho e le bo mogolo'ago
 4. O nnyatšang
1. Why do you undermine me
 2. You undermine me while I am your elder
 3. You undermine the people while they are your elders.
 4. Why do you undermine me

In this song the girls were taught about respect for all members of the community as this was the vital weapon that the woman could use to maintain marital life.

Jele-jele o a lla

1. Jele-jele o a lla
 2. Jele-jele Mpule homola
 3. Jele-jele o a lla
 4. Jele-jele o llelang
 5. Jele-jele o letšwa ke koma tša basadi
1. Jele-jele she is crying
 2. Jele-jele Mpule stop crying
 3. Jele-jele she is crying
 4. Hele-jele why is she crying
 5. Jele-jele she cries because of the secrets of women

The song was sung during the period when the girls were shown 'dikoma' (secrets) of women. These 'dikoma' were hard for initiates that they made them cry.

A mmanabile

1. A mmanabile
 2. Kgopha ke nabile
 3. A mmanabile
 4. Le yena a nabe, ke nabile
 5. A mmanabile
 6. A kwe taba tša basadi
 7. A mmanabile
1. A mmanabile
 2. I, a matured girl I stretched my legs
 3. A mmanabile
 4. Let her also stretch her legs, as I stretched mine
 5. A mmanabile
 6. Let her feel the pains of being a woman
 7. A mmanabile

The song 'A mmanabile' was sung during the exercise of the stretching of the legs by the initiates. The girls were told that the stretching of the legs should be their life style as this would help to prepare them for sex, pregnancy and giving birth.

Morogo wa monyaku

1. Morogo wa monyaku
 2. O a mpelebetla
 3. Morogo wa monyaku
 4. Se letša dikgopha
 5. O a mpelebetla
1. Morogo wa monyaku
 2. You make me sick

3. Morogo wa monyaku
4. Who causes matured girls to cry
5. You make me sick

In this song the girls were told about the pain that is caused by the penetration of the penis in the vagina, especially at the beginning of the marital life. The song encouraged the girls to endure pain as this will be for a short period.

Sebaibai

1. Ija wee sebaibai
 2. Se a bata sebaibai
 3. Ija wee sebaibai
 4. Se letša dikgopha
 5. Ija wee sebaibai
 6. Papago ngwanake ke mo retile
 7. Ija wee sebaibai
 8. Sebaibai se a baila
 9. Ija wee sebaibai
-
1. Ija wee sebaibai
 2. It plasters sebaibai
 3. Ija wee sebaibai
 4. It causes matured girls to cry
 5. Ija wee sebaibai
 6. I have praised the father of my child
 7. Ija wee sebaibai
 8. Sebaibai flashes
 9. Ija wee sebaibai

The image of 'sebaibai' (something sparkling) stands for an erect circumcised penis. The image 'se a bata' (it plasters) stands for the action during intercourse, which causes the matured girls to cry. This

cry is the cry of joy and satisfaction during sex. This highlights the fact that women are also in need of circumcised men as this will lead to a joyful marital life.

Mashita (2003) said that traditionally circumcision was not only meant for the prevention of diseases as usually claimed by most people. It was also meant for the satisfaction of the female during sexual intercourse. The exposed gland therefore made a difference, it contributed a lot in the maintenance of marital life.

Ke laiwa eng

1. Ke laiwa eng wee
2. Ke le kgophakgolo
3. Ke laiwa eng wee
4. Ke le kgophakgolo
5. Ke laiwa eng

1. Why am I instructed
2. While I am a graduated matured girl
3. Why am I instructed
4. While I am a graduated matured girl
5. Why am I instructed

In this song the initiates were taught that a person should live according to the norms and values of her tribe even if she is a grown up.

3.2.3 Termination songs

The termination songs are songs that were sung at the end of the initiation. Example

Holahola

1. Holahola re lekane
2. Holahola

3. Mašilo a Mmatlou
4. Holahola
5. Kgophana ge e le tsweya
6. Holahola
7. Re tla e ntšha botsweya
8. Holahola

1. Grow up-grow up so that we must be equal
2. Grow up-grow up
3. Mašilo of Mmatlou
4. Grow up-grow up
5. If small matured girl is quarrelsome
6. Grow up-grow up
7. We shall take stubbornness out of her
8. Grow up-grow up

The above song was sung during the last night of the initiation. The night was devoted to dancing and showing of many secrets (dikoma). It was 'selalaseeme', the night when one spent the night standing- that is, does not sleep at all, although, some just took a nap any time they felt tired (Krige & Krige 1943: 114). By pressing the fingers of the girls, the older women aimed at taking out all the stubbornness from the girls' lives (Lamola: 2003). From the above views, the ceremony prepared the girls to be respectful, as humility is the essence of N. Sotho womanhood.

3.3 THE STRUCTURAL PATTERN OF THE SONGS

Makgamatha (1987:1) states that the structure normally implies pattern, form, or system. The structural pattern of 'kgopha' initiation songs just like other folksongs, resemble that of poetry. There are a number of stylistic features which prevail in the 'kgopha' ritual songs.

3.3.1. The external structure

Milubi (1997:22) states that the external structure deals with the external shape of the material which the author uses and it works on the literal level of meaning. In 'kgopha' ritual songs there are different external structures that are visible, viz, stanza, rhyme, rhythm, enjambment, repetition and refrain. In this study only rhythm, repetition and refrain will be dealt with.

3.3.1.1. Rhythm

Southey (1987: 114) defines rhythm as the patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables. Heese and Lawton (1973:14) state:

Rhythm is an affectual movement or flow that is brought about the poet's use of emphasis and tempo.

Rhythm is observed in the song

A mmanabile

1. A mmanabile
2. Kgopha ke nabile
3. A mmanabile
4. Le yena a nabe, ke nabile
5. A mmanabile
6. A kwe taba tša basadi
7. A mmanabile

1. A mmanabile
2. I, a matured girl I stretched my legs
3. A mmanabile
4. Let her also stretch her legs, as I stretched mine
5. A mmanabile
6. Let her feel the pains of being a woman
7. A mmanabile

The phrase 'Ammanabile' brings rhythm in this song. Rhythm reinforces emotions and help to convey to the reader the writer's attitude, feelings and thoughts.

3.3.1.2. Repetition

The World Book Dictionary (1988:1772) defines repetition as the act of repeating; doing or saying again. Various types of repetition techniques are found in 'kgopha' ritual songs. Repetition serves to emphasize a point. Examples.

3.3.1.2.1 Alliteration

The concise Oxford English Dictionary (2001:36) defines alliteration as the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words. Example

Seilele

1. Seilele wee wee (see page 26)

In this line there is a repetition of *l*

3.3.1.2.2. Parallelism

Guma (1967: 159) defines parallelism as...

A certain similarity between two parts of members of a sentence whose words correspond with each other. It may occur at the beginning or at the end of lines.

For example. End-parallelism, in the song

Mosesethu (page 27) lines 2 and 3

2. Mosesethu koma di loma
3. Jele-jele mosesethu koma di a loma
2. Mosesethu the secrets bite.
3. Jele-jele mosesethu the secrets bite

The first line has been repeated in the second line, this repetition serves to emphasize a point, i.e. how the secrets of women bite. Parallelism is used with the objective of achieving rhythm.

3.3.1.2.3. Linking

Mafenya (2002:63) says linking is the kind of repetition where we have the word or stem at the end of the first statement or sentence beginning the second statement or sentence. This is known as oblique linking.

Example in Mosesethu

1. Jele-jele Mosesethu
2. Mosesethu koma di a loma

1. Jele-jele mosesethu
2. Mosesethu the secrets bite.

Linking like other types of repetition, contributes towards rhythm through the recurrence of the same unit.

3.3.1.3. Refrain

According to the concise Oxford English Dictionary (2001: 1204) refrain is a repeated line or a number of lines in a poem or song, typically at the end of each verse.

Example in the songs Seilele and Mmankgodu

Seilele (see p 26)

1. Seilele wee eee
3. Seilele wee eee

Mmakgodu (see page 25)

2. Kgodu sa ngwale mauwela kgetlwa.
6. Kgodu sa ngwale mauwela kgetlwa.

Refrain, like other types of repetition, is used with the objective of achieving rhythm.

3.3.2. Internal structure

Milubi (1997:25) states that internal structures refer to the deeper, underlying meaning of a piece of work. It is brought about by images which are embedded in literary devices such as metaphors, imagery, similes and personification. These aspects are also visible in 'kgopha' initiation songs.

3.3.2.1. Imagery

Abrams (1971:76) states:

Imagery (that is, images taken signify all collectively) is used to the objects and qualities of sense perception, referred to in a poem, or in the analogues (the vehicle) used in its similes and metaphors.

Imagery are the various images that are formed by the poet in order to communicate his views. Types of images which may be employed are: metaphor, personification, simile and symbol. In this study only metaphor and personification will be discussed.

3.3.2.1.1. Metaphor

Shacleton (1984:1) states that metaphor is a colourful use of language in which something is described in terms of something else. Southey (1987: 114) defines metaphor as the description of something as if it were something else; an implied comparison; a transfer of meaning. Example in Mmankgodu (page 25)

14. Ke Peiši a'bo Kgabo, serurubele sa mabala, mauwe.

14. He is Peiši a'bo Kgabo, the butterfly of many colours, mauwe.

In this line Peiši is equated with the butterfly of many colours.

3.3.2.1.2. Personification

Heese and Lawton (1978:63) regard personification as a kind of image where the 'something concrete' relates to human beings, while the 'something else' is not human. Southey (1987; 114) states that

personification is a kind of metaphor in which human characteristics are given to non-human things. Example in Mmankgodu (page 25)

7. Ke Mahata a hata meboto dihlogo, mauwe

7. He is Mahata who stamps hills'heads, mauwe

Hills 'meboto' in this line are personified because they have 'heads'.

3.4. The functional value of the songs

The concise Oxford English Dictionary (2001: 940) defines music as the art or science of combining vocal or instrumental sounds to produce beauty of form, harmony and expression of emotion.

There is music for all important stages in the life cycle of a person, that is, from birth to death. 'Kgopha' initiation songs as folksongs comprises the poetry and music of groups whose literature was transmitted from generation to generation through oral tradition.

The functions served are amongst others, historical, conative, social, political, cognitive, entertainment, educative and communicative functions. In this study the following functions will be discussed, viz, social, communicative, educative, conative and cognitive.

3.4.1. Social value

The concise Oxford English Dictionary (2001: 1361) defines social as relating to rank and status in society:- woman of high social standing. Every society has a system of laws, social ethics and precepts. Every member of the society is bound to conform to certain obligations and codes of conduct within the society. Monnig (1967: 124) says puberty ceremony is a socio-political maturity. This explanation shows the importance of a woman in the society.

During 'kgopha' initiation the songs sung by the women are to welcome the girls to a new status of life. For example, the song sung for the girls on the first day they enter seclusion hut.

Mohlakola

1. Mohlakola wee
2. Ba hlakola kgopha
3. Mohlako wee
4. Ba hlakola kgopha
5. Mo hlakoleng 'bo...
6. A tsene bangweng
7. Mohlako wee
8. A a tsene bangweng

1. Mohlako wee
2. They wipe the matured girl
3. Mohlako wee
4. They wipe the matured girl
5. Wipe her please
6. So that she must join others
7. Mohlako wee
8. Let her join others

By this song the women welcome the girls into womanhood. The girl crosses the bridge from childhood to adulthood, she therefore has to leave the childish behaviour behind.

3.4.2. Communicative value

During the period of seclusion in 'kgopha' initiation, several rituals of a highly secretive nature are performed. This is done through the medium of music. Example in the song Mmankgodu, the girl is asked the names of the father and of the uncle of her child. She gives them the names for example, of the father, Mahata and of the uncle, Peiši. In this song, the two parties, that is, the girl and the women do communicate through singing. Thus music has the important function

of providing the medium for communicating traditional rituals through song texts.

3.4.3. Educative value

Every community brings up its young according to its norms and values. Through songs during 'kgopha' initiation, the girls are informed about how to treat men and cope in future. Some of the moral lessons given are about secret, respect, love, perseverance, obstinacy. Example is the song, Holahola. This song is dealing with obstinacy. According to the concise Oxford English Dictionary (2001: 983) obstinacy is stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or chosen course of action.

In Holahola, lines 5 and 7

5. Kgophana ge e le tsweya

7. Re tla e ntšha botsweya

5. If the small matured girl is quarrelsome

7. We will take stubbornness out of her

By this song the women aimed at removing stubbornness out of the girls. This is done through singing and pressing of the girls fingers.

At the end of the initiation the girls would know that stubbornness does not pay. A ream woman is one who is co-operative, kind, approachable, respectful and obedient.

3.4.4. Conative value

'Kgopha' initiation songs have a conative value, as they can induce a state of fear, hatred, affection, pride or courage.

Example: Lejapela

'Motsomi batalala, lejapele le e tla'.

The hunter crouch, the rock-rabbit eater is coming.

Nke o tshele

1. Nke of tshele matshelane
 2. Noka e tletše
 3. Nke o tshele
1. Cross over one who crosses
 2. The river is full
 3. Cross over

The two songs are sung during the soaking in water ceremony. The girls are induced with a state of fear as they approach the well or the river. They are ordered not to scream and after the ceremony they feel proud of themselves and courageous to face any situation in life.

3.4.5. Cognitive value

Cognitive value refers to the ability of the mind to grasp the message and meaning of the song. The song affects the participants psychologically as well as their reactions to the impact. This means that the song may stimulate the participants' imagination and sensitivity of being a woman.

For example, the song

Sankobela

1. Sekgotwana wee sa nkobela
 2. Ke godile bagolo ba ka
 3. Sekgotwana se nkobetše
 4. Letswele le tšwile
 5. Le tšwetše banna.
1. Small ramp brought hardship for me
 2. I am grown up my elders
 3. The small ramp brought hardship
 4. The breast emerged
 5. It emerged for men

This song is sung during the mounting of the anthills ceremony. The singing collaborate with the tough exercises, for example, running and mounting anthills with one leg while both hands are put on their heads. The words of the song put the girls in the stead of the grown up women, who are ready for men.

All the 'kgopha' initiation songs have one main aim, that is, to prepare the girls for womanhood and the maintenance of future marital life.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF 'KGOPHA' INITIATION IN MOULDING FAMILY LIFE

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Groenewald (1996:14) states:

Culture acts as a screen between a person and social reality, colouring it in such a way that his or her interpretation and understanding of reality may be totally different from that of a person of another culture.

In a lot of African societies culture and education have always occupied a very central role in the formation of the individual, his or her socialization and overall progress of the collective group. Learning and culturalisation were considered continuing processes that took place from birth until death with family unit, extended family, the village and the entire community participating (Makgoba 1999: 213).

From the above discussion we deduce that according to the culture of African people, different age groups of the members of a society undergo various initiations to develop them to become responsible and competent members of the community. All these initiations are meant to prepare an individual for a productive role to play amongst his/her fellows.

The Basotho ba Leboa of Southern Africa, just like other ethnic groups in Africa also have their initiation practices and other ritual customs. One other initiation practice is 'kgopha'. 'Kgopha' initiation is meant for girls when they reach puberty stage. Every initiation has its expected results. The 'kgopha' initiation is meant to prepare the young women for adulthood. It is also concerned with the preparation of a marital status in later life.

4.2. ASPECTS OF CULTURE AS EMBRACED IN THE 'KGOPHA' INITIATION

There are aspects of culture that are catered for in 'kgopha' initiation.

4.2.1. Social aspects

The main function of the initiation schools is to prepare people for fuller participation in society. During 'kgopha' initiation, the girls are inspired with the spirit of togetherness among themselves and the older women. This helps the initiation school to run smoothly without problems and it also enables the young women to approach their community in a different way after the initiation. The initiates are therefore empowered to live with their family members in harmony, i.e. their husbands and the in-laws.

4.2.2. Moral aspects

Moral aspects have do's and don'ts which contribute in the development of ethics in the person's life. The concise Oxford Dictionary (2001: 490) defines ethics as moral principles governing or influencing conduct. Makgoba (1999:15) adds to say that it is generally accepted that ethics are:

- a general pattern or a way of life,
- a set of rules of conduct or moral code; and
- an inquiry about the rules of conduct or way of life.

It has been discovered from the above authors that moral values contributed to the development of moral fibre. The moral aspects of life also receive attention of the teachers of 'kgopha' initiation. The 'kgopha' initiates are instilled with the sense of choosing between right and wrong.

4.2.3. Respect

The notion of respect for elders in a typical African society is not uncommon and another sound foundation for a healthy relation

amongst people. The notion of respect for elders presupposes a variety of social networks interacting in a variety of ways on the basis of mutual relationships between the young and old, the high and low ranking people in any hierarchy, the members of different social groups and organizations, the members of the smallest social units in a community (a family) and so on (Makgoba 1999: 158).

Respect in 'kgopha' initiation is taught by letting the initiates learn to respect their senior initiates, one another and the elderly women. They are expected to be humble, e.g. when they greet the elderly they must bow and put their hands together as a sign of respect. This is automatically applied even later in their marital life. In this way, the initiates learn to respect the members of the community in general. As a result the 'kgopha' graduate would then be able to respect her spouse when married. Formerly women who had undergone 'kgopha' initiation were able to respect their husbands and in-laws, so they could run their families smoothly. The women would have developed empathy and they would treat everybody in the family, including extended family members fairly. Divorces then were rare.

4.2.4. Humility

BlancheSheffler (1993:87) states that after all, the purpose of initiation ceremonies is first, by a process of public humiliation, to make the victim aware of his inferiority and then to extract from him, through some painful form of ordeal (difficult and painful experience), proof of the courage which alone can entitle him to redemption from his shameful singularity in membership of the privileged community.

The 'kgopha' initiates were subjected to harsh activities such as 'mašilo a mmatlou' to eradicate stubbornness in these young

women. In later life this contributed to respect in the family. A woman is not supposed to shout and exchange words with her spouse. A humble and respectful woman is a good mentor, a good supporter and a good helper of her husband.

4.2.5. Bravery, tolerance and perseverance

Makgoba (1999:154) lists some norms and values that are typical to African humanism; justice; respect for a person and property; tolerance; compassion with and sensitivity to the aged, handicapped and the less privileged, clear-cut sex and marriage controls, unwavering obedience to adults, parents, seniors and authority, courtesy, reliability, honesty and loyalty.

The 'kgopha' initiates were taught to be brave during the act of soaking in deep waters. They were not allowed to run away or scream and in that way their bravery, tolerance, perseverance and determination was tested. In a later stage the initiates were able to be brave where necessary 'mmago ngwana o swara thipa ka bogaleng', (the mother of the child shall try by all means, however dangerous, to save the child from a dangerous situation), to tolerate, e.g. in marital life 'makoti' (new bride) is expected to tolerate petty treatments she is subjected to by the in-laws in that particular 'kgoro' (clan). For example her husband's mother and sisters may initially not accept her willingly in their family.

4.2.6. Secrecy

Groenewald (1996:60) states that confidentiality as to what learnt in the initiation is paramount. In 'kgopha' initiation, like other initiations, secrecy takes an integral part. The young women were taught to keep secrets. Partly this is encouraged in order not to tell the uninitiated the activities practiced in the 'kgopha' initiation, in order not to deter them from enrolling in the 'kgopha' initiation in future.

The activities of 'kgopha' initiation are also not expected to be told to members of the opposite sex and to the public. They are only known amongst the graduates and the initiates themselves.

In later life (marital life) these women are able to keep secrets in their families in matters that need not be told to other people outside the family. Like the saying that maintains that every cupboard has its skeleton, each family has its particular problems. So, nobody should go along shouting about the problems of her own family, as if it were the only family that experiences problems.

The 'kgopha' initiates are already acquainted with the secrecy matter when they graduate from the initiation. This helps them to maintain their families in future.

4.2.7. Physical aspects

Lamola (2003) said that throughout 'kgopha' initiation the initiates undergo extensive exercises. These are suitable physical exercises that prepare the initiates for future marital life. The exercises are meant to keep physical being trim, strong and enduring. The health state of the bodies of the young women is nurtured. Even during pregnancy, the women's body would have been proactively prepared for the task of giving birth and carrying the baby, during 'kgopha' initiation.

4.2.8. Formulae (melao)

Kaschula (1993: 348) states that 'milayo' worth knowing because they are pure knowledge and therefore in a way magically strong, but more especially because they are the keys which unlock the doors that lead to full acceptance within certain social groups, recruited on the basis of association of age mates rather than on kinship and rank.

Some 'milayo' are intended to remind initiates of the rules of behaviour, especially in connection with sex matters, but their chief value, to the average initiate who does not aspire to being a ritual expert, is as passwords which prove that one has been to a certain school and is therefore entitled to privileges due to the members and past-members of that school- notably participation in special feasts. In the absence of written certificates, 'milayo' act as credentials when a person claims rights in a district where he or she is not known.

The 'kgopha' initiates are taught amongst other things, a language which is figurative in nature. This language is full of imagery and is usually full of metaphors. The language is taught, used at 'kgopha' initiation and also used consequently by the graduates amongst themselves after graduating. The language cannot be understood by the uninitiated, and the graduates can use it amongst themselves even in the midst of the general public without being understood by the uninitiated. By so doing, the graduates of 'kgopha' initiation develop special pride, associated with the knowledge they get from 'kgopha' initiation. This automatically puts them to a proverbial higher level of position as against those young women; who had not yet undergone the 'kgopha' initiation. This aspect gives the graduates power, authority and identity.

In a sense 'milayo' are a form of a magical power, that is socially oriented, that grows in proportion to the growth of one's social personality (Kaschula 1993:348). The specialty of this special language enables the graduate in martial life to communicate and solve the problems amongst her fellow graduates and elderly women, in order for a problem to be solved amicably. So, through formulae taught at the 'kgopha' initiation, a harmonious life is encouraged among the communities.

4.2.9. Sex education

Groenewald (1996:110) states that during their seclusion, the girls or 'namwali' as they are also known, are taught through songs and dances, the various requirements of a grown-up woman and practical instructions in sex life and child rearing.

At the 'kgopha' initiation the young women are taught and trained about sex matters. These young women are trained generally how to keep a husband, to care for him and to satisfy him sexually. One of the sex practices is the elongation of labia minora. The elongation of labia minora starts at the early stage, i.e. during the 'bjale' initiation, and the process continues during the 'kgopha' initiation (Sathekge: 2003).

The elongated labia minora contributes a lot in marital life. The elongation is done so that men can be gratified during sexual intercourse. This will lead to the satisfaction of both parties, i.e. the husband and wife. The family (marital life) is then maintained as the satisfaction stops both of them from going out and search their satisfaction.

The elongated labia minora can also function as a preventive measure. The fully elongated labia minora can be used to tie a knot (go bofa lehuto) in order to:

- prevent unwanted penetration, e.g. when the woman is menstruating, as menstruation is dangerous and could condemn and weaken the man. The 'kgopha' initiates are taught that penetration during menstruation condemns and weakens the man and that when time goes on in life, performance in bed will no more be satisfying (Kgabi: 2003). This will cause the woman to go outside, as such this will lead to physical abuse as the husband will not allow his wife

to do that. When the girls reach marital life, they would have been empowered by this, so when they menstruate, they will tie knots and instead, the husbands will relief themselves between thighs. The marital life would therefore be maintained.

- prevent rape, e.g. the knot is used as defensive mechanism. No one including the husband could force the woman and penetration be possible against the will of he woman. This therefore contributes a lot in the prevention of rape and sexually transmitted diseases (STD's).

From the above discussion one realizes how important 'kgopha' initiation is in the moulding of marital life. The submission of the women to their husbands, sex education, ethics and formulae contributed to the well being of the family life and this led to the stability of the nation. It is therefore worthwhile for youth to learn about these before they reach marital stage. 'Sehlare se kobja e sa le se se nanana' (the plant is blend while still young).

5.1. Findings

The aim of this study was to determine factors of 'kgopha' initiation that contributed towards the moulding and maintenance of traditional marital life. The following findings came to light and they are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

- 5.1.1. Through the study one comes to the realization that sex is seen as the most important aspect in the family life. Both man and woman should be satisfied sexually, in order to run the family smoothly. The girls are taught that the secret of a successful family is to compromise. If the husband is in need of sex, the woman should comply with this need, and this should also apply to the man. This will then prevent quarrel between them, which can lead to divorce.
- 5.1.2. From this study it has been discovered that respect for elders and all the members of the community is seen as the sound foundation of healthy relationships amongst the people. Respect is also seen as a tool for binding the community members together. By respecting one another, i.e. men and women, the spirit of harmony will prevail in the families, and even to the extended families. This will help the parents in the rearing of their children, as they will automatically copy from them. Respect builds the spirit of tolerance and compassion amongst the family members. Respect is therefore the value concept that is perceived as one of the ingredients of 'ubuntu'.
- 5.1.3. The study has shown that humility leads to humanity. Young men and women are encouraged to be humble. A humble person usually affects those who are around him/her. This will stop arguments and fights amongst the family members. The crime

and abuse will be eliminated. Ultimately this will lead to peace in the families and the stability of the nation.

5.1.4. From the study, it has been discovered that during 'kgopha' initiation, just like in other initiations, the girls are taught the norms and values of their culture, and it is done through songs. Formulae, norms and values prepare the boys and girls for adulthood. These help them to be determined to the values of their norms and also to be realistically obedient to the authority of these norms as sound directives for life. This ultimately helps them in their maintenance and moulding of the traditional marital life.

5.1.5. From this research, one has also come to realize that physical fitness is important in one's life. A healthy and tough body can be able to perform different duties. Men and women become socially engaged in the activities of the community. They live with the spirit of working together as the community members, e.g. by taking part in 'matšema' (plural of the word letšema). Letšema is the way groups of people of similar interest help one another to accomplish the work of each individual member in the group, in turns without remuneration.. The 'matšema' contribute to the strong links amongst different age groups in the society. This gives them a sense of belonging.

5.2. Recommendations

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

5.2.1. For the families to last, both men and women should respect one another. They should know that for a marriage to survive both need to compromise. A peaceful family leads to a peaceful nation. The rearing of children should be the responsibility of both men and women. These values are learnt at 'kgopha' initiation and it will be worthwhile to see to it that this initiation practice do not become extinct.

- 5.1.1 The concept of retaining traditional norms and values should be taken into consideration. Each society is what it is because of its norms and values. It is therefore vital for Blacks to go back to their roots. They should live according to the norms and standards of their culture. By so doing, their children will automatically be cultured and become responsible citizens. This is the objective that 'kgopha' ceremony achieves and needs to be retained.
- 5.2.3. Having sex before marriage should be discouraged among the youth. There should be workshops where teenagers are to be enlightened about the importance of virginity and disadvantages of becoming a parent at early stages as purported by 'kgopha' initiation. The elongation of labia minora is very important for men and women in the prevention of divorce, rape and the spreading of STD's and AIDS. These practices need to involve health professionals, like medical practitioners and nurses.
- 5.2.4. As everything has its advantages and disadvantages, so the 'kgopha' initiation. Its disadvantages are the ill-treatment of the initiates by the older women. For example 'mašilo a mmatlou' and the merging of the initiates in the deep waters should be abolished as these practices do not respect the dignity of a person.
- 5.2.5. Finally it can be said that 'kgopha' initiation contributed a lot towards the maintenance and moulding of marital life. It would be to the benefit of society, for the Department of Education to take the 'kgopha' initiation syllabus into consideration, i.e. it should be revised and modified so as to be included in the school programmes. By so doing the following would be under control:
- divorces
 - abuse
 - street kids
 - crime
 - STD's and AID

5.1.2 Suggestion for further research: During the course of this study, it became evident that further research is needed in the sphere of other initiations related to 'kgopha' initiation, which also contributes to the maintenance and the moulding of the traditional marital life. Further research may help in bringing other recommendation about marital life.

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