

**TRADITIONAL PRACTICES OF *NYALUSO YA VHANA* IN A VENDA HOME  
SETTING: AN AFROCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Avhurengwi Florence Murovhi, hereby declare that the thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in African Studies at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my own work in design and execution and that all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored *Nyaluso ya vhana*, the traditional child rearing practices in Vhavanḁa families. Child rearing practices are associated with culture, norms and beliefs of a group. However, due to modernisation and globalisation, community and family are concerned that child rearing influences are no longer closely connected to traditional practices, which poses a societal challenge. Furthermore, the positive aspects of traditional child rearing practices were never circulated. As a result, it appears to have no place in the contemporary child rearing practices. The purpose of this study was to explore the traditional child rearing practices in Vhavanḁa families. The intention was to establish if there are areas of traditional practices that were useful, and that should be promoted. A qualitative research design was used. Data collection was through one-on-one interviews with 16 participants. Results show that traditional Vhavanḁa child rearing practices entail the following: i). role modelling good behaviour, ii). Respect as an important ingredient of role modelling, iii). Perseverance as a virtue that was inculcated in children through various ways, iv). Participation in household chores, v). Taking a village to raise a child, vi). Traditional leaders helping the community in fostering culture and traditional child-rearing practices, and vii). Rituals and taboos as backbones in traditional child rearing practices. It was believed that the deliberate guidance and discipline-oriented practices, contributed to the positive child development and healthy citizenship. This study provided insights in the positive aspects of traditional Vhavanḁa child rearing practices.

**Key words:** *Nyaluso ya vhana*, Child rearing practices, Traditional practices;  
Knowledge holders, Vhavanḁa culture

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my late husband, Nditsheni Peter Murovhi, who has been the foundation and pillar of my strength. Before he passed on, he said to me, “Never let anyone or anything discourage you to reach your goal.” During his lifetime, he dropped off from his studies and remained with the children at home, allowing me to continue with my studies. His selfless attitude pushed me to where I am today.

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Creator Bless and give you more Wisdom for the sake of those who will fall into your hands.

## GLOSSARY OF TSHIVENDA TERMS

Domba	The final stage of girls' initiation
Khongodoli	First food prepared for the newborn baby
Khube	Game of gazing which hand has hidden a pebble
Khwara	Scale of an animal used for child immunisation.
Lufhaho	Scoop
Luselo	An apparatus used in the process of maize grinding.
Luthede	A medicine smeared around the head of a child during the process of muthuso
Mavhele	Maize meal.
Mirero	Proverbs
Mudzumbamo	Hide and seek play
Makhulutshikegulu	Grandmother
Muḽa	Male initiation.
Musevhetho	Junior female initiation
Musi	Grinding log.
Musidzana	Girl
Muthatha	Carry basket
Muthuso	A child immunization process.
Mutuli	Mortar
Ngano	Folktales
ḽwana	Child.
Nyaluso ya ḽwana	Child rearing practices.
ḽyaluso	Rear, guide, coach, mentor.
Pfene	Baboon
Pfure	Seeds of mupfure that produces special oil for different uses.
Thai	Riddles
Sefo	Sieve
Swanzwo	Medicinal portion used for muthuso.



Tshitangani	Tshivenda kitchen
Tshiunza	Food prepared for the child.
Tsingandedede	Circle dance
Tshivenda	A language spoken by Vhavenda people
U kotha	Process of greeting in Vhavenda culture by one knee down done by females only.
U losha	Process of greeting in Vhavenda culture.
U nzwera	When the child gets sick and becomes thin.
U sinḁa	The process of grinding mealies.
U ṁamba vhutuka	The final stage of boys' initiation
Vhakoma	Headman of a certain portion of a village.
Vhavenda	A nation found in Limpopo Province, Vhembe District
Vho Makhadzi	A sister to the late chief.
Makhadzi	A sister to the chief
Vhusha	Girls' second stage of initiation
Zwidade	Traditional children's songs

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCP:	Child Care Practices
EU:	European Union
ECD:	Early Child Development
GAA:	Group Areas Act
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IK:	Indigenous Knowledge
IKS:	Indigenous Knowledge System
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
NGO:	None Governmental Organizations
RDP:	Reconstruction and Development Program
SA:	South Africa
SABC:	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SDO:	Social Development Officials
TKH:	Traditional Knowledge Holders
UK:	United Kingdom
UNICEF:	United Nation Children's Emergency Fund
USA:	United States of America
VDM:	Vhembe District Municipality
WHO:	World Health Organisation

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## CHAPTER 1

### STUDY OVERVIEW

#### 1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Child rearing practices and the effects on the public are themes of enthusiasm for research and academic discussions comprehensively crosswise over borders. The field of child rearing has promoted enthusiasm for many especially in the social sciences. Child rearing is not a simple errand, as parents and guardians of all societies verifiably battle to set up their children for the unavoidable complications of life (Yorburg, 2002). Child rearing practices are often guided by parents and guardians' own encounters and how they were mingled, instinctual feelings of good and bad, and their general social convictions (Hamner & Turner, 1985).

Family, community, culture and traditions play an important role in raising children. In most traditional African cultures, child rearing was a societal agenda. Parents, including other family members are more responsible for *Nyaluso ya vhana* (child rearing). In addition, traditional home settings for Vhavenda in the past made it simple for families to guide children towards the right direction in life, because of its extension; every member of the family is responsible for the task of rearing the child.

Culture shapes guardians' opinions about child rearing practices, conduct administration, order and control (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Generally, in Vhavenda culture, a child is raised by the whole community; *Nwana wa muṅwe ndi ṅwana wau*, meaning that another person's child is yours. The Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria have a saying, *Eniyan kan lo ma nbi omo, sugbon gbogbo ara ilu lo ma nto ju won*, meaning that although only one person is a biological mother or father, the entire society becomes social parents when it comes to child training and rearing (Emmanuel, Akinyemi, & Nimotalai, 2012). It should

be noted that many African countries have similar sayings that speak about the child being the child of the community.

However, the current practices seem to be mainly inward focused; each parent and each family do it their own way without points of intersections and appreciation for connectivity. According to Evans and Meyer (1994:13) “in some Sub-Saharan African countries, traditional child rearing practices both positive and negative, are changing as families are exposed to other beliefs and practices”. The disappearance and absence of the traditional practices of *Nyaluso ya vhana* (child rearing) is alleged to be one of the root causes of why a lot of children are being involved in acts of ill-discipline, substance abuse, inappropriate sexual activities, and so on.

Previously, the indigenous knowledge that the families held was rich in a way that it helped child rearing to be a collaborative activity. Child rearing activities included activities such as singing and dancing, evening activities such as riddles, folktales and storytelling. Evans and Myers (1994) argue that, for years anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have been providing descriptions of how children are raised within cultures around the world, including the beliefs and practices surrounding pregnancy, childbirth and treatment of young children. Therefore, it is an indication that children around the whole world are reared differently and the environment that the child comes from will shape his or her character. It is for this reason that parents tend to come up with their own rearing styles (Smith, Dolores, Gail & Mosby, 2003). The African charter on the rights and welfare of the child together with Children’s Rights under South African Bill of Rights focuses largely on the protection of children and not on the importance of traditional child rearing practices. Carter (2011) attest that the Jamaican community although under pressure from the government to abolish some traditional practices, never conforms to the pressure, but insists on rearing their children in the traditional way. The debates about the contribution of traditional practices in child rearing, and their contribution to curbing the perceived ill-discipline and lawlessness among children is currently underway.



Traditional African child rearing practices largely believe in discipline through physical punishment as a necessary condition for bringing up respectful and respectable children (Carter, 2011). Smith, Dolores, Gail & Mosby (2003), from the Jamaican experience, agree that the Jamaicans believe in corporal punishment as a means of discipline and they resorted to it, although it was regarded as having negative psychological outcomes by those against. It is believed that children's rights are regarded as a 'foreign' concept which has done more harm than good. Changes on the social and political fronts have resulted in changes in society's value system. Smith, Dolores, Gail & Mosby, 2003 claim that parents and elders seem to not have the authority for disciplining children which the generations of elders before them had, hence they are forced to choose what they think is the best. They further blame democracy for bringing in a social system that is foreign to their culture and traditions that are disruptive to their way of doing things. Teaching children is now difficult because the adults have been stripped of their traditional authority. Some literature has reflected a concern about the growing moral decay among the youth of South Africa.

According to Gyeke (1998:324) "there seems to exist a moral vacuum which has eliminated something that used to be there in Africa". The values that are well-appreciated in African traditional societies seem to have gone amiss in our modern society. Children seem to lack some of the common moral values shared across Africa such as, charity, honesty, hospitality, generosity, loyalty, truthfulness, solidarity, and respect for nature, elders and God (Kinoti 1992:84). Majola (1988:30) also rues harmony, peace, friendliness and decency" for good morals. Gyekye further identifies "kindness, compassion, benevolence, and concern for others.

Child rearing is intended to influence a child to pick up something that will help him/her in the process of development. How a child winds up learning turns into an issue when a youngster's idea of oneself is adjusted. "There are different types of adapting, however, how one learns depends principally on what is accessible in the earth for learning" (Ganga cited in Ganga & Chinyoka, 2017:38). I agree with this sentiment because parents are

role models to their children and the home environment helps the child to learn, although some parents may have the desire that the child do or become what they wish.

## 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A lot has been said about child rearing practices, but little has been said about indigenous approach to child-rearing practices in the Vhavanḁa culture. There are a lot of contestations about the parenting practices. Most of the Early Childhood Development (ECD), and Human Development and Educational Psychology literature focuses on Euro-Western child rearing practices. Carter (2011), supported by Ladzani (2014) purported that some literature about traditional child rearing practices by some missionary scholars like Hofmeyer, Wasseman and Creux quoted by Ladzani (2014), as a result of misconceptions and a lack of knowledge about culture and traditions of African people, gave wrong information, by regarding black people as creatures without a soul who need modern education to make them human. Most of their findings were influenced by the Western culture, leaving African cultural child rearing practices to be less desired by those who are not familiar with it.

The current trends are such that unlike in the olden days, elderly people are left out of child-rearing issues in homes. As a result, the indigenous cultural knowledge they had regarding child rearing is not shared. They die living behind a nation with traditional-cultural bankruptcy (Olutayo, 1996:77-90). Instead of the knowledge being passed from generation to generation while they are still alive. Since, African cultures depended on oral history, the cultural child-rearing practices are not documented, leaving parents, families and communities without any point of reference. This study aimed at exploring the traditional Vhavanḁa child-rearing practices with an intention to lift positive child-rearing practices that could be integrated to contemporary practices.

## 1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the traditional child-rearing practices in Vhavenḁa families. The intention is to establish if there are areas of traditional practices that were useful, and that should be promoted and to develop a programme that would facilitate the integration of traditional practices in contemporary child-rearing practices.

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To establish the traditional cultural Vhavenḁa child-rearing practices regarding *nyaluso ya vhana* (child rearing),
- To explore the contemporary child-rearing practices in selected rural households, and
- To develop a program that would facilitate the integration of positive traditional Vhavenḁa child-rearing practices to the contemporary practices.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions in this study:

- What are the traditional Vhavenḁa child-rearing practices?
- What are the contemporary child-rearing practices in selected rural households?
- Which program would facilitate the integration of traditional Vhavenḁa child-rearing practices in effective contemporary child-rearing practices?

## 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study makes both a methodological and theoretical contribution. The methodological part lies in the manner data was collected and the approach to the topic which led to

extensive triangulation. This was done by seeking clarity of information from participants more than once but finding the same response.

In addition, the use of an indigenous research paradigm which entailed deeper reflective conversations, brought to the body of knowledge a unique contribution about the positive traditional indigenous ways of raising a child. Information from participants and literature led to the development of a suitable program which influenced the inclusion of traditional child rearing practices in the modern life. The program also serves as a feedback process because rearing children depends on the way it is practiced.

The theoretical contribution lies in the fact that as this study has been developed from participants' data and literature reviews, it reveals how children were reared so that others may be alerted and learn how it was done. The information which the topic addresses, gives rich knowledge about how children were reared.

Traditional child-rearing practices in the Vhavanḁa culture have been regarded as a foundation for raising children. The outcomes of this study could be used to help different stake holders, such as the community, the family, policy developers, the researchers, indigenous knowledge holders, and schools in general.

Parents are regarded as the ones who hold the primary responsibility of raising the children, and will benefit by means of being educated, trained or workshopped on how children were reared, and how they can raise their children so that they also could pass the knowledge on to others.

Single parents will also gain knowledge about traditional child-rearing practices, norms and values, knowing that leaving their children under the care of grandparents is not as bad as they think.

Schools will benefit from this, because the study would have brought new knowledge as to how children were raised, therefore, the information would be made available in articles and books.

The academics are also one group that would benefit from the outcomes of this study because it may promote their interest into further research on the topic. The findings would help researchers to find answers and solutions from some of the questions this study has posed.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research will be grounded by the sankofa approach. Sankofanian originates from the word 'Sankofa' from the Ghanaian dialect called 'Twi.' San-ko-fa signifying return and get it, and it additionally alludes to the Asante Adinkra image which speaks about a flying bird with its head in reverse taking an egg from its back. The entire message is, "it is not forbidden to bring what is in danger of being abandoned". The Sankofa approach demonstrates that Africans must return to their foundations and ponder best practices of the past. This implies that whatever is considered good should not be discarded. There are some good childrearing practices the Vhavenda culture, which can be used in the contemporary society.

Asante (1980) emphasises the Afro-centric perspective by alluding to the fact that Africans must not stay adhered to their past, they should adapt to the present, yet not overlook what used to happen in the past. At the end of the day, the announcement advocates that Africans should train their children as to how they were reared. There is an adage that says "each one teaches one" which means that those who have traditional wisdom should teach the young generation about traditional custom and values.



Diagram 1: Illustration of the Sankofa bird indicating a return to the roots. This means that African people should be proud of their history and whatever is valuable should be integrated in today's life.

Source: <https://www.sankofa.org>

## 1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The research was conducted in the communities where individuals were visited. Working with elders who have more knowledge about the topic, requires more time. As a result, I was compelled to spend more time than scheduled. Traditionally, elderly people are not used to appointments, and as such, sometimes when I visited some of them, I found out that they were already engaged in other things, like looking after their cattle, or fetching wood from the forest. One day I was forced to wait for more than an hour as the participant I was visiting got a call to the royal house. To overcome this, rescheduled meetings were arranged to fit in their busy schedule, although it was not always possible but, at the end I was able to meet all participants.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

It is very important that key expressions or terms used in the study be defined. The definitions below are key terms used in the entire study.

### **1.8.1 Afro-Centric**

Afrocentricity is a paradigm based on the idea that African people should re-assess a sense of agency in order to achieve sanity. It is a revolutionary shift in thinking proposed as a constructural adjustment to black disorientation, decenteredness and lack of agency. (Asante, 1980).

### **1.8.2 Child-rearing practices**

In this study, child-rearing is a way in which culture, norms and values are transmitted from generation to generation in any group or society (Korbin 1983). It is in this process where the child learns moral values, ethical issues expectations from him/her by the family and community.

Child-rearing practices refer to bringing up children by parents or substitutes (Saramma & Thomas, 2010:171). This means the way parents and substitutes bring up their children by inculcating certain values, attitudes, opinions and beliefs through teaching, modelling and imitation.

### **1.8.3 Community**

In this study, I chose to use the definition by MacQueen et.al. (2001) which refers to a community as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings. They further define community as, literally, where prevention and intervention

take place. Community context has been identified as an important determinant of health outcomes.

Community is also defined as a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage or a locality inhabited by such a group or a social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists.

#### **1.8.4 Contemporary society**

Contemporary society is defined as a setting characterized by technological innovation and increasing human interconnection and globalization. It brings about changes such as increased life expectancy, literacy and gender equality, bringing a natural equilibrium. Gronow (1988:319-331) defines contemporary society as the predominance in both the market and state sectors, of social capital in the form of large, impersonal bureaucratic organizations operating according to the rule of law.

#### **1.8.5 Culture**

So many scholars have defined culture in different ways, but all agree and define it as follows:

In this research study, culture is defined as the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952:3-217) while Hudson, (1980:136-143) describes culture as socially acquired knowledge; in other words, as the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a society.

Fetterman (1998:7) "Culture is the sum of social group's observable patterns of behaviour, customs and way of life". He adds that culture embraces the ideas, beliefs and knowledge that characterize a certain group of people.



Gove and Webster (1961:552) define culture as the total pattern of human behaviour and its products embodied in thought, speech, action and artifacts and dependent upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generation using tools, language, and systems of abstract thought.

Hudson (1980:74) describes culture as socially acquired knowledge; that is, as the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a society. Ladzani (2014:19) with the same view refers to culture as that which a certain group of people have in common within a certain language such as behavioural patterns, beliefs and the way of doing things.

### **1.8.6 Extended family**

In this research study, extended family refers to as a family bond that exists between or relationship between a husband and wife, together with their children and other members of the family such as cousins, uncles, aunts living together or nearby (Treuthart, 1990:91).

With a concurring view, Jansen (2017: 718-814) defines extended family as any person related by blood or law who is outside of the family of origin and is not a primary caregiver or legal guardian. Therefore, extended family members can include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

### **1.8.7 Indigenous Knowledge.**

In this research study, Indigenous Knowledge refers to ideas and knowledge that have their origin in ancient history and have been carried over, unchanged over several generations (van Vlaenderen, 2000:1-11).

Flavier et al., (1995: 479) assert that Indigenous Knowledge may be regarded as local knowledge which is unique to every culture or society.

Warren and Mundial (1991) on the other hand, describe Indigenous Knowledge as knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. It is the basis for local-level decision making, in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host other activity in rural communities.

Dei et al., (2000:116) also attest that Indigenous Knowledge is a body of knowledge associated with the long-term occupancy of a certain place. This knowledge refers to traditional norms and social values, as well as to mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate peoples' way of living and making sense of their world.

### **1.8.8 Modernisation**

Modernisation is the transformation from a traditional, rural society by undergoing the comprehensive transformation that societies become modern. It is a continuous and open-ended process.

### **1.8.9 Nyaluso ya vhana**

*Nyaluso ya chana* is a Tshivenda term that means child-rearing or child upbringing.

### **1.8.10 Nuclear family**

Traditionally, a nuclear family or elementary family is a family group consisting of a pair of adults and their children (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, Encyclopedia Britannica).

Nuclear family is described in this study as part of the traditional family which includes, single parents, child headed households, and grandparents.

### **1.8.11 Parent**

Maser (2006:14) states that a parent is defined as a father or mother; one who begets or one who gives birth to or nurtures and raises a child; a relative who plays the role of guardian.

Parents are those adults with the duty of parenting children including infants, toddlers, and children in middle childhood and adolescents (Luster & Okagaki 2006: x).

### **1.8.12 Tradition**

Ladzani (2014:20) defines tradition as the process of passing down of information, beliefs and customs from generation to generation through the word of mouth or by institutions designed for such purposes. Supporting Ladzani's idea is Soanes and Stevenson (2005:1869) who defined tradition as the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way.

On the other hand, Gove and Webster (1961:2422) say "tradition is the process of handing down information, opinions, beliefs and customs by word of mouth or by example: transmission of knowledge and institutions through successive generations without written instruction which transmits culture from one generation of a society to another".

### **1.8.13 Traditional knowledge holders**

Given the complexity of human history and social organization, there can be no single definition for being indigenous (Mauro & Hardison, 2000:1263-1269)

Therefore, this means people who uphold the knowledge, skills and practices that are developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity are indigenous knowledge holders. (Anaya, 1996:611).

#### **1.8.14 Tshivenda culture**

In this study, Tshivenda culture is defined as a way of life of a group of people the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

### **1.9 CHAPTER ORGANISATION**

The work in this research study was covered in five chapters.

**Chapter 1** dealt with the study overview and included the problem statement, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, theoretical framework and definition of terms.

**Chapter 2** covers the literature review. Literature was reviewed under the following headings: Child rearing practices in the traditional family, Vhavana rituals and taboos in child rearing practices, The effects of quality of parenting, contemporary child rearing practices in selected rural households, contemporary child rearing in other countries, the effects of apartheid within the South African context on child rearing practices and the differences between African and Western child rearing practices.

**Chapter 3** outlines the research methodology, study area, data collection and how it was analysed, sampling procedure, ethical considerations, measures to ensure trust worthiness.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings. It also outlined the programme of integrating traditional and contemporary child rearing practices. The implication and evaluation were highlighted.

**Chapter 5** deals with the summary, evaluation, conclusions and recommendations. The chapter also outlines ideas for further study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with a review of literature by considering different views in rearing children in traditional ways. It also considers child rearing practices in other countries and other cultures. The chapter also sought to understand the ways in which the Vhavenda used to rear their children and these were carried out. The difference between this study and others is that it went further by closing the gap when exploring child rearing practices of Vhavenda, in an Afrocentric perspective. Traditional child-rearing practices is the process whereby children are traditionally guided, educated, moulded, trained, coached, mentored and shaped. Traditionally, an individual exists in relation to and for the group. The group includes family and community (Tumuti 1985:1-16). Tumuti further attests that, the bond of the extended family is an indispensable value in the African society where every member is concerned about how every individual member is doing. Several themes are discussed. These includes childrearing practices in the traditional family, ritual and taboos in traditional child rearing practices, the effect of quality parenting, contemporary child rearing practices in Vhavenda rural household, contemporary child rearing practices in other countries, the effect of Apartheid within the South African context on child rearing practices, similarities between traditional and western childrearing practices, differences between traditional and western childrearing practices, social and cultural setting in child rearing practices, parent and child discipline, childrens'behaviour and lastly cultural and socio-economic circumstances in child rearing practices by parents in Vhavenda families.

#### 2.1 CHILD REARING PRACTICES IN THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

Traditional child rearing practices brings with it the notion that this practice cannot function without the family and the community. Holborn and Eddy (2011:2-11) define a family as

a group of people who are tied by marriage, blood, adoption or cohabitation, staying together or not, interacting and communicating with each other in their respective family roles, maintaining a common culture and governed by family rules. This definition clearly reflects a traditional family. Other scholars gave their definition of a traditional family as large families consisted of more than two generations per household (Makiwane, Nduna & Khalema, 2016:24-40). This brings the idea that not a single definition of a family could give us the true meaning of the word. Children who are born and reared from traditional families are said to be well mannered. However, it is argued that traditional families have lost their power and authority and traditional values have vanished (Popenoe, 1993:527).

Every community has its own way of raising children depending on culture and beliefs. Culture shapes guardians' opinions about child rearing practices, conduct, administration, order and control (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This is a wide idea claiming each country has its own convention and social method for living. My focus lies in traditional child rearing practices in Vhavenda families. As indicated by Burns (1993:141), "Each cultural group in which an individual grows up is a one-to-one background which affects child rearing attitudes and child rearing styles". Traditional Knowledge Holders (TKH) depict that traditional child rearing is how children are raised in a family that is accustomed by beliefs, standards and qualities that depend on culture of that society.

The child is expected to live and comply with those viewpoints of that community. Children in the traditional families are guided by everyone from the family to the entire community at large. Both Santrock (2006:553-579) and Wenner and Smith (2000) assert that the methods used to raise children are passed on from generation to generation, from parent to child. It was also evident that when that process unfolded, the cultural values and traditions are also passed on. Therefore, children were expected to behave the way their parents expect and to carry that to their own parenthood. Thus, parents passed their parenting practices to their children down to their great grandchildren. Stephens (2007:526-535) adds that children are very sensitive. Whatever behaviour they see from adults, they copy and practice without any idea of whether it is right or wrong. That is why

Stephens (2007) emphasises that parents should practice what they preach, because children are very gullible; it is a mark and a legacy for their children.

The change of family structures has an impact on how parents and everyone around children should play the role to provide care and give children their needs and wellbeing. The family is regarded as a foundation that connects peoples' lives. Levy and Fallers (1959:647-651) define family as a social group composed of adults of both sexes with a common residence, maintaining a socially approved relationship and having one or more children from their relationship. Coser (1964:880-885) adds that family is a group of people composed of husband, wife and their children born in their wedlock and united by moral, legal and social rights and obligations. Hill, Davis, Prout, and Tisdall (2004:77-96) give their definition of family as consisting of children under 18 years, where family ties are significant in adult-to-adult relationships. No matter what definition is used to define a family, it is very important because it influences the way the child is understood in the family context. Although different scholars gave their definition of family, they tend to agree that a family is a place where children are found with those who have the responsibility of nurturing and educating them. According to the African culture, the extended family plays a significant role in the rearing of the African child.

Family is regarded as an important institution existing within a broader socio-economic context. The family as a social institution is primarily responsible for the transmission of socio-cultural values, morals and norms. However, most children face difficulties in the adoption of desired social behaviour. Ladzani (2014) has shown that there is a growing moral decay among the youth of South Africa. Shutte (2001:1) posited that there seems to exist a moral vacuum which has eliminated something that used to be there in Africa. The values that are well-appreciated in African traditional societies seem to have gone amiss in our modern society. "Children seem to lack some of the common moral values shared across Africa such as, charity, honesty, hospitality, generosity, loyalty, truthfulness, solidarity, and respect for nature, elders and God." (Kinoti, 1992:84). Majola (1988:30) mentions the loss of "harmony, peace, friendliness and decency", while,



Gyekye (1998:324) identifies the loss of “kindness, compassion, benevolence, and concern for others”. Kagitcibasi (2005), who studied families, developed and differentiated three patterns of family interaction; those on total interdependence, independence and emotional interdependency. It is clearly indicated in the first family model of total interdependence that it resembles the traditional family where the child grows totally depending on the support of the family and later becomes the provider of that family. The second family model is that of independence, where the child grows up in a nuclear family where independency is encouraged, and their individualistic self is motivated, unlike in the first model, where the child is developed towards a person who can take care of others. The third family model is one of emotional interdependency, which involves both of the first two and where self-development is emphasised. Therefore, the researcher is of the opinion that the child growing in the family from the last model will benefit in life.

The process of socialisation refers to how a child, through education, training, observation, and experience, acquires skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are required for successful adaptation to a family and a culture Parke & Burial (2008:95-138); Ladd & Pettit (2002:269-309). As indicated above, the family therefore is a center where the child receives basic education before adapting to the outside world. Therefore, sociologists argue that socialisation is the way social and cultural ways are achieved by means of continuing teaching the young generation, whereas the psychologists regard socialisation as how other people have influence in other people’s thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

Pnina (2001:14) states that “Socialisation is the main process of communication amongst community and the child and how the society apply that in raising the child.” He adds that, through that process, the child adopts and alters the characters in norms and values in everyday life. Two studies that have been carried out amongst Vhavenda people, indicates that parents intended to shape their children to be better persons, obedient and honest, who stay away from bad behaviours of alcohol abuse, fighting, drug abuse, lying and stealing (Zimba & Otaala 1995:24; Smith & Mosby 2003:121-134).

Others argue that parent-child play is the best contact that can promote intellectual development (Hinitz & Lascarides, 2000). Myers (1995:153-176) indicates the importance of children's play. As recorded, “play can teach children the abilities of collaboration, respect, teamwork and creativity” (Zimba & Otaala, 1995:24). The challenge in urban communities is that space is limited, unlike in the rural areas where there is an abundance of space (Bernard Van Leer Foundation, 2010:199-213). Others say play enhances the fine motor development. Fine motor development refers to smaller movements that occur in the wrists, hands, fingers, feet and toes. They involve smaller actions such as picking up objects between the thumb and finger, writing carefully, and even blinking. These two motor skills work together to provide coordination (Trawick-Smith 2007).

Ganga and Chinyoka (2017:28) argue that, “the patterns of raising children and the connection among parent and child are essential parts of the training and socialization of a child”. Prior to the presentation of formal training in different parts of Africa, there existed customary methods for rearing children. Obvious jobs, commitments, rights, desires and authorities were recommended (Durojaiye, cited in Mwamwenda 2010:141). With the appearance of formal instruction and the impact of various societies, the customary parent-child connections and child rearing practices have been modified. Hardly any customary African group still holds certain parts of the raising examples flawlessly, yet many have been weakened by the Western culture.

It has been further insisted that some African nations demonstrate that there are no obvious patterns of raising children, yet rather a mix of both African and Western styles (Ganga & Chinyoka 2017). Maybe this is because of changes in parental jobs, for instance, mothers are currently getting utilised outside the home, and much of the time, housemaids play the mother's roles - whose qualities and standards are probably going to be imparted in the child as she/he develops. The supposition is that these significant child rearing practices are additionally normal raising examples seen in Africa today.

Socialisation in the Vhavenḁa culture was rendered in activities whereby elderly people teach young children and older children teaching young children. Activities such as *tsingandedede* (circle dance) were performed during the day and *mudzumbamo* (hide and seek) played during the night. Educating children in the Vhavenḁa culture was an important aspect where adults teach children *ngano* (folktales), *mirero* (proverbs), *thai* (riddles) and stories. Music is regarded as one of the most important components in the life of Vhavenḁa children. In every event, music is part of their life— worship, sadness, joy, work and grieving. It was through this process where the child was prepared to be able to socialise with other people young and old (Ladzani, 2014). Traditionally, children were taught through various techniques, one being physical punishment which, intrinsically, in a law-based world, is viewed as child abuse. Mothers and grandmothers oversee raising children, as most men, except for elderly, are away for work related issues.

At the point when the procedure of traditional child rearing unfolds, the entire family and the entire community are involved in ensuring that youngsters they raise progress toward becoming stable and capable grown-ups of the community. It was in that way that the Vhavenḁa idiomatic expression *nwana wa muḁwe ndi nwana wau*, (it takes the entire village to bring up a youngster) were relevant. Children as young as one year, were encouraged to follow custom and social standards and qualities like respect, dedicated, tirelessness, how to talk, and dutifulness. Each one of those were instilled by senior citizens and older people. Before the advent of the church and Western formal schooling systems, there were traditional practices that played an important role in instilling good moral values among the children. Owing to such traditional institutions, teenage pregnancies, casual sex, and degrading language, as is the norm today, were unheard of.

According to Ladzani, it was difficult to come across youths who were ill-mannered; “If such happened, it was the responsibility of the whole community to deal with them” (Ladzani 2014:3). Although educating children in traditional communities was informal, it served the purpose of nurturing, educating, promoting and raising. Woolman (2001:30)

agrees that the informal education is performed at home, in the community or clan and considered age group. He further agrees that family members and community stakeholders take responsibility for being educators, considering their experience and wisdom. He is of the opinion that the curriculum of traditional education's emphasis on teaching the child holistically, means that the child is taught in all life aspects, for instance the social, manual, physical, moral and cultural values.

In concurrence, several scholars who studied traditional schools for boys and girls, further agreed that all those schools were meant for children to learn about the greatness of traditional culture and everything in it (van Warmelo 1960; Stayt 1931; Mathivha 1985; Mafenya 2002; Mandende 2009; Netshitangani 1997 – all cited in Ladzani 2014:32). These scholars discovered that young girls were taken to the primary stage, *musevhetho*, where they are taught how to take care of themselves and not to engage in sexual activities. Although the above statement is true, it should have been further researched about how it was done, which adds value to the culture and shows how Vhavenda people practice their culture during those initiation schools. Young boys were taken to their initial stage called *muḽa* or *murundu*, where they were taught respect and perseverance. The second stage was *vhusha*, which is equivalent to *u ṽamba-vhutuka*, a male initiation. The two stages are for matured young girls or boys not yet ready for marriage.

This stage seems to be the foundation for the third stage because what is being taught is related to what is taught in *domba* - the third stage. Apart from being taught respect and how to behave as a woman, they are also taught symbols that symbolises sexual organs and their use. The *domba* is said to be for developed young men and young ladies who are prepared for marriage. At this last stage, it was when young men and young ladies were trained at being men and women, how to discover a partner and how to bring up children. It was in that phase where grown-ups can foresee if a young lady or boy will be a decent wife or husband. "The older folks could, without much of a stretch, foresee by the character of that girl or young boy" (Ladzani, 2014:31-33). The character of a child was a symbol of how their parents have raised them. It was additionally underlined that if

the character of a young lady was bad, it was exceptionally troublesome for her to discover a spouse since marriage was a family issue. Elders were the ones who picked a spouse for their young boy considering the young lady's character and her family ethics.

The above statement is supported by Stayt (1931), who remarks on how elders gave children orders and children obeying the rules without any complaints. He further emphasises how children at informal schools were given different tasks to perform. Although Stayt was a missionary scholar, his views are very contrary to the views by Wesseman (1908) who disregards Vhavenda as human beings, their culture, and what they teach their children at their schools were regarded as being of no value. Serpell (1993:394) developed the idea of a "socially distributed model for socialisation", to characterise the African system in which parents and other kin encourage children to be cooperative and interdependent rather than focus on individual achievement.

This process of socialisation teaches a child his/her place within a larger kin system with respect to gender differences, norms and values, and boundaries for behavior. It is a way to accrue social and cultural capital for the child and draw in adults other than biological parents to be actively engaged in child rearing. A socially distributed model emphasises the need for children to become socialised in the appropriate cultural competencies that are necessary for successful development into adulthood (Harkness & Super 1983:221-231; Levine, Dixon & Richman 1996; Ogbu 1979:17-21). In the African context, this includes an emphasis on collective or communal well-being rather than a focus on individuals that is often emphasised in Western contexts. Subsequently, child rearing is, by all accounts, adopting a multi-faceted strategy where the used-to-be traditional child rearing styles are being weakened and blended by some westernised child rearing styles both working on the ground.

Holborn and Eddy (2011:1-11) further argue that a lot of factors contributed to the breakdown of traditional family structures like urbanisation, colonisation, economic relations, apartheid and race. As a result, they say that it is the greatest reason why most

scholars are drawn into researching the very current issues, such as impact of family structures, high divorce rates and many others. This has also been backed by Monde, Mzikazi & Khalema. (2016:24-40) who argue that “industrial development has altered many aspects of socio-economic which left traditional families being affected and the process of child rearing being destabilized”. This process led to the creation of different categories of family structures such as: intact families, single parent families, stepfamilies, and many others. Cancian and Reed (2009: 151-169) and Hill (2012) argue that family structures differ across culture and change over time.

The emotional state of the expectant mother is related to the health of the foetus. If an expectant mother is experiencing stress because of fear, rage, anxiety, tension or serious conflict, this may adversely affect the health of the foetus. Among the Africans, wife battering is practiced even on expecting mothers and this affects the foetus. In support of the above, Wenner and Smith (2000) assert that child rearing practices are embedded in a culture and determine to a larger extent, the behaviours and expectations surrounding the child’s birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence and the way these children will be parents. According to Mazrui (cited in Mwamwenda, 2010), the Africans know that the parental period is a sensitive one and that everything possible must be done to protect the life of the human foetus. Most African pregnant women such as the Baganda, Xhosa and the Shona, are expected to take certain traditional medicines from plants, which are intended to protect the foetus and prepare the mother for delivery Darling & Steinberg (2010:220-231). The Banyankole women of Western Uganda are made to drink the first milk of a cow that has just calved, which is believed to be very nutritious for the child she is carrying (Ainsworth, 1967). Bullock (cited in Mwamwenda, 2010:219-221), is of the opinion that during pregnancy, the Shona expectant mother is forbidden to eat anything that is bitter or sour, nor can she look at anything deformed or ugly as she may give birth to a child with similar characteristics.

In different cultures in sub-Saharan Africa, the practice is for pregnant women to observe food taboos that restrict their consumption of foods that are in fact important to their

nutrition and the growth of the foetus. For example, in Zambia, food taboos include fish and eggs, and in Namibia pregnant women are not to eat meat, groundnuts and oranges. The Western also value the prenatal stage, that is, they visit the doctors and they go to ante-natal clinics, some medicines and vitamins are taken as a way of protecting the foetus. During conception, the Wanyakyusa, the Shona, Ndebele and the Xhosa women carry on their usual duties until the baby is born. Munjanja's (cited in Ganga & Chinyoka, 2017:38) study on childcare practices in Zimbabwe admits that among some Shona speaking people, there is no reduction in workload, particularly of strenuous activity, foetal growth and development may be compromised.

## **2.2 RITUALS AND TABOOS IN TRADITIONAL CHILD REARING PRACTICES**

Vhavanḁa as other cultures, have their own customs and beliefs they pride themselves with. However, their cultural ways depend on oral history, which leaves researchers with minimal points of reference. Because of the similarities with some African countries, taboos and rituals from Malawi are used for reference. Rituals and taboos are performed to protect the mother and baby from different ailments. Although some taboos and rituals do not pose a danger to the mother and baby, some are a concern when it comes to the mother and baby's health. For instance, when the mother is forbidden to eat nutritious food such as eggs, the reason being that the baby will be big and will not be able to pass through the birth canal (Maliwichi-Nyireda & Maliwichi 2016:263-268) There are different rituals that are performed for different reasons, for instance when the mother is still pregnant, when the child is born and when the child is growing up.

Name giving was the responsibility of elderly people. Mandende (2009) affirms this by saying that, the privilege was given to male grandparents to name the child. "This was done without seeking permission from the parents of the child" (Mandende 2009: iv). The newlyweds were not allowed to have their own family immediately. They must learn first how the family is run and how to raise children. It was an indication that the child is for the family. In the Vhavanḁa culture, children were given names in accordance to many



events such as happy events, a child will be named Takalani meaning that s/he was born when the family was happy, if there are family tensions a child will be named Konanani, meaning that there has to be reconciliation. Mmbulaheni is named when there was a conflict, one of the parties might say mmbulaheni which means “kill me”.

In the contemporary Vhavenda society children were given European names immediately when they are born by the parents. It is no longer done by grandparents because people have adopted the Western way of life. This was also exacerbated by colonisers who regarded traditional names as a sign of paganism (Mandende *ibid*: 62). Mandende attests that there was no stipulated time for naming children. Every culture follows what they believe in. Other cultures prefer naming the child immediately after birth like the Vhavenda, and others like the Naxos, prefer to name the child on the day of his/her baptism. “Before that the child will be called baby.” (Mandende 2009:46).

### **2.3 THE EFFECTS OF QUALITY PARENTING**

Darling & Steinberg (1993:487) posit that the way parents interact with their children has a great impact on their children’s character. They further argue that the attitudes of parents whether verbal or non-verbal indicate a pattern that characterizes the nature of the parent-child-relationship across all situations (Darling & Steinberg 1993:487). Studies indicate that the choice of parenting styles by parents also influences the children’s behaviours. It has been argued by other scholars that “parenting children in the home environment which is more violent and lower parental involvement increases greater chances of children being violent” (Edelstein 2018:34). Although the above arguments may be relevant to contemporary lifestyle, in a traditional society, children do not belong to their biological parents only but to the whole society. It is therefore the responsibility of the community, together with parents, to shape the children.



## 2.4 CONTEMPORARY CHILD REARING PRACTICES IN SELECTED VHAVENḌA RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

As the Western culture seems to overpower African culture, parents are more confused as to how child rearing should take its form. According to Matshidze (2013), the introduction of colonialism in South Africa imposed a new economy, as well as the imposition of new government systems. The new marital system and gender role expectations and activism impacted the traditional lifestyle where women find themselves being more subjected to patriachal laws. Unfortunately, those practices created by the new organisations were carried over as policies that were supposed to be obeyed. At that instances, African women found themselves more burdened than before the pre-colonial period, where socio-political systems established women's recognition spaces in the society. Although women were given these spaces, a lot of them could not utilize them because some men felt their powers were being taken away and they put more pressure on women to feel inferior.

With democratic changes in South Africa, some women find themselves free from oppression and started to enjoy the fruits of freedom whereby they started to venture for job hunting. This led to children being left behind as their work schedule demanded. Some of the mothers must spend the whole month away from their families. Grandparents were left responsible for taking care of their grandchildren. In families where there are no other family members, nannies were employed to take care of the children or taken to the day care centres. Traditional child rearing was being eroded daily. Children were reared in the western culture. Traditional norms and values were becoming outdated in most families. Families increasingly changed, and the male dominant models have been replaced by more equalitarian ones. Dessen and Torres (2002) argue that some macrosocial and historical factors, such as globalisation and modernisation, and new patterns of feeding, have probably caused adaptations tp Brazilian families' dynamics and ideas about child development. Aizpurúa, Jablonski and Féres-Carneiro (2007:189) studied Brazilian and Argentinean family transformations and identified new family organisations influenced by

divorce acceptance and women's increasing participation in the job market. Drawing from the above researchers, it is evident that colonisation and democracy in African countries as well as South Africa contributed to the erosion of culture and traditions of African people.

## **2.5 CONTEMPORARY CHILD REARING PRACTICES IN OTHER COUNTRIES**

The UNICEF (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund) has argued that there is a difference between the Western and the African women on how they are respected when they are pregnant by their husband and the people who surround them. It has been found that Western women are highly appreciated and respected during their pregnancy time, unlike the African women. They are given enough time to rest and relax. It has been indicated that the reason is to protect the foetus and not for it to be upset. The Western culture allows the husband to be nearer to his expecting wife most of the time, and he can touch her stomach and even talk to the foetus. The UNICEF Study on Child Care Practices in Zimbabwe (2002) argues that in other communities, pregnancy is regarded as a special time where a woman should be treated like a queen. The woman's workload is usually reduced, her diet is always regarded as special including for her unborn baby. However, it is evident that some Africans especially the educated individuals do respect the pregnant women and do some preparations for the unborn baby, which in African tradition are forbidden.

There is a very thin line between African and Western child rearing practices because some African families tend to use both practices, the reason being that there is a move by Africans from their African way of doing things to what they call modern life and child rearing practices. However, some of the African mothers' resort to both practices. Mothers who are working find it difficult to take care of their children and as a result they turn to bottle feeding and hire nannies to take care of their children. This results in children being attached to their nannies rather than their mothers as the mothers spend most of the time away at work.

Others argue that there is a difference between a model of intensive child rearing from the middle-class parents both Black and White, and a model of normal growth which includes the working class and poor families (Lareau, 2002:747-776). These modern families, both prepare for the arrival of the newborn babies. The preparation includes buying clothes, napkins, feeding equipment before the baby arrive. In both classes, the mother is the primary caretaker. Breast feeding is regarded as the most important thing as the child needs it for the proper development of his/her whole body.

## **2.6 THE EFFECTS OF APARTHEID WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT ON CHILD REARING PRACTICES**

Apartheid in South Africa brought a lot of changes in African families on how they live their lives. Since then it was visible that a lot of families have started to turn their backs on their traditional lifestyle. This was evident from both rural and urban black communities. This, in turn, has compromised the way traditional African families practice child rearing. Due to Apartheid laws, those families in rural areas lived in extended and nuclear structures Spiegel (1996:143-170). That was because the Group Areas Act restricted where and how black African people could live. The circumstance forced black men to leave their families behind and go far away in search for work so that they could provide for their families Ramphela & Richter (2006:73-81). As a result, children from these families suffered the consequences because their fathers would have to stay away from them for a long time with limited or no contact Murray (1981). Furthermore, father's failure to meet their responsibilities reduced their connections with their families, especially their children Hunter (2007:216-230).

Other researchers argue that the situation increased the number of children born out of wedlock because of long distance relationships, hence children grew up in female centered families Preston-Whyte, (1978:55-85). While some of the most pernicious aspects of the apartheid system were dismantled in 1994, the process of transformation continues with, perhaps, the greatest challenge seen in employment and poverty

alleviation. The post-apartheid context is marked by very high unemployment rates particularly for the Black population. Rural community's poverty increased drastically where Blacks were mostly affected. The highest percentage of unemployment are Black youths under the age of 30. Unemployed Blacks were more than whites: 19.6% in 1995 to 36.8% in 2002 compared to 3.3% to 6.2% Altman & Woolard (2004).

The rate of women seeking employment in cities or nearby households increased. Mothers were forced to leave their children because their husbands were away, and they were facing starvation with their children (Posel & Cásale 2003:455-479). Other members of the family were to stay behind looking after the children. In that context, those family members must take parenting responsibilities in place of the working mothers. The responsibilities range from moral guidance, skill training such as household chores, ploughing and cattle herding (Mkhize, 2006:183-198). In African tradition, it is therefore, communal that children are cared for by people who are not their biological parents.

The Vhavenḁa families are some of those affected by colonisation. The apartheid government used the colonisers' rules to oppress the marginalised tribes. Poverty made it very difficult for parents to be able to take care of their children. Mothers, fathers and elderly people were confined to slavery where they must work without payment or any benefits, but for staying in the farm. Children who grew up in those situations did not have rights.

## **2.7 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND WESTERN CHILD REARING PRACTICES**

Traditional and Western families on child rearing practices do not have many differences. They both prepare in time for the child to be born. In the traditional rooted families, preparations for the newborn baby is done, but differ from the Western culture. Instead of Western medicine, the traditional family have the provision for traditional medicines that will be used when the child is born. In both Western and African families, the mother is

the primary care giver. For those mothers who are working, when the maternity leave comes to an end, preparations are done for someone to look after the baby. Breastfeeding from the onset is regarded as the priority from both African and Western culture.

## **2.8 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AFRICAN AND WESTERN CHILD REARING PRACTICES**

Jimenez (2002:523-551) argued that difference between Western and African families can be understood from an African perspective, whereby there are families that are still observing the traditional way of rearing their children. During the birth process, in traditional families, the elderly woman is the midwifery, while the Western culture uses medical doctors and nurses. Although the elderly women may be illiterate, they do have the great knowledge of performing the process. The mother and the baby in African tradition will be separated from the father and stays with the elders for the period of three months. This is done so that the elders could monitor the child well. There is no separation in the Western culture. Mothers in traditional family regard breastfeeding as very important, whereas Western mothers engage in breastfeeding for a short period. It is common traditionally that Vhavenḁa children are breastfed for eighteen months to two years and sometimes it can be extended for up to five years depending on whether the mother is working or not. Thus, some African mothers are also resorting to bottlefeeding of which traditional women did not know about back then before they enter the labour market. Children are mostly cared for by the maids and some are left at the day care centers (Winikoff & Laukaran, 1989:859-868). In the traditional family, the whole family takes it as their responsibility to look after the child. This happens in the extended families where there are many people staying together. Western parents buy toys for their children to play with whereas the African children play with objects like stones, mealie cob and sticks. The doll of a Vhavenḁa child is made of sticks, grass, mealie cob and some old rags. All these toys play an important role in educational values and it is a great advantage and a strong foundation for formal schooling.

Food and other taboos were something that differentiate the African and Western cultures. The Western people seems to have no taboos that have been recoded, but Africans have lot of them. The African pregnant mother was not allowed to eat much food that have nutrients so that the baby should not grow big to avoid problems during birth. Something sour or yellowish drinks were also forbidden as the baby could develop jaundice. Buying clothes for the unborn child was not allowed because it brings bad luck to the child. Going to the funeral was forbidden as there will be a lot of people, some with evil spirits and that hinders the progress of the child. The African mother was not allowed to watch something strange like snakes, baboons, monkeys because the child might be born resembling those creatures (Ekwochi, Osuorah, Ndu, Ifediora, Asinobi & Eke, and 2016:7). There is a difference between the past generation and the present generation in African families because the modern generation regard everything from the past as outdated.

## **2.9 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SETTING IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES**

The way in which children are raised in the community and the family, will results on how they will have the capacity to associate with others and how they will take part in social desires. Developed nations with substantially more mixed histories, have anything but difficult to make the prevailing social structures and their connection to child rearing practices. It has been indicated that Brazil is one of the biggest nations and possessed the seventh position among the world's economies in 2012 (Fritz & Prates 2014:210-239) and has the biggest populace. The population has been shaped by gatherings of individuals and societies, including indigenous individuals who possess the American mainland when it was discovered by individuals who moved from Europe (Portuguese, Italians, Germans, and Polish), and Asia (Japanese and Chinese), or slaves who were purchased from Africa, among different gatherings.

For example, Bronfenbrenner, (1997:264-290) has demonstrated in a few investigations that the socialisation objectives of 349 Brazilian moms, from various locales that the

moms tended to introduce an example that encourages the advancement of youngsters' self-governing social selves. He further contend that children with self-rule characters are now and again urged to settle on choices and act independent from anyone else. This example is overwhelming in families that live in generally related settings that have been experiencing change forms, including urbanisation, monetary improvement and instructive chances.

Piccinini and Bahar (2013:453-488) emphasize that components such as human trademark and social world have the effect on human qualities although it is probably going to recognise, scientifically between these factors. They are firmly related inside a total that can't be consolidated to the measure of its basics. As pointed out by these authors, parents' child rearing standards are something beyond the formation of culture or class, they include dynamic transaction between highlights of the specific circumstance.

The emotional status of children in the process of development is regarded as the most important aspect. It has been highlighted in most studies that interaction between parent and child have an impact on the child's development especially in the early stages. Most studies argued that if this situation is not well managed, it brings behaviour problems (Fraley & Haltigan 2013; Piccinini, Alvarenga & Marin 2013:817; Bayer & Hemphill, 2009:4-14). All these scholars put more emphasis on the value of relationship between parent and child as a paramount importance to the socio-emotional development of the child. Although this can sound as the most important aspect, some scholars like Grusec and Davidov put their emphasis on culture as one of the pillars to support parents in the process of rearing children (Grusec & Davidov 2010:687-709; Grusec, 2011:243-269).

## **2.10 PARENT AND CHILD DISCIPLINE**

In different countries and cultures, it has been reported that parents have diverse ways of showing their love for their children. It was also argued that they use their own ways of

rearing their children differently from those of other countries. Some scholars argue that experience of parents play a vital role in child rearing. Kaufman & Zigler (1987:186-192) explain that apart from using experiences, some parents use the parenting styles from their past and following their previous traditional norms and values. Durrant, Broberg and Rose-Krasnor (1999) state that parents who are less educated are likely to use physical punishment than educated parents. However, other scholars have linked physical punishment with those parents who are highly educated. On the other hand, scholars like Wolfner and Gelles (1993:197-212), Dietz (2000:129-1542), Bluestone and Tamis-LeMonda (1999:881-893), Woodward and Fergusson (2002:213-235), Fisher and Fagot (1993:250), Ateah and Durrant, (2005:169-185), Holden, Thompson, Zambarano and Marshal (1997:481-490), and Vasta, (1982:125-149) believe that physical punishment is related with parental depression, drug and alcohol problems, unable to socialise, frustration and anger. In addition, Ghate, Hazel, Creighton and Field (2003), Graziano and Namaste (1990:449-463), Deater-Deckard, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit and Bates (2003:351-360) and Kendler (1996:391-399) found out that in other instances, parents who have been under physical punishment while still children seem to be on the likelihood of physically assaulting their own children. When using the process, they regard it as a discipline strategy other than punishment.

In addition to the above studies, the results of studies carried out in Northern Ireland and Korea indicate the socio-economic circumstances as the root cause of physical punishment and has been extended from generation to generation (Murphy-Cowan & Stringer 1999:61-71). Nevertheless, this was not the case in the middle-class families because parents use lower levels of punishment. Likewise, Park (2001:945-58) indicates that in USA Korean mothers who had experienced physical abuse themselves while still children use this type of punishment at a lower level to their children. This was not found in middle-class families, where parents who had experienced high frequencies of physical punishment reported using lower levels with their own children. Similarly, among Korean immigrants in the USA, mothers who had experienced physical punishment as children were less likely to respond with physical aggression to conflicts with their children.



Durrant (2005:49-90) attests that knowledge of physical punishment by parents was an indication of endorsement of carrying out the process without remorse. He strongly indicates that due to this parental experience of corporal punishment, disciplinary goals, and knowledge of child development are strongest predictors (Ateah & Durrant 2005:169-185). The European Union also confirmed that tolerability of punishment by men, elderly parents and less educated parents was regarded the highest level and that the level was five times higher (Gracia & Herrero 2008:210-217; Ghate et al., 2003).

More scholars kept on repeating the same view of physical punishment as being influence by characters or experience the parents had gone through their early childhood. Although there are some who had contrast views, I concur with those who agreed that experience may be the core influence of parents to carry on with physical punishment and therefore were encouraged to pass the behaviour from generation to generation (Bugental & Happaney 2002:267-282). I am compelled to agree with those scholars who suggested that physical punishment may be associated with gender of parents because physically men are stronger than women and as such the impact. They had in punishing their children would be more than those of women.

However, one cannot argue against those who said that physical punishment by parents may be influenced by the way parents had been brought up. Most parent as it was argued, who had experienced violent upbringing seemed to show those symptoms to their children when they practice discipline. Scholars like Smith & Brooks-Gunn (1997:132-189) also indicate that family structures have been found to have an influence on the way children are disciplined. It has been further argued that parents who come from bigger families had greater chance of practicing physical punishment than those from smaller families (Eamon & Zuehl 2001:218-226; Coyl, Roggman & Newland 2001:145-163).

## 2.11 CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Holden et al. (1997) has been emphasised that the attitudes of parents had a great influence on how they raised their own children. The perception of parent's attitudes influencing the child's character, is a two-way process because children's character may also influence how their parents treat them. They further discovered that 75% of mothers who administered physical punishment were triggered by the way their children behaved. Different studies gave different views about physical punishment. Physical discipline is characterised as "an activity expected to make physical distress or agony right a youngster's conduct," (Durrant, Fairbairn & Erdelyi 2004:1). Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg & Zwi (2002:1083-1088) highlight physical discipline as a brutal demonstration expressing that it is perilous to youngsters. In the momentary, it executes many children every year and harms and disables some more. In the more extended term, "a vast assemblage of research has indicated it to be a critical factor in the advancement of vicious conduct and is related with different issues in youth and later life" (Krug et al., 2002:64).

The characters of a child are defined by how parents describe the way their children act. (Bugental & Happaney, 2002; MacKinnon-Lewis et al., 1992:403-415). It was for that reason where parents went as far as physically punishing their children arguing that the child deserve that type of punishment. This also happened to children who are very young for example, the preschooler's and early elementary school (Miller, 1995:1557-84). Ambiguous and unexpected events are also more likely to trigger parental attributional processes. Bugental & Happaney (2002) indicated that for those parents with less parental powers tend to show self-justifying answers to children who display misconduct behaviours.

From this viewpoint, it is evident that the way parents behave in the parental process, is in respond to what has happen in that moment and that triggers the way they respond whether negative or positive. Parenting styles seem to be also related with some forms in parental acknowledgements. In the authoritarian style, it has been found that mothers

did not consider conditions showing empathy to children's bad behaviours than their authoritative equals (Coplan, Hastings, Lagace-Seguine & Moulton 2002:1-26). Some authoritarian mothers showed more aggressive attitudes across child rearing practices. Therefore, the findings indicate the difference between the authoritarian and authoritative mothers differ in child rearing styles. But physical punishment is related with many factors that are associated with child behaviours. Factors such as the child's gender and age have demonstrated that some parents tend to be harsher with boys than girls, but other scholars see no difference.

It has been discovered that boys in general were the most vulnerable when it comes to physical punishment (Dietz, 2000:1529-42). On the other hand, some have argued that there is no specific evidence that gender have an influence on how parents punish their children (Woodward and Fergusson 2002:213-235; Holden, Thompson, Zambarano, and Marshal, 1997:481-490). While, other scholars agree that in some countries punishing children was done according to gender and age (Smith, Gallop, Taylor and Marshall, 2005; Nobes, Smith, Upton and Heverin, 1999:887-902; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Chyi-In, 1991:159; Ritchie, 2002:30-33; Ghate et al., 2003; Nobes and Smith, 2002:887-902).

It has been evident that in other countries like the UK and North America, parents impose corporal punishment which may fall under physical punishment depending on how it is implemented to younger children. This process as indicated show a high number of children with unwary with the influence of children unable to understand the danger of these type of punishment and therefore, may lead to children doing the same actions to others without realizing the impact of it (Clement, Bouchard, Jette & Laferriere, 2000; Durrant, 2005:42-90). Therefore, these actions could also lead to problems in discipline if not attended to properly.

Studies shows that in the UK and USA, some behaviours such as violence were said to be among the most commonly known which indicate that physical punishment is tolerable

(Durrant, 1996:19-25; Holden et al., 1997:481-490). Smith et al., (2005) attest that physical punishment was regarded as a process that does not respect the moral values and challenges the authority parents had as they believe was the best way to raise their children. However, parents regard physical punishment as their second means of relieving their anger and sometimes it could be replaced by slapping the child. Therefore, that may create anger for the child and the child may develop negative attitude (Socolar et al. 1999:927-34).

Although many studies indicate complex situations of physical punishment among small children, other studies show that children who are older were under severe punishment. An important reflection on child effects is that, its qualification was from the way parents clarify their children's actions. It was also argued that the parent's tendency for physical punishment was related to how parents wanted to discipline their children. As indicated above, the character of parents may have the influence on parents to improve the way they discipline their children. Other scholars attest that the gender of parents had nothing to do with the way they discipline their children (Murphy-Cowan & Stringer, 1999:61-71; Nobes et al., 1999), while other scholars specify that mothers use physical punishment at an extra mile than fathers (Anderson, Murray & Brownlie 2002; Straus & Stewart 1999). However, it has been argued that younger parents were found to be using more physical punishment (Giles-Sims, Straus & Sugarman 1995:170-176; Dietz 2000; Durrant, Broberg & Rose-Krasnor 1999:25-41). It was also argued that society's morals and beliefs also to be the influence on how parents discipline their children (Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit & Zelli 2000:380-400). To those parents who believe that rearing children positively may have a positive result, they did not adhere to intimidating style of parenting.

It is a general view that parents who are less educated are the ones who are abusive (Durrant et al., 1999). Moreover, a contrary view from other studies indicated that, it is those parents with high level of education who tend to use physical punishment (Wolfner & Gelles 1993:197-212), and other studies say there is no effect of education level (Dietz, 2000). Other scholars show depression, drug and alcohol, antisocial behaviour are some

aspects that may lead to parents using physical punishment (Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999:881-93; Woodward & Fergusson 2002; Fisher & Fagot 1993:250-54:125-49). It is also indicated that when parents face frustrations, anger and irritation about the character of the child, that is when they rely on physical punishment (Ateah & Durrant 2005; Holden et al., 1997:481-90; Vasta 1982).

Other findings reveal that the principle of physical punishment may be triggered by the way the parent have been raised as a child. Parents who have been physically abused as children are likely to practice that behaviour on their children (Ghate et al., 2003; Graziano & Namaste 1990:449-63). It was also revealed that there was no connection about the physical mistreatment in early child or middle age children that has been assumed (Kendler's 1996). But other studies carried out reveal that parental arrogances, resulting from the family of origin, motivated parental behaviour in addition to child physical punishment.

The Northern Ireland study supports the above ideas by revealing that socio-economic upbringing was the influential aspect whereby corporal penalty was conducted from generation to generation. However, Murphy-Cowan & Stringer (1999) agree that physical punishment in children of high-class families foreseen the regularity of its use to children of all generations. Nonetheless, parents of middle-class status frequently used lower levels of punishment to their children. Similarly, children from Korean immigrants in USA who were physically abused were recoded to have less abusive character with their children.

Alternatively, it was revealed that physical punishment in children seems to be strongly approved by parents Durrant (2005). It seems to be a norm in the African countries to use corporal punishment to children with that approval that it is ok to do so. However, although it is approved by many African countries including the Vhavenda communities that physical punishment is fine, some countries with democratic practices regards the practice as child abuse. Those countries include South Africa. It is by law that any person

who apply physical punishment to a child faces punishment, even those who gave approval for it (Ateah & Durrant, 2005:ibid).

Another revelation made by a recent study, found out that from 14 European countries, it was reported that the highest percentage of approval comes from men, older people and parents who are less educated (Gracia & Herrero 2008). Others argue that in the UK, parents who believe that physical punishment was good were five times more than those who do not believe in that thinking (Ghate et al., 2003).

It has also been noted that mental health of parents may contribute to shaping the character of parents when disciplining their children. Related aspects such as family construction, relate to the way parents use corporal punishment (Brooks-Gunn & Smith 1997). This might be influenced by, in larger families there are more family members of which more are elderly people than in small families where you find parents and their children (Eamon & Zuehl 2001:218-26).

## **2.12 CULTURE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES**

Child rearing as described by Bouchard (1994), and Jenni & O'Conner (2005) is a behaviour in tradition, theories, values and perception from parents to the children. It is the way in which parents handle their children's behaviour (Judy 2000). The researchers are inspired by the way parents bring up their children and the style they employ in different developmental stages (Kail & Cavanaugh 2000). Although a lot of researches are being conducted, there is still a gap that needs to be filled as far as rearing children in a Vhavenda traditional way. There are different factors that influence child rearing practice in Vhavenda homes. Some of those factors are religion, literacy, socio-economic status of a family. Factors differ in every society aspect due to cultural beliefs and the way those beliefs are practiced. Some areas in the community where Vhavenda resides are in great poverty.

As confirmed by Bronfenbrenner (1997), poverty may distract parents and mislead them to be unable to fulfil their parental goals as parents design their parental goals guided by the eco-cultural conditions. Therefore, poverty may limit parents and children and bring obstacles that they will find it hard to progress. It may also influence the early development and for the future. The Vhembe District, one of the six districts in the Limpopo Province, is regarded as one of the poorest districts in South Africa which faces high number of families with poverty. The families in the study seems to have lived in the same area for more than five years or more in the Vhembe District. They practice traditional lifestyle which includes tilling of land to plant crops for their survival. Few people in that community are working, and many do not have a profession. Therefore, the families in that community live a traditional lifestyle and still practice traditional child rearing. In that community there are families who don't have an income, who survive on social grants. The difference between family finance also affect the way children are reared. Children from families of low-income families tend to feel inferior to those coming from families with high income. This is also confirmed by Grotberg & Badri (1987:213-232) when they emphasize that poverty has an impact on the lives of people since children from poor families feel inferior from those children who are from high income.

### **2.12.1 Disciplining the child**

The traditional way of disciplining children in both high and low income seem not to differ because every parent expects their children to be well disciplined and behave in a proper manner following the rules and commands of the family. As it has been highlighted above by different studies, parents of low income tend to resort in physical punishment to their children more than high income parents do. Traditionally, punishing the child physically is allowed and can be practiced by any person to the child as long it is done for the purpose of discipline. That act is different in families of parents in high income as they are trying to move away from their traditional way of doing things (Grotberg & Badri: *ibid*).

### 2.12.2 Accepting the child's behaviour

High income parents raise their children to be independent, whereas low income parents raise them as subordinates, and they do not accept the child who is inquisitive. It was indicated that parents have problem of accommodating children who have many questions, especially when there were visitors. Unlike parents of high income, they are free to accommodate children who ask questions, and respond to give them answers. Both parents of lower income groups seem to be ignorant to the child's anger against adults (Grotberg & Badri: *ibid*).

### 2.12.3 Interacting with the child

Weinberg is of the opinion that all income groups interact with their children, but in a different way. High income parents showed little time to interact with their children while low income parents have more time to interact with their children especially mothers. High income parents use more resources to replace their presence around their children. It has been found that they take their children to libraries, cinemas and museums for learning while low income parents interact with their children through playing using self-made resources like dolls and animals. Singing and dancing was also seen as one of the tools used by low income parents to interact with their children (Weinberg 2001:266-280). Family members in low income families play a role in this process of interaction by engaging children during the night teaching children idioms, *thai*, *khube* (game of guessing in which hand the other side has hidden a grain or pebble) and *zwidade* (children traditional songs) sitting around the fireplace outside or inside (*tshitangani*) traditional kitchen.

Ladzani (2014) is of the opinion that the African children are taught to relate to one another and to those who are senior in age quite early in their lives. According to the African culture, "there are traditional games, stories, toys, songs and ways of playing that are passed from older children to the younger children, many of which support children's



physical, emotional, social and intellectual development” (Ladzani 2014:4). According to Vygotsky’s social cognitive theory, the siblings scaffold their young brothers and sisters, as they are involved in the traditional games since they are more knowledgeable and skilled. Rananga emphasises that the lore is a transmission of knowledge from elderly to children and this is done through the word of mouth as nothing has been recorded. (Rananga, 2008:47-48)

Vhavanḡa children learn children songs more oftenly from their mothers than from other children because when they are still young, yteir mothers are with them. Childrens songs are categorized differently, for instance songs for girls, songs for boys, mockery and lullabies (Blacking 1995:23-145).

Some of *zwidade* (children traditional songs) are:

### **1. *Vho mmane mmbebeni***

*Kolongonya*

*Ni nnyise lufherani*

*Kolongonya*

*Nnḡu khulu i na biko*

*Kolongonya*

Meaning that, “My mother’s young sister put me on your back, take me to the varender because the house makes me sweat”.

The song is sung by a child who runs home from the rain and ask her mother's sister to put her on her back and take her to the varendor because in the house she will sweat.

## **2. Lili n̄wana n̄wananga**

*Lili n̄wana n̄wananga vhasa mulilo*

*Lili vhasa mulilo*

*Lili vhasa mulilo khotsi vha a vhuya*

*Vha vhuya na nnyi*

*Vha vhuya na donga*

*Donga u t̄odani*

*U t̄oda musikana*

*Ku sa ḷi mavhele*

*Ku ḷa ndovhodzhane*

*Ndovhodzha muṭanga*

*Seli a hu welwa*

*Hu na mupfa muṭunu*

*A u vayi muthu*

*U vaya vho faho.*

Meaning that, "Lili my grandchild, make fire, your father is coming back, he is coming with who? He is coming with Donga, what does Donga want? Donga want the little one who does not eat mealies, who eat ndovhodzhane ndovhodzhamuṭanga".

This song is a lullaby by a grandmother lullabying the grandchild who seem to be crying for the father. It further frightens the child that if he/she continue to cry, father will bring Donga who does not eat mealies and will eat him/her.

Scholars like Ladzani indicated that, when these songs were sung, children are seen to be very happy learning to sing and dance. It was not only based on singing and dancing, children were also learning the value of culture and norms. The first song is a symbol of security where the child is to be taken to the veranda because it is raining. The second song is cautioning the child to be home so that when the father comes home and find the child not at home there will be a punishment. The child is warned not to play far away from home as there are dangers. During this process elderly people were the ones who instill the traditional customs by teaching the children (Ladzani 2014).

#### **2.12.4 Parents expectations from their children**

Most studies indicate that every parent wish the very best of his/her child, whether the parent is educated or not, whether their financial status is high or low. However, parents from high income can take their children to preschool programs and can afford to take their children to higher institute of learning. It is therefore with great concern that parents from poor communities like Mahunguhwi could not afford the high standard of living. That situation therefore hinders the children's progress to achieve better life and be able to develop the community.

#### **2.13 CHILD REARING PRACTICES BY PARENTS IN VHAVENḐA FAMILIES**

It is apparent that most parents all over the world have different characters and behaviour that they use when parenting children of different genders. Harkness & Super (1983:221-231) advocates that human parents, particularly mothers, devote substantial time, resources, and energy to rearing their children. Given humans' extended period of youth, there is likely no other species that devotes as much time and energy to their offspring

from conception to adulthood as human sapiens. If at first glance it may seem as if both females and males should be equally likely to invest in their children, this is not the case. For most species, including humans, females invest more heavily in their offspring than males do (Harkness & Super 1983:7). Different studies indicated that, when parenting, fathers tend to disturb their daughter's emotions through their styles in parenting which is different when using disciplinary methods. Around the world, it has been argued that parents tend to pick up different behaviors of parenting based on the gender of their child. It has further been indicated that parents are sometimes tempted to treat their children differently for instance, authoritarian style would be used for girls and authoritative style for boys. Even mothers were trapped in that process of treating their children according to gender, favouring one gender. Traditionally, Vhavenda fathers are not entitled for child rearing. Child rearing is mainly for mothers while fathers are to provide for the family. As the evolution of the world took place, change affects the rest of the countries. Due to these changes, Vhavenda families find themselves among different cultures where they are sometimes forced to adapt to other cultural beliefs for instance fathers parenting their children which might be difficult for them (Leaper 2014)

Child rearing practices in most African cultures include events like providing home, clothes, emotional safety, limiting stress to children, training children for toiletry, attending children's sickness, showing love and providing children with a safe place to play. Zeitlin, (2003:93-111) believes that rearing children involves every member of the family and community, that include health practitioners and after care facilities. Other cultures' child rearing practice involves giving children fundamentals that will cater for their social and emotional gain. Chibuye, Mwamwenda and Osborne (2006:2-5) attest that "if this support is not taken into consideration, and children do not get the support they are supposed to get, it hinders with their progress on development physically and socially."

Ganga and Chinyoka (2017:28) argue that the patterns of raising children and the connection among parent and child are essential parts of the training and socialization of a child. Prior to the presentation of formal training in different parts of Africa, there existed

customary methods for rearing children. Obvious jobs, commitments, rights, desires and authorities were recommended (Durojaiye 1996 cited in Mwamwenda 2010). With the appearance of formal instruction and the impact of various societies, the customary parent-child connections and child rearing practices have been modified. Hardly any customary African people group still hold certain parts of the raising examples flawless, yet many have been weakened by the Western culture.

They have further insisted that some African nations demonstrate that there are no obvious patterns of raising children yet rather a mix of both African and Western styles. Maybe this is because of changes in parental jobs, for instance, moms are currently getting utilized outside the home, and much of the time, housemaids play the mother's jobs. Whose qualities and standards are probably going to be imparted in the child as she/he develops? The supposition is that these significant child rearing practices are additionally normal raising examples seen in Africa today.

## **2.14 DISCUSSION**

This chapter was developed to review literature and tackled issues related to traditional child rearing practices. It also highlights different views regarding the way traditional child rearing was practiced in Vhavenda families and child rearing practices in other cultures. The next chapter discussed the methodology, study area, data collection and how it was analysed, sampling procedure, ethical considerations, and measures to ensure trustworthiness.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research strategy and techniques employed in the study. It highlights the research design and methods, research site, population, sampling procedure, data collection, data analysis, ethical measures and measures to ensure trust worthiness. Burns and Grove (2001:61) state that research methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study and it offers the theoretical analysis of body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge.

#### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is a plan indicating how the research is going to unfold. It also indicates what processes will be followed, how the participants are going to be selected through which methods. This study used a qualitative approach, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature.

##### 3.1.1 Qualitative research design

Burns & Groove (2001:61) define qualitative research as “a systematic, subjective approach that is used to describe life experiences”. Polit & Beck (2009:17) argue that “qualitative research is an enquiry of a phenomenon, which gives a holistic in-depth information.” A qualitative design allows the exploration of the depth, richness and complexity inherent in a phenomenon (Burns & Groove 2009:51). I chose a qualitative design bearing the following reasons in mind. Through interviews with the participants, I was able to dig deep down for information from the participants through probing. This design also provided me with the knowledge of how to communicate with the

participants. The method helped me in my sampling process, and as a result I was able to find participants who were knowledgeable about IK and the Vhavenda culture of *nyaluso ya vhana*, and who were also interested in participating. Through this method I observed that all the participants indicated that they felt free when making their inputs.

The qualitative design was also selected so that it would provide me with a holistic view of realistic events and testable hypothesis. The study exploring the traditional way of *nyaluso ya vhana* (child-rearing) is a topical issue that required me to be on the site to get first-hand information from knowledge holders, parents, teachers, traditional leaders and grandparents. Also, I saw to it to allow the natural settings and beliefs of participants to be probed in the study on how children were reared in the traditional manner. In other words, qualitative design enabled me to draw a clear picture aimed at analysing the depth of the network of relationships within various aspects of child rearing practices. I am therefore, expected to be a good listener, be non-judgemental of the participants, and be honest and friendly.

### 3.1.2 Exploratory design

“Qualitative exploratory design does not provide conclusive evidence but, helped me to get facts and gather new data when the study deals with new subject” (Babbie & Mouton, Voster and Prozesky 2001:79). It therefore helped me to understand child rearing situations in the families and in the communities. In that regard, I applied the Sankofanian approach, which states that there is a belief that there must be movement and new learning as time passes. As this forward march proceeds, the knowledge of the past must never be forgotten in exploring the subject matter of *nyaluso ya vhana*. By applying the Sankofanian approach, I explored the traditional practices of *nyaluso ya vhana* in Vhavenda home settings in a unique way. An Afro-centric perspective was also adopted to gain new insight and discover new ideas on traditional child rearing practices. An Afro-centric perspective brings with it the notion of understanding Africanism and the way they

live. This was important as it increased knowledge about the integration of traditional and modern practices which were dealt with.

### **3.1.3 Descriptive design**

Descriptive research design accurately portrays the characteristics of persons, situations or groups within a certain phenomenon (Polit & Hungler 2006). Burns & Grove (2003:200) state that in a descriptive design, “the researcher intends to describe the phenomenon accurately within a specific context, looking at the collected data”. In addition, Brink (2002:10) says that descriptive goes further by describing how people behave, their character and beliefs in that situation being investigated. The purpose of using descriptive design in this research study was to gain more insight about the child rearing practices.

### **3.1.4 Contextual design**

As Burns and Groove (2001:61) attest, “contextual designs focus on specific proceedings that happen in a natural setting”. It was this reason that this research study was contextually designed because the focus was on the traditional child rearing practices in Vhavenda home settings.

## **3.2 STUDY AREA**

This research study was conducted in the Vhembe District Municipality in the Limpopo Province, with a population of 1 393 949 census with a total of 382 357 households (Statistics South Africa: STATS, 2016), of which there are some live-in tribal areas that are not fully developed. Some communities still resemble a rural setting, and there are still a lot of traditional practices that are still observed. As a Muvenda, I am well conversant with the local language, Tshivenda, which is mainly spoken in the Vhembe District. My involvement in the settings enabled me to hear, see and to begin to experience the reality of *nyaluso ya vhana* amongst the participants.



### **3.3 REFLECTIONS ON FIRST DAY OF DATA COLLECTIONS**

When I considered the Vhembe District Municipality as my research area, I was excited and looked forward to what I was going to learn. It was in September 2017. Many researchers are discouraged about the distance and access to their research sites. I was lucky that my research site was the Vhembe District. That gave me confidence, even before starting data collection process.

I started to have my own views and imaginations about the communities and people I was going to meet. It was the time when schools were in recession and children were at home. I could easily see some parents with their children of different ages helping them doing their household chores. Some were busy with their children collecting mealies from the fields as it was harvesting time. This situation brought to my mind that there are parents who can teach their children different tasks for them to learn at an early stage. The participants were all Tshivenda speakers. They were given the freedom of choice in how to answer the questions. Those who are a little bit elite, such as teachers were at liberty to communicate in either Tshivenda or in English throughout the process. Some participants who are illiterate used Tshivenda in all discussions and interviews. Data collection and presentation in this thesis was done through Tshivenda as the language of the participants. Interviews were transcribed in the languages used. In instances where the quotes are in Tshivenda, they have been translated into English.

### **3.4 POPULATION**

The study objectives and features govern the number of participants to be selected in the sample. According to Silverman (2013:9-20), the study population is the total members of a defined class of people, objects, places or events selected because they are relevant to the research questions. In addition, Potter (2011:29-34) defines a population as a group of individuals selected from the overall inhabitants who share a common value such as experience, culture, geographical area, age, and sex or health condition. The population

of this study comprise of people who are knowledgeable in Tshivenda ways of rearing children, and still practicing the Tshivenda cultural way of living.

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

Marshall (1996:522-526) posits that sampling in qualitative approaches is done to draw the representative sample from the general population for the sample to be generalised back to the population. Polit and Hungler (1995:235) suggest that “the knowledge of the researcher is paramount in being able to select participants who have an interest in the issue under study”. My experience as a parent, grandparent, school teacher and of working with the community, the experience of supervisors of this study and the recommendations of the initial interviewees about who else should participate in the study, influenced my decision. I purposively selected parents who had two children or more and had experience in child rearing and were witnessing the influence of modernity to children’s life. I selected teachers with 10 years or more teaching experience, elders who were 50 years and above – who had wisdom and knowledge about child rearing. I also selected traditional leaders who were 50 years and above for their leadership roles and maintaining peace in their communities. Three youth were also selected for the family life experiences. This has been done through a snowball technique. The sample was composed of participants who are knowledgeable about traditional child rearing practices, children who are being raised by those participating parents, those with experience of child rearing and have witnessed their children being influenced by modern childrearing practices and those with traditional leadership skills.

#### **3.5.1 Snowball sampling**

Biernacki and Waldorf (1981:141-163) refer to snowball sampling as a chain referral. Meaning that a participant may refer you to someone with more knowledge about the topic. However, Noy (2008:327-344), describes snowball sampling as a process that can generate a unique type of social knowledge which is emergent. As a researcher, I visited

the community following protocols that were acceptable to the royal council. In line with the royal traditions of the Vhavenda people, the traditional leaders communicate with people through their leaders (royal council) who are usually carefully selected brothers, cousins and other relevant associates who are closely monitored to serve as advisors and/or the royal council. After obtaining permission from the royal council, the person assigned to assist referred me to the respectable elder in the community who also referred me to other people who were knowledgeable about my study, traditional child rearing practices. In the end, sixteen participants contributed to the study, of which 4 were female Indigenous Knowledge holders, 3 grandparents, 1 traditional leader, 3 parents, 2 teachers and 3 youths.

### **3.6.2 Self-selection**

This sampling is not oftenly used however, it is relevant in this study as in the data collection process there were participants who participated because they were in the company of the othe participants during the time of the data collection.

## **3.6 DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS**

Data collection, as Polit and Hungler (1995) argue, is the way of gathering information needed by the researcher to address the research problem in a study. It helps the researcher to establish the proper measuring instrument which will be able to answer related questions. The collection was done through both primary and secondary sources, where a primary source is original data from participants through one-on-one interviews, and secondary sources being data from books, journals, media and articles. The data collection process was done through a literature review from other researchers. This began after I got permission from the authorities where data should be collected. I was also referred to other members of the community who were said to be knowledgeable about my topic of traditional child rearing practices. Being the speaker of the language spoken by the community, gave me the opportunity to find information in its first class. My

visit to the communities was spread into 10 trips. I had two assistants to help me with my research. Communication with participants about our visits was done telephonically to make follow-ups and reminding them about the next meeting. Below are the methods used in data collection; one-on-one interviews and observation.

### **3.6.1 One on one interviews**

I did some informal meetings or telephonic meetings with all participants. These meetings were done in advance to determine the most suitable times and dates for the actual meeting to have interviews with the participants. These meetings made it easy for me to draw up a timetable to meet with the participants. The exercise was very helpful to avoid double bookings and to be able to meet the interviewees when they had all the time to respond to the questions without rushing. Although sometimes, it was not easy for participants to adhere to the appointments, in the end the interviews were conducted.

Before every session, I started by introducing myself by starting something as an ice breaker such as a joke, but not to be an offensive one, only meant to ease the tension. Then, I thanked the participants for their willingness to take part in the process and explained that they have the right to withdraw any time they wish to do so. Participants had the right to allow me to record the proceeding. They were asked questions that are similar throughout the data collection. Their responses would determine the follow-up questions. In other words, this type of data collection method influenced the follow-up questions, which were not the same. As a researcher, for the interview to be successful, participants need to be respected and given time to express themselves freely. Interviews were conducted under conducive environments meaning that most were conducted at their own homes.

Time allocation was a problem as every participant is different and because the way adult people express themselves differs greatly with how it is done in modern life. For instance, in chapter four I relate greetings that took longer because of the way the participants

greeted me. Bless & Higson-Smith (2006:141-163) argue that an interview involves direct contact with participants who should respond to questions from the researcher. I used one-on-one interviews to gather information from participants to be able to clearly judge the expression from the participants when answering the questions. The audio tape was used with the consent of participants to record the interview and the information was later transcribed. This method was best suited for the traditional leaders because it enabled me to have direct contact with individual leaders easily. The royal process to set appointments with individual traditional leaders was also followed. Due protocol was followed. I set up an appointment with the traditional council who in turn went to arrange with the tripartite (traditional leader, makhadzi and khotsimunene) in the traditional leadership.

### **3.6.2 Observation**

Patton (2002) indicates that observation is the collection and recording of events in an orderly manner in the social setting as they happen. I had a chance to observe participants in a distance when they were busy working with their children. During the interview sessions, I observed how they trusted me by freely expressing their feelings when answering questions. That process gave me the opportunity to personally experience that human interaction, whereby they allowed me to be part or one of their family members. Through observation, I managed to get the view of the physical surroundings, the procedures as well as the activities that happen in their home settings and about the practice, they use in rearing their children.

Furthermore, by using the observation method, I learnt what life is like for participants in their families while remaining an observer. By being in these community settings, I also had a chance to write down my observations.

## **3.7 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

The research is a process wherein in-depth of the phenomenon under study is realised and needs to be probed further. Traditional child rearing practices as a topic under research can be understood through in-depth investigation and probing. As a researcher, I was part of the process and guided by the procedures to be followed in an interview process. Through probing, participants were free to express themselves and gave more information. The process of probing follows certain procedures such as:

### **3.7.1 Open-ended questions**

Open-ended questions gave participants the freedom of expressing themselves in their own words. Because of their nature, it gives more than a one-word answer, but a sentence or statement structure (de Vos, 2005:357-66). This is where I allowed the process to unfold without interruption, but gave guidance.

### **3.7.2 Clarification**

Often as a researcher, I had to clarify participants if the given answer was not clear. This happened, when participants misunderstood the question. Then I repeated the question.

### **3.7.3 Reflection**

De Vos (ibid) attests that the researcher repeats what the participant says, making sure that the meaning is not distorted. In doing so, the confidence of the participants had been built. I was fully engaged with the process by repeating what they had said in the manner they said it.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Burns and Grove (2003) explain that data analysis is a tool for reducing or organising data to produce the findings needed by the researcher. I used a content analysis method after the data collection process. The aim of content analysis was to make sense of the data collected and to highlight the important messages, features or findings. I conducted data analysis with my peer, Diana Ramusetheli, and assisted by my promoters. We also did content analysis which involves coding and classifying data, also referred to as categorising and indexing.

Data collected from different participants through interviews and observation was described and analysed clearly. I used the objectives of the study as themes to discuss the findings and outcome of the data gathered. The steps used in developing themes were informed by Marshall and Rossman (cited in De Vos, 1998) and included the following procedures:

#### **3.8.1 Organising data**

I transcribed data repetitively and probed through to be familiar and to be sure that everything is in order.

#### **3.8.2 Generating categories, themes and patterns**

This is a stage that required creative and analytical thinking. I then identified the most important themes, recurring ideas, and patterns of belief, which assisted me with the integration of the results. The process of category generation involved noting patterns. As categories of meaning emerged, I searched for those that were internally consistent but distinct from each other.

### **3.8.3 Testing emergent hypotheses**

When categories and patterns between them became apparent in the data, I therefore, evaluated the credibility of these developing hypotheses and tested them against the data. This involved evaluating the data for their informational adequacy, credibility, usefulness and centrality.

### **3.8.4 Searching for alternative explanations**

As the categories and patterns between them emerged, I engaged in challenging the patterns that seemed apparent. Alternative explanations were looked and described until I reached the explanations that were most reasonable of all. In addition, if there was something that need further explanation, I was compelled to go back to the source and get clarity.

### **3.8.5 Reporting the results**

By reporting the results, I unpacked the findings that gave shape and interpretation and meaning to the huge amounts of raw data, so that there was a clear message of what transpired in the research.

## **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this research study, ethical consideration means that as a researcher I have full responsibility that in the whole process of data collection, everything I do should be done the right way.

Chapman (1993:93) notes that, “ethics means concerned with the commitment to do what is right and acceptable”. The ethics which were followed in this study are discussed below:



### **3.9.1 Informed consent**

The participants were fully informed about the procedure and risks involved in the study and they gave their informed consent through signing the consent form by those who are literate. For those who could not read or write, the information was read to them. I made sure that the participants were completely free to express their feelings. It was my responsibility to ensure that participants were not exposed to physical or psychological harm, and they were not subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem. Throughout the process, I made sure that as a researcher, I was attached to them by trying to be on their level and standard. This included my attire. When I went to the traditional leader's kraal I will wear the Venda traditional attire or a dress. I would not wear pants because that is not acceptable. It helped because participants were freely involved.

### **3.9.2 Voluntary participation**

Participants were informed about their participation and that it was voluntary and there was no payment to be made. They could withdraw at any time. Communication was through letters and phone calls.

### **3.9.3 Anonymity and confidentiality**

Anonymity was one important ethical consideration which encouraged participants to give information freely. Anonymity was a good foundation for confidentiality where participants know that the information given was not going to be misused. Information about participants was used with the consent of individuals.

## **3.10 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS**

This study ensured that there was trustworthiness by following Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba (2007:11-25), where they define trustworthiness as the way in which the inquirer

can persuade that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of high quality. It was my responsibility as the researcher to convince and guarantee the trustworthiness of the study to the readers. The data gathered was a true reflection of the experience of the participants. I bear the responsibility to ensure that all necessary measures of trustworthiness were followed. To achieve this, I had followed Lincoln & Guba's (1985:112) model which "identified four criteria to establish trustworthiness which are credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability."

### **3.10.1 Credibility**

Durrheim & Wassenaar (1999:54-71) refer to credibility as the assurance that the researcher's conclusions stem from the data. The credibility of the study was reached through prolonged engagements with all parties. The scheduled time for every session with the participants could not be a fixed time because it depended on how participants expressed themselves. Some will take more than scheduled time and others will be short. I had meetings with the promoters and coders to ensure content validity. As indicated, in data collection, field notes were taken and recorded. All the inputs were integrated into this study. I strived to produce the findings that are credible and convincing. To ensure that the research findings were consistent with the reality, the adopted qualitative method was followed carefully not to allow any loopholes. Participants were accurately selected and had knowledge about cultural child rearing traditions. Strategies that influence credibility were prolonged engagement, reflexivity, member checking, triangulation and peer debriefing.

#### **3.10.1.1 Prolonged engagement**

Lincoln & Guba (1985) indicate that prolonged engagement is the time the researcher spends with participant for purpose of gathering information and building trust. This can be possible if the researcher spends more time in the site. Working with elders who have more knowledge about the topic, requires more time. As a result, I was forced to spend

more time than scheduled. I also re-visited the participants to seek clarity on matters that were not clear to me. Through this process, I managed to build a strong relationship and trust with the participants, which allowed time to probe and observe without tension.

### **3.10.1.2 Reflexivity**

As the researcher, I was part of the research process, and as such, could not detach myself from the scene. As the main research tool, I was fully engaged on the site providing resources and support needed for the process. The experience acquired throughout the analysis process helped me to be aware of biasness and preconceived ideas. Bracketing was used so that what I know should not influence the findings.

### **3.10.1.3 Member checks**

Polit & Beck (2009) refer to member check as a way of giving feedback to the participants by the researcher if new developments transpired. In this study, participants were fully informed about any new developments and they gave their views.

### **3.10.1.4 Triangulation**

This is when I tried for several times from different participants to find new information about a question but keep on getting similar response. This stage is also known as saturation (Flick, 2004:178-183). I triangulated the responses from different data sources (elders, parents, teachers, grandparents, youth and traditional leaders).

### **3.10.1.5 Peer debriefing**

Peer debriefing increases credibility. This is when the researcher and the peer work together to review the research that need a critical scrutiny. Together with my peer, Diana Ramusetheli, throughout the study process, we gave each other constructive criticisms.

Promoters were involved to ensure validity. This helped me to be able to do corrections where necessary.

### **3.10.2 Dependability**

Dependability refers to the “degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occurred as the researcher says they did” (Durrheim & Wassenaar 2002:64). Identified themes were discussed with participants to ensure that it was indeed what transpired during the whole process and that they were accurate and dependable (Creswell 2003).

In meeting the issue of reliability, I ensured that the methods I employed for data collection were repeated in the same context and with same participants to get similar results. In addition, the promoters were engaged throughout the process to give me guidance. Data analysis protocol were also followed.

### **3.10.3 Transferability**

According to Durrheim and Wassenaar (cited in Maree, 2010:297-300) transferability is the degree to which generalisation can be made from data and context of the research study to the wider population and settings. I gave a thorough description of the context and methods of this study. The information about the topic was clearly outlined which was traditional child rearing practices. Readers would be able to take the findings of this research and transfer them to other contexts.

### **3.10.4 Confirmability**

Member and data checking were done. Continuous discussions and feedback with the participants were done to validate the data. All the findings were shared with my two promoters.

### 3.11 DISCUSSION

The chapter discussed the methods and procedures used to collect data. Highlights about the research design, research site, population, sampling procedure, data collection, data analysis, ethical measures and measures to ensure trustworthiness was also done. The methodology was done with diligence so that it gave clear and truthful findings. The next chapter reports the findings of traditional child rearing practices.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

This study explored cultural child rearing practices in Tshivenda families. The experiences of elders, parents, children, teachers and traditional leaders from the small group of Vhavenda families were captured through face to face interviews. To obtain information about the Vhavenda cultural child rearing practices, I identified, recruited and interviewed sixteen participants of which 4 were female Indigenous Knowledge holders, 3 grandparents, 1 traditional leader, 3 parents and 2 teachers and 3 youths, gave me a clearer picture of traditional child rearing. I went back to them to discuss the emerging themes and to agree on the way their inputs could be summarized. The findings are presented in three themes that are closely related to the objectives as follows:

- Cultural Vhavenda child rearing practices,
- Contemporary child rearing in Vhavenda household and
- The proposed program that would facilitate the integration of traditions into contemporary child rearing practices.

#### 4.1 CULTURAL CHILD REARING PRACTICES

During my conversation with the participants, the following sub-themes emerged and were agreed upon and discussed under each theme:

#### 4.1.1 Role modelling good behaviour



Figure 1: Children imitating cooking process

Figure 1 illustrates that children watch, learn and imitate what they see. Role modelling was regarded as an effective parenting tool where children learn through emulating what their parents do. There were things that adults were not supposed to do in front of their children, like fighting and quarrelling. Similarly, there were skills that adults demonstrated and or gave permission to imitate for instance speaking.

Vho-Mushayathoni was quick to indicate the significant role played by elderly grandparents, the elders in the family as role models. She talked of the dismay, they experience daily within households because parents do not teach and show their children respectful behaviour.

*Kha muṭa muṅwe na muṅwe na tshitshavha hu toḡea vhaaluwa ngauri ndi vha ndeme. Vhana vha no bva miṭani i re na vhaaluwa vho fhambana na vha no bva miṭani I si na vhaaluwa nga mikhwa yavho.*

Meaning that, “Every family and community needs elderly people because they are assets. Children who come from families with elderly people are different from those from families without elderly people because of their behaviour”.

The perception by many elders is that traditional ways of raising children is the best way as it was always coupled with instilling *vhuthu*, *thonifho*, *vhuḏifhinduleli na u bvuda* (respect, responsibility and discipline) of the child. According to Vho-Mushayathoni, nothing beats traditional child rearing practice.

*Zwi no khou itwa ano maḏuvha ndi maḏudzi. A hu tshena muhulwane kana muḏuku. Vhabebi vha khou lingana na vhana. Zwi no khou itwa a zwi ḏivhalekani*

Meaning that, “What is happening nowadays in life is taboos. Parents behave like their children. Their actions are not that much different from those of their children. What is happening is not good at all”.

Role modelling is when one leads a life where his/her actions are emulated or admired by others who watch him/her. As a role model, there is a display of qualities and character the role model acquired from those who led him/her. Role models are often admired and emulated by those who watch them daily. Their serves as a picture that can help those who are watching and admiring their personal qualities and achievements without talking to them.

The other interview I had was with Vho-Mandiwana, a 56 years old male primary teacher. He has been in the teaching profession for 27 years. Through his experience with primary school children helped him to see that children’s behaviour is a mirror of whom they have copied from. He then added his views by saying that;

*Vhabebi vha a hangwa uri vhana vha sedza khavho na uri ndi vhone vhadededzi vha u thoma. Vha ita zwithu phanda ha vhana sa u semana, u lwa na u amba zwi songo teaho u pfiwa nga vhana. Tsumbo: kha tshikolo B nga ḏuvha la vhumalo, nwedzi wa Tshimedzi gidimbili fumisumbe, mutukana wa grade ya vhuraru o vhudza kusidzana henefho kijasini uri u ḏoḏou mu mala uri a ite zwi no itwa nga khotsi awe kha mme awe. Musi vhabebi vha tshi vhudziwa a vho ngo hanedza vho tenda.*



Meaning that, “Parents forget that they are role models to their children. They are the first teacher to the child. They do things in front of their children, which is to quarrel, to fight, and say statements that are not supposed to be heard by their children. For example, at school B, on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017, a grade 5 boy told a grade 5 girl, that he loves her, he will marry her and fuck her too much. After investigation, it was found that the boy heard from his father telling his mother that he will fuck her too much. When the parents were alerted, it was found that what the child said was true”.

Children can be seen when they are role playing family games, the girl child mostly imitates how her mother talks and do things while on the other hand a boy child tries to be his father. Sometimes they copy even when they are angry. It was revealed that traditionally parents respect their children by not fighting, quarrelling, argue in front of them. Children may fail to listen to adults but will never fail to imitate them.

Vho-Tshinakaho, a parent of two girls age 18 and 20. Although she was a dedicated parent, she sometimes gets worried about her children if they are following or copying from her. She was raising her children alone because her husband passed away five years ago. She gave me this scenario:

*Ndi zwa vhukuma uri vhana vha guda nga u vhona. Vhahura vhanga vha na vhana vhaṅa, vhatuka vhararu na musidzana. Miṅwaha yavho l nṅha ha fumi sumbe. Vhabebi vhavho vhoṅhe ndi zwidakwa. Khotsi ndi rakonṅiraka wa muḽishumi vhane vha ita vha sa yi mushumoni. Vhana vhavho vha ita nga u funa hu sina ane a vha kaidza. Vho dzhena kha zwikambi vha tshe vhaṅuku na tshikolo vho litsha. Zwino vha thaidzo kha tshitshavha vha a tswa. Musi tshitshavha tshi tshi gungula, vhabebi vhavho vha a vha imelela. Ndi tendelana na ḽiambeke ḽi no ri apula a ḽi weli kule na muri. Vhana vha tshe vhaṅuku, a vha koni u fhambanya zwavhuḽi na zwi si zwavhuḽi. Ndi ngazwo vha tshi edzisa tshiṅwe na tshiṅwe kha vhabebi sa izwi vha tshi vha vhe navho tshifhinga tshinzhi.*

Meaning that, “It is true that children learn from what they see. My neighbours have four children, three boys and a girl. Both are over 17 years of age. Both parents are alcohol and drug addicts. The father is self-employed doing constructions and could hardly go to work. Children do as they like without any body to ask them. They started drinking at an early age. They are all school dropouts. Just like their parent they live as they wish. They are now a social problem because they steal to survive and satisfy their addiction. When the community complain, their parents stood up for them. I really agree with the saying that an apple don't fall far from the tree- children

copy what they see being done by their parents. When children are still young, they have not yet developed the skill of differentiating good from bad. That is why they imitate everything especially from their parent who are with them most of the time”.

My second interview with Vho-Mushayathoni revealed that even when parents are not being able to play their part in role modelling, other members of the family and community may be role models to their children and help those children to be responsible adults. She said to me:

*Ndi tshi aluwa muḍini wa hashu, ro vha ri vhanzhi. Ndo zwi ḍivha ndo no aluwa ndo no vha mufumakadzi uri vhaḥwe vhana vho vha vhe si mashaka. Ndi vhana vhe vhabebi vhashu vha vha dzhia hayani havho nga u vhona kutshilele kwa vhabebi vhavho vhe vha vha vha tshi dzula vha tshi lwa. U dzula navho zwo ita uri ri aluwe roṭhe ri tshi guda kha vhabebi vhashu. Zwino vho no aluwa vha na miḍi yavho na vhana vhavho vha khou vha alusa zwavhuḍi, ngauri vho guda zwavhuḍi.*

Meaning that, “when I grew up in our family, we were many. I have learned while I was a woman that some of the children were not related to us. They came from families where their parents were always fighting and quarrelling. Staying with them helped all of us to learn from our parents. Now they have grown up and have their own children and role modelling them as they have learned.”

Culturally, a lot of idiom expressions help to put emphasis on the importance of modelling children for good or bad: “*muri u vhavhaho u bva tsindeneni. ho penga ngozwi.*” Meaning that whatever the child has become are the results from the parents. Therefore, parents are to be blamed for the character of their children.

Role modelling was regarded as an effective parenting tool in instilling responsibility. There were things that adults should not do in front of the children. Similarly, there were skills that adults demonstrated and or gave permission to simulate. Teaching children responsibility means doing what needs to be done, meaning to take care of yourself, your family, your friends, and the whole community at large. It also means that others can rely on you and follow on your footsteps. It was clear from statements of participants that if children are taught from the early age, when they grew up, they will not forget what they

have been taught. Children need to learn that being responsible might involve doing something difficult such as studying or giving up social plans with friends in favor of helping the family. Responsibility can also take moral strength such as saying no to things that others see as important. Parents need to learn more ways to teach their children responsibility if they want tomorrow's generation to be a responsible nation.

#### 4.1.2 Modelling respect

At the core of traditional child rearing practices was a strong belief that children who are brought up well should have good morals, be respectful, be responsible citizens and must have the capacity to endure difficult situations. From the day the child is born, the expectations are high that the child should display high moral ground and respect. When the child starts to hear and become aware with the surrounding, he/she was taught to say "Aaa" (women) or "Ndaa" (men) which is the humblest way of greeting in Tshivenda. Children learnt from the early age that visitors, or a passerby, or someone you meet on the road who should be acknowledged through greeting. If, when meeting the chief, or any traditional leader, one ought to kneel by the side of the road until the leader passes. This was a way of showing respect to the elders. Any child who would not do the gesture of respect was regarded as disobedient and would be labelled as such. She/he lacked *mikhwa* (morals), they would say.

*U losha* was not the only symbol that portrays respect. According to participants, respect was shown through obedience. Children were to obey whatever they are told to do without arguments. This compliance they say, is contrary to what modern children do. Elderly participants regard modern children as the "why? generation" because whatever they are told not to do, they ask 'why?' which was not the case traditionally. They said that traditionally children were expected to be silent when being rebuked by adults. To respond to adults at that stage was a symbol of disrespect and was punishable. One aspect that symbolizes respect was the issue of sending children to do some chores by an adult, they freely do that without demanding any remuneration unlike what they are

experiencing from modern children whom you cannot ask to do something without payment. The views of participants were an indication that traditionally, every child must respect all adults regardless of whether they are their biological parents or not. In fact, they further indicated that the word biological parent was unheard of in traditional families. My interaction with participants shows that they are concerned mostly with the behaviour of children of modern society who they say, argue with adults and some even got to fight. They say those children may even tell an adult that they have only two parents and are the ones supposed to rebuke them.

Although the process of *u khottha* is one of the symbols of respect, some of the participants argued that it might not fit in today's lifestyle because traditionally there were no roads. However, instead of walking paths there are streets with cars moving up and down which may pose danger to those practicing that process. The difference was also related to family status, especially in women. Royalty greetings differs from general greetings. A princess is expected to lie on her side with both hands clutched together and her head on top of her hands facing down. In addition, there was a strong belief that '*thanda i khotlolwa i tshe nnu ngauri ya oma i a vunde*' – you must straighten the rod whilst it is still wet because if it gets dry, it can easily break. An early start in teaching and modelling the correct behaviour to the child was believed to be the way to go.

My encounter with Vho-Mushayathoni, brought this to light. She was a 93 year old woman I visited first. She was known in the village for her insights about life and wise ways of rearing stubborn children. She is often, as I was told, concerned about the way parents are not raising their children in a traditional way. She was already a great grandparent of three. Her son, who is himself a grandfather told me that he is in trouble with *Mukegulu* (an elderly person), as she is often referred to by the community members, for not doing what is right relating to child rearing. When I arrived at her homestead, I found her seated under a tree *muṭani vhaḍuhulu vha tshi khou tamba heneḥo tsini navho* (grandchildren playing near her). She ordered one of her grandchildren to go and fetch a mat like the one she was sitting on. Immediately when we sat down, both her grandchildren came and

greeted us in a traditional Tshivenda way *nga u losha*. The grandchildren, about 7 and 9 years old, both demonstrated the Tshivenda way of greeting. As a Muvenda I praised them and said, *ahee vhakololo. Vha a zwi funana vha ha nyankwita vha nḁevhe dza mapango*. This is a traditional praise, a way of encouragement and acknowledgement of a clan. I wanted to encourage them for greeting in the traditional Tshivenda way. However, to show that the children enjoy the praise they smiled and went away, as it is a Tshivenda norm that children are not supposed to sit with adults when they are engaged with visitors.



Figure 2

The above figure reveals the conversation I had with *Vho Mushayathoni*. In the picture below the children are there to greet me as a visitor, after greeting they leave the adults alone.

Vho-Mushayathoni further re-iterated:

*Zwine na khou vhona vhana vha tshi khou ita ndo tou vha funza. Arali ndo vha ndi songo touri ja da hafha ja kovhela musi vhabebi vha tshi vhona unga vhana vha khou gudiswa zwithu zwi si na mushumo, havha vhana vho vha vha tshi do aluwa vhe mabambukwa.*

Meaning that, “what you see these children doing, I taught them. If I did not stand up when their parents thought that children were taught outdated things. Otherwise these children will be bend logs”.

Vho-Mushayathoni’s statement meant that she still insists on grandchildren learning how to respect their elders. She reiterated that if children are taught at an early stage, they will grow up being respectful adults and the community will benefit a lot. It was evident in the way the great grandchildren greeted us and how they responded when they were called, that traditional practices were still upheld, something she took pride of. While it is a general feeling of grandparents in the village that their grandchildren should learn about the culture and tradition of Vhavenda, enforcing it is not easy. In Vho-Mushayathoni’s situation, it is notable that the great grandchildren still respect the grandparents. Furthermore, the parents appreciated the support and the role she played in transferring such skills as the proper way of *u losha* and greeting the visitors.

#### **4.1.3 Perseverance**

Most indigenous parents recognised the need for their children to have right cultural values. As such, the elderly would invoke practical work and other relevant things to instil perseverance. Doing so was noted to help to keep children away from undesirable characters who may influence them negatively in their personal development. Participants gave their views about teaching children to persevere. This is what they said:



Perseverance is the way in which children are taught tolerance, respect and endurance. Even though it is through hardship, what is learned there helped in preparing the children to grow up with good morals. There were male and female initiation schools. *Vhusha, domba, musevhetho* were for girls. *Muḽa* or *vhutuka* were for boys. *Musevhetho* was the first initiation stage for girls where girls as young as 6 years were enrolled. *Lunya* or *u hwala ngoma* was one of some practices done at *musevhethoni* and was one of the hardest performances of all. A piece of a reed was sharpened at both ends. It would be put on the inner sides of the thigh so that the initiates hold it and walk so that it does not fall. While others will be singing, the initiate will be walking slowly and carefully to the marked destination with her hands-on top of her head. If the girl arrives without dropping down the stick, the whole group will ululate and praise her. Her family will be happy for her success but if the stick drops, she is to repeat the process.

The other performance was *u newa luswayo lu no itwa kha tshirumbi* – a given identity on the thigh. This is done on the selected day, the initiates are taken to a secluded place on the river bank, where a qualified elder woman performs the operation. The girls are branded with a mark on the outside of the thigh. The brand is a passport for the initiate to have access to attend when these ceremonies are taking place. The pain endured through those processes leaves the child with a strong character of tolerance. Other initiation schools also add to what has been done *musevhethoni*. I then wanted to know how perseverance was inculcated through various means. Although traditional schools have a positive impact on rearing children, some activities have a negative impact, for instance, at *mulani*, boys are taught songs that disrespect women. When they come back from initiation schools, these children's character or behaviour has drastically changed. Even those who are still young show this behaviour of disrespect when the women, or even their mother talks to them.

Another conversation I had was with Vho-Luvhani, a 57 year old mother of 6; three boys and three girls, aged 18 to 23, who stay with her 88 year old mother in the same household. It is important that I bring Vho-Luvhani into the picture of my interview as she

is a central figure in this research. Traditionally when a person gets old, his/her children have the responsibility to take him/her, to stay with them and look after him/her. It was a cultural mandate which all children who have been well raised will do in turn. Although Vho-Luvhani has a big house, she has a separate hut for her mother. She told me that the decision to leave her mother in a separate house was largely an outcome of a battle between community perceptions and what her mother wanted. Her mother believed that *malofha avho ha pfani na mazenenge*, meaning her blood is not fine with corrugated iron roof, as she is used to grass thatched roof hut all her life. She also did not want to be too close to her daughter's room where she will hear everything that happens in the room. The issue of having the toilet in the house where everyone will hear what you will be doing inside, she could not take it and she said: *vho mme anga vho fa vha songo zwi vhona hezwi* (my mother died without seeing this).

She thought that it would not be appropriate for her. The contemporary perception could be interpreted as Vho-Luvhani is ill-treating her mother by leaving her in a separate hut, something she personally grabbed with, until she eventually acceded to her mother's wish. Now she is happy. She prefers a place outside where she can prepare a traditional fire and prepare traditional food such as *tshidzimba* for her grandchildren. She further told us that her grandchildren enjoy the food. This makes her very happy and, on the other hand, teaches them the good manners.

Vho-Luvhani made sure that her mother is comfortable in her hut. She even installed a television for her so that she can watch *Muvhango*. *Muvhango* is the popular SABC TV soapie that has been running for more than 2 decades, whose purpose is to show traditional Vhavenda culture. Vho-Luvhani's mother likes it very much, although sometimes she is disturbed by the other languages being used that she cannot understand. This means that language is an important aspect even in the development of the child. With interference from those other languages, *mukegulu* (an elder) is missing something from the soapie and she cannot connect well with what she heard before interruption. It also encourages parents to allow their children to learn other languages so



that they will be able to communicate with others. When doing so, parents must not forget that knowing one's own language is very important because culture and language are intertwined, we cannot separate the two. She complains about the way her Tshivenda culture is being displayed because some of the things are wrongly done for instance, where Khosi Vho-Azwindini marries his wives in a modern way instead of *vhaselwa*. Vho-Luvhani commented:

*Vhabebi vhanga vho vha vha tshi ri funza zwothe vha sa londi uri u mutukana kana musidzana. Ro vha ri tshi tou kombetshedzwa. U thomani ndo vha ndi tshi vhona u nga ri vhabebi vhashu vha a dina, u swika ndi tshi zwi vhona ndo no aluwa uri vho vha vha tshi khou ri funza u kongelela. Ndo vha ndi lupedzi nahone vhabebi vhashu vho vha vhe na zwifuwo zwinzhi. Nhe ndo vha ndi tshi lisa mbudzi. Ndo vha ndi tshi vuwa nga matsheloni nda sedza uri mbudzi dzi hone na nda kona u ya tshikoloni. Tshikolo tshi tshi bva nda dzi vula dza yo fula. Vhakomana vhanga vho guda u lisa na u hama kholomo na u lima nga phulu. U hama na u lima nga phulu zwo vha zwi tshi vhavha ngauri ho vha hutshi raiwa muthu nga kholomo na mbudzi. Ndi humbula quvha le khaladzi anga ari ndi de ndi fare tshinamana a tshi khou hama mme atsho. Ndo tou mangala ndo no qala fhasi. Ndi tshi vuwa ndo vha ndi tshi khou nzuruma malofha nga ningoni. A thongo tsha tenda u sendela tsini na kholomo, fhedzi ndo vha ndi tshi fanela u zwi ita nga u kombetshedzwa. Zwothe zwe ra vha ri tshi ita ro vha ri sa tou nanga, ro vha ri tshi tevhedza zwe ra vhudzwa.*

Meaning that, "my parents taught us to do everything regardless of whether you like it or not, you are a boy or a girl. In fact, everything was enforced upon us. First, I thought my parents were cruel until I discovered when I grew up that they were teaching us through perseverance. I was the youngest by the time. All other children were boys. My family had a lot of livestock. My responsibility was to look after the goats. Every day in the morning I will go and check whether the goats are safe and then go to school. After school, I will take care of them until I take them home in the afternoon. My brothers even though they were young, they were also even taught how to look after, milk cows and how to plough with an ox span. This process was hard. I remember one day my brother asked me to hold the calf while he was busy milking the cow. When the mother of the calf saw me holding its calf, it turned and ran towards me. I woke up blood oozing from my nostrils. From that day I did not want to be near the cow but was forced to do so. Everything we do was not by choice but doing what you are told to do".

The history of Vhavenda is in oral form and as such there were no pictures illustrating what happened. The quotations by Vho-Luvhani introduces another critical factor associated with traditional child rearing practices as follows.

#### **4.1.4 Children raised to work**

Vho-Luvhani's scenario largely represented a traditional girl growing up in a family. They were expected to assist their parents in household chores. Initially, that is before most of them could go to school, that's all they did in a day's household chores. However, as children started to go to school, they were expected to assist in the home after school, on weekends and during school holidays. For those parents with farms or fields to plough, their children had to assist them in tilling the land and in planting. This was done as preparation for future life. Children who work hard was a measure of good parenting and good citizenship. I observed that this elderly woman was old but seemingly she was very active.

What caught my interest was that she was treated as a boy and would go to the fields to look after the cattle. In modern day life, this can be interpreted as child labour. However, under the cultural norms this was a way of training children to be able to fend for themselves. Laziness was an enemy of the community hence such hard work was a good foundation for her to find a good and caring husband. Sight should not be lost on the fact that the indigenous communities' economy was mainly based on subsistence farming. Thus, hard work determined one's status within the community. Contrary to modern day families that only have one or two children, indigenous people would have up to ten or more children. The example above shows that the family was made up of seven children, six boys and one girl. They believed that there is strength in numbers. If they were to work in the field, they would not spend many days tilling one piece of land. It was, in my view, the reason also why the girl-child had to be trained to be strong so that she can support the mother with household chores. Parents whose children worked hard in the families were respected in the community. Every family would want to marry from that family.

Traditionally when the boy is ready to get married, his family will first check the character of the girl and the family she was coming from before engaging in the process. If the girl was well mannered then she qualified.

Teaching children household chores was the responsibility of the parent. Carrying water on the head was a way of doing things. Children as young as 5 years could carry water containers on their head. There were no wheelbarrows like there are now. You will find a 12 year old girl or boy able to pick up a 20 litre container from the ground to their head without being assisted. Mealies were grinded by *mutuli* (mortar) *na musu* (grinding log). *Muthatha*, *luselo*, *sefo* and *tshifhaho* were some of the utensils used during the process of *u tohola kana u sinda*.

I conducted an interview with Vho-Litshani, a female elder of 60 years who stays alone in her son's house, because he is staying in Gauteng with his family. She is concerned about her grandchildren that they will grow up without traditional guidance. When they visit her during school holidays, she can see that they have problem of coping with what she is trying to teach them. The environment in which children are being raised contributes a great deal to how they become. She explained:

*Vhabebi vhashu vho vha vha tshi ri vusa nga matsheloni-tsheloni a duvha line ra fanela u tohola. Tshinwe tshifhinga ro vha ri tshi ita zwigwada u itela u leludza mushumo. Musi li diso janga, mme anga vho vha vha tshi dzudzanya zwothe duvha li sa athu u swika. Ro vha ri tshi tohola saga kana tswotswi zwi tshi bva kha u hula ha tshigwada tshi re hone. Nga vhavhili-vhavhili ri do sindisana kha mutuli muthihi. Mme anga vha do vha vha tshi khou ri thusa nga u fhefhera na u tungula mufumbu. Musi ro fhedza u tohola mavhele a a lovhewa u itela u sindiwa. Mme anga sa vhone vha no ri thusa vha do ri vhudza uri ndi lini hune ra do sinda. Ri tshi tou ri duvha ja u sinda ndi matshelo, mavhele a a lovhewa a nuliwa a lindela u sindiwa matshelo madautsha. U sinda ho fhambana na u tohola ngauri kha u sinda mavhele a sindiwa u swika a tshi fhelele, ngeno mme anga vha tshi vha vha khou sefa vhukhopfu nga sefo. Vhukhopfu vhu do anewa ha oma ha konou shumiswa kha u bika vhuswa.*

Meaning that, "Our parents wake us up in the early hours of the day and start *u tohola*. Sometimes we would make groups to make the job easier. As it was my turn, my mother will make sure that everything is ready before the

day. We used to finish a 50kg or 80kg bag of mealies depending on the size of the group. A set of 2 will be using the same *mutuli*. My mother will be doing her part of *u fhefhera na u tungula mufumbu*. When the whole process is complete, the grinded mealies were put away waiting for the process of *u sinda*. My mother as a guide will tell us when we are to start with the process of *u sinda*. Before that day arrived, *mavhele a a lovhewa* (will be soaked) a *nuliwa li tshi kovhela* followed by *u sinda* the following day early in the morning. *U sinda* differs with *u tohola* because here mealies are grinded until they are finished. In between my mother will be busy *nau sefa vhukhopfu*. The sifted mealie flour will be dried in the sun then it can be used to cook porridge. The whole process was only for women”.

**Figure 3: Luvhola cultural village: Women teaching girls how to pound mealies with a grinding log and a mortar**







**Figure 4: A woman showing the process of *u fhefhera na u tenga*.**

Elderly people make sure that children are taught house chores so that when they have their own families, they will be able to do as they were taught. Parents teach their children by doing what needs to be done. Then children imitate by doing what they are taught. This is evidence from Figure 3 which illustrates elderly women showing how mealies are ground. Figure 5 shows a girl being taught by elderly women how to carry a bucket of water on her head. It is said that if you teach your child the right ways of life, he/she will not deviate from it. All these are an indication that parents and elderly people are responsible for teaching the young ones. Apart from learning to do household chores, the process of grinding mealies was a good exercise because it involves the whole body, for instance, focus, balance, body movements and coordination.

I interacted with Vho-Selina, a 58 year old mother of two girls aged 19 years and 20 years. She has a 20 hectare pine tree plantation next to the Mahunguhwi Village. She inherited this from her father. She used one hectare to plough mealies and vegetable which she sell some of to the community. She told me that she was the only girl from her family of five children. Her father chose her because he saw that since she was a child she was interested and followed him when he went to the plantation. Although her children are all girls, she taught them to look after the plantation by tilling around the fence to protect it from fires. They did the work without complaining.

*Ndo guda uri u shuma nga maanda a zwi vhulahi muthu. Kha u shuma honohu ndo funza vhananga nga ha liambeke li no ri "a sa shumi na u la a songo la" zwi tshi amba uri vhabva a vha faneli u newa zwa u la ngauri zwiliwa zwi wanala nga u shuma. Ndo vha ndi tshi vusa vhananga nga matsheloni-tsheloni u itela uri ri shume mushumo munzhi duvha li saathu u fhisa. Ro vha ri tshi twa ngeo ra vhuya nga mathabama. Zwa zwino vhananga ndi di tongisa ngavho ngauri vha a kona mishumo. U fhira vhana vhanzhi vho aluwaho navho vha sa funzwe mishumo.*

Meaning that, "She learned as a child throughout those processes that working hard does not kill anyone. Through this I taught my children using the idiom that says "a sa shumi na u la a songo la" meaning that those who are lazy are not expected to be fed because food comes from hard work. I used to wake them up early in the morning so that we can do a lot of work before it is too hot. We spent the day there until late in the afternoon. Presently, I am proud of them because they know how to work compared to those whom they grew up with who were not well trained to work. She indicated that she learned concentration, focus, coordination, hard work, tolerance and responsibility. She continued and said, she did not have any problem when she started her family because what she learned at home prepared her for the future".

The participants agreed that traditionally, teaching children to work was done through gender recognition. This means that a girl child will be taught woman's chores and a boy child would be taught male chores. Depending on the family structure, those who are males would be guided by male adults and female would be guided by a female adult. If parents are not there, uncles, aunties and grannies took their place. Because of the gender identity, girls associate themselves with toddlers. They practice taking care of

those toddlers using the skill they learned when playing with their dolls. According to Vho Selina gender is not an issue. Children can be trained to do anything. As long they are taught at an early age and in the right way. This is also shown by the picture underneath.



**Figure 5: Teaching responsibility – carrying a bucket on the head.**

The picture above shows how children were given tasks and taught responsibility. A girl child is taught how to carry a bucket of water in her head by elderly women.

I had an interview with Vho-Netshiṭuni, a 71 year old elder born from the royal family. He was referred to as Vhavenda, meaning a male senior elder of royal blood. Visiting Vho-Netshiṭuni was not easy as our first appointment failed because he was attending *khoro* (a royal meeting) of which we could not disturb in respect of culture. By the time we arrived at Vho-Netshiṭuni's house, he had already left. We found his wife and her friend Vho-Phophi. Nearby there was a child playing. When I enquired about his whereabouts, the child immediately pointed a finger at the eastern side and said: *gugu vho ya hafhala muḑini wa Vho-Masindi* (my granny is at Vho-Masindi's home). I asked him to go and call

him. He came back with him and he greeted us by saying *hei vhaeni vhangha vho swika* (my guests have arrived). *No tɔdɔu wana tshinoni tsho fhufhisa* (you nearly missed me).

We introduced ourselves. I asked him if we can find a place where we can talk to him, but he said “*thukhani zwanu henefha vhakololo ni songo dzhenwa nga phepho* (sit down and don’t be afraid). I asked him how children were reared during his time. He took a deep breath and said:

*Ndila ye nhe nda aluswa ngayo na ndila ye nda alusa vhananga ngayo, yo fhambanela kule na ndila ine ano maɖuvha vhana vha khou aluswa ngayo: Nwana o roredzwaho mapfura ndevheni a nga si ite hezwi. Vhabebi vha aṅo maɖuvha a vha zwi divhi uri Tshivenda tshi ri thanda i khotlolwa i tshe nṅu ngauri ya oma i a vundea.*

Meaning that, “the way I was raised and the way I raised my children is very different from today. Children who were trained to do household chores at an early stage seem to have no difficulties in carrying out the demand of those chores. A stick is well bent while still new because when it is old it can break”.

*Kha vhananga a huna khundavhalai, vhothe vha na zwavho* (all my children follow the rules, and they have their properties). The statement emphasises that it will be difficult for parents to discipline and correct grown up children if they did not do that at an early age. That is why it is said that teach the child the correct ways while still young and that child will never deviate from it. Vho-Phophi, a friend to Vho-Netshituni’s wife, without being invited to participate, raised a concern and said *naa kaniha riṅe vhaṅwe a ro ngo beba ari divhi u alusa vhana hu tshi vhudziswa avha Vho-Netshituni fhedzi? Zwino imaniha ri ni vhudze mafhungo nga fhedzi* (we also have children and we know how to rear children. (Why do you ask Vho-Netshituni alone? Let me tell you something for free).

*Vhananga vho vha vha nga si ite zwi no itwa nga vhana vha ano maɖuvha. Ndo vha ndi sa tendi rwavhishi yeneyo muḍini wanga. Ndo vha ndi tshi nea vhananga muthetho une vha fanela u u tevhedza. Arali vha sa tevhedzi zwine vha vhudzwa vho vha vha tshi rwiwa, vha sa zwi vhudze na muthu na muthihi. Vha ano maɖuvha a vha kaidziwi. Wa vha kaidza vha fhedza vha tshi u pota mapholisani.*



Meaning that, “I used to give my children rules that they must follow. If children don’t follow the rules, they would be given a hiding and they could not report to anyone unlike today where children are not rebuked. Traditionally, punishing a child who was lazy, disobedient or run away from family chores by giving him/her was not a problem till democracy took over. When they are corrected, they report you to the law and you end up arrested for correcting your children”.

*Linwe ɖuvha n̄wananga wa tanzhe o vhuya o lenga hayani a tshi khou shavha uri ho ngo ya u reɖa khuni nga matsheloni sa zwe vhañwe vha ita. O ri a tshi swika nda mu vhudza uri kha humele hune a bva, hone arali vhu vhuswa u ɖo lala o n̄anzwa banga. Zwi si fhelele afho fhedzi, ndo vho ɖo mu rwa lwe na n̄e nda vho pfa ndo no dzhenwa nga nyofho. U bva leneɓo ɖuvha ho ngo tsha dovha u shavha mushumo.*

Meaning that, “one day my daughter came home late as she was afraid because she did not go with others to pick up woods from the bush with others. When she arrived, I told her to go back where she was coming from. Even the food she was not going to taste it. She slept with an empty stomach. I also beat her very hard. Since that day she never run away when given some work to do”.

At the end I asked who the elder is, I was told she is one of the elders in that community. It was added that while she was still a middle-aged woman, she was known for her tough discipline measures to her children. Some parents would take their children to her to be disciplined. It was said that she was very tough in such a way that some of the men could not stand her.

Vho-Phophi’s statement is an indication that where parents staying alone without other family members, there was a need that parents should take the primary stand and know that it was their responsibility to make sure that their children are reared well in family chores. The statement further revealed that although the parent might be single, it was upon their shoulders to raise children properly. This is evidence of what she told us because she used to teach her children well and enforce discipline.

Modern societies regard elderly people as uneducated and knowing nothing. What they know is regarded as outdated. As a result, the indigenous cultural knowledge they have seems wasted and instead of guiding the children, they die with it leaving behind a nation

with traditional-cultural bankruptcy (Olutayo 1996:77-90). It is with great sadness that traditional families are decaying. It is reported that, due to societal changes, some parents are working far from home and can come and visit their families on weekends or on a monthly basis. Some children are orphans and therefore the responsibility remain with grandparents to raise them. I agree with Olutayo, because according to participants, traditionally there were no orphans. The community took it upon their shoulders to make sure that those children whose parents were diseased are taken care of. There was no need for formal procedure to follow. When members of the community took decisions like this, they were bound by communalism character which embraces love and *Vhuthu*.

From the participant's views, we can see that elderly people play an important role in traditional child rearing through their wisdom. They used their knowledge to guide young ones even if they are not their own.

I also ran an interview with Vho-Sandani, a parent aged 68 with four grandchildren, a knowledge holder who was said to be very active in her community. She was involved in programs of teaching young children good behaviour. She was totally convinced that elder people have wisdom and experience as far as rearing children the traditional way was concerned. The idea of elders teaching children could not be more emphasized. I heard that since she started with the program, parents have witnessed changes in behaviour from their children and they are happy and wish the program to continue forever. This is what she said:

*Sa musidzana ndo aluswa nga Makhulu wanga vha Mukegulu. Zwo vha zwi tshi khou konḡa sa izwi vho vha vha sa shumī. Vhabebi vhanga vho lovha ndi na miḡwaha ya fumi. Makhulu wanga vho mfunza mishumo minzhi na ye ya vha yo mphira. Nda tea u shuma sa izwi o vha e ḡe muhulwane. Vhazwala vhanga vho vha vha tshe vhaḡuku. Nga itsho tshifhinga ndo vha ndi tshi ri ndi khou tambudzwa. Ndo guda u bika ndi tshe muḡuku, na u lela vhana. U aluwa u si na vhabebi, wa aluswa nga vhathu vha re na ndavha, zwi a thusa.*

Meaning that, “As a girl, I was raised by my grandmother. It was very hard as she was old and had no income. My parents passed on while I was only 10 years old. I was young, and my grandmother taught me to do a lot of work which was not of my age. I had to do all because I was the elderly child. My two cousins were still young. I was taught lot of work although by then I thought I was being punished. I learned to cook at an early age. I also learned to take care of other children even when my grandma was not around. Growing up without parents can sometimes be of advantage if those around you rear you and guide you in the right direction”.

#### **4.1.5 It took a village to raise a child**

To give this theme a context, I start by providing a brief of how a traditional homestead looked like. In a traditional family structure, groups of people lived together with no fence, not any form of demarcation that divided stands. In those units one would find uncles, aunts, cousins, parents, grandparent and in-laws. Inside those bigger units there are small units or compounds. Some families make *luhura* as the fence unlike modern homes where barbered wires and brick walls are built. *Luhura* – a fence was for protecting livestock not to go astray and to show where the yard ends. Modern fencing is called stop nonsense so that every family minded their own business without being interrupted by other families.



**Figure 6: Cultural structures of Tshivenda homesteads**

The father's house was built at the centre surrounded by his wives' huts and *tshitanga* for cooking. The grandmother shares the house with her female grandchildren. Every wife has her own hut. The grandmother was regarded as the caretaker for her grandchildren. This setup made it easy for children to be raised by an extended family. Furthermore, my interaction with Vho-Khaukanani, a 98 elderly who although she was very old, was very strong, particularly in her eyesight, hearing and her speech. She has seven children, three boys and four girls who were all aged. She has twenty-five grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. Vho-Khaukanani is presently staying with her youngest daughter Vho-Masindi, who is also a grandmother. She is the first born in her mother's house and does not remember her position in her father's house as there were more than five wives. That day it was raining heavily, and it was cold. We found Vho-Khaukanani in the traditional kitchen sitting around the fire. She said that:

*U ɔi dzhenisa ha muvhundu kha u alusa n̄wana zwi bva kha murero u no ri n̄wana wa muñwe ndi n̄wana wau. Ndi wone murero u no vhofhekanya Vhavenda zwa ita uri vhana vha aluwe vhe vhana vha re na ndavha. Nga*

*Tshivenda arali nwana o khakha, mulandu a u vhewi kha n'wana u vhewa kha avho vhane vha mu alusa. Ndi afho hune tshitshavha tsha kona u kaidza n'wana arali a tshi khou khakha.*

Meaning that, "The involvement of the whole community in child rearing comes from the Vhavenda proverbs which says, "someone's child is your child". This is the saying which unified the Vhavenda people and helped in raising children in the manner they are responsible citizens. Every child's wellbeing depends on the hands of the community. Traditionally if the child did wrong, the blame is not directly put on the child but on those who raised him/her involving the whole community. That is why the community will take a stand to call to order or discipline the child".

During the process of my study, I learnt a lot about how the similar expressions apply to different African cultures. For example, The Yoruba of South-western Nigeria have a saying, "*eniyān kan lo ma nbi omo, sugbon gbogbo ara ilu lo ma nto ju won*", meaning although mother and father are by birth biological parents, the whole society becomes second parents to each child (Ajiboye 2012). These expressions show that if the community wants good citizens, all members should work hand in hand to achieve that dream. If the family wants to have well-mannered children with good morals, each member should be committed to achieve that goal. Every adult member in the village should participate in raising a child.

Vho-Sikhipha, an elder aged 70, was residing with his wife as their children are all grown up. He was very respected in his community due to his indigenous knowledge he has and his character and the way he raised his children as they are regarded as assets to that community. As an elder he was always concerned about how things are done in his community, compared to what things were before when he grew up. He told me that:

*Kutshilele kwa kale kwo vha ku kwavhuḍi ngauri vhathu vho vha vhe vhathihi. Musi wa dzimpfu vhathu vho vha vha tshi thusana hu sa sedzwi uri u ḍo wana tshithu murahu. Musi muḵa i na mishumo i ngaho sa minyanya vhathu vho vha vha tshi ya hu songo thoma ha bva thambo. U vha muraḍo wa muvhundu zwo vha zwi zwone zwa ndeme, u fana na zwine ra khou zwi vhona ano maḍuvha hune arali u songo rambiwa a u yi. Musi muḵa una zwithu, wo vha u tshi kovhekana na vhahura u fana na musu ho bikwa tshidzimba kana ḵama. Zwo vha zwi si na ndavha uri munwe muta a u na*

*tshithu. Muṭa wa hashu wo vha u si na zwawo, honeha, ro vha ri tshi dzula tsini ha muṭa weṭhoho yawo vha vha vhe maine. Zwifhingani zwa khirisimusi vho vha vha tshi ri vhidza ra ḷa ra nwa na tie. Naho ndo vha ndi muṭuku, ndo kona u guda u ṅea. Mme anga musu vho ṭhavha khuhu vho vha vha tshi avhela-vho vha ula muṭa.*

Meaning that, “communal life was very good because every person belongs to the community. When there were funerals, every community member took the burden and assisted the family that was mourning without getting anything in return. When families had events such as traditional weddings, people just go there. There was no need for invitation. Being a member of that community means you are always welcomed unlike what we see in modern life where you only go where you are invited. They will be there for each other. When the families had something, they shared with other families who have nothing. For instance, if a family cooked a delicate traditional food or meat, they will give a plate to their neighbours. As we grew up, we learned that every person is important. It does not matter whether in that community there were people of different culture. Our family did not have much, and our neighbour were well to do family and were Xitsonga speakers. The father of that family was a traditional healer. Most of the time there were dances called *matshomani*. During those times, all neighbouring children would be invited to go and feast there. During Christmas times, we would be invited to go and enjoy tea, bread with red jam, porridge and meat. Although I was young, I learned many things like sharing, selfless love and so on. When my mother slaughters a chicken at home, she would send me to the neighbour to give them their share. When they have something, they will also do the same”.

I asked him whether what he learned helped him in any way as he grew up, and he said:

*Ee, zwine nda vha zwone ndi zwe nda zwi guda ndi tshe nwana. Zwi sumba uri muthu ndi muthu nga munwe. Zwe nda funza vhananga ndi zwe nda guda. Ndo takala ngauri vhananga vha khou tshimbila kha ndila yone. Zwi kha tshitshavha u vhona uri vhana vha khou aluswa nga ndila yone. Vhabebi vha fanela u tendela tshitshavha tshi tshi kaidza vhana.*

Meaning that, “Yes, what I am is the results of what I have learned as a child. This also clarify the saying that: I am because you are, you are because I am “VHUTHU”. It helped me to see the value of sharing, communal life and what love do to others. What I taught my children is what I learned. I am happy that my children are walking the talk. Every community member bears the responsibility of living the life that would help the child to be a responsible member of the community. When the community members discipline the child, parent of the child did not interfere with the process instead the parents would encourage those who were enforcing discipline to carry on”.



I learnt that the reason why the mother of the child would not intervene when her child was being disciplined was because within the cultural values and norms of Tshivenda, a child belonged not only to the mother but the community. In the same way, traditionally beating a child as a way of correcting the child. This had seemingly started to change because of the constitutional Human Rights which came up and abolished corporal punishment. The emergency of the democracy did not do away with the cultural rights of indigenous people. Section 30 and 31 of the Bill of Rights (Act 108 of 1996) acknowledges this right.

Every family, and every community needs elderly people because they are assets. Children who come from families with elderly people are different from those from families without elderly people because of their behaviour. It was evident in the way they greet people and how they respond when they are called. The parents appreciated the support from grandparents as they play different roles such as mentors, caregivers, role models, and parenting and many more. Our elderly people taught us many things such as *mirero*, *maidima*, *thai*, *dzingano*, stories and taboos which bear educational value.

Vho-Sikhipha said,

*Ro vhuwela nga zwinzhi kha hovhu vhushaka. Vhabebi vhanga na vho Makhulu vho vha vha tshi dzula vho di imisela u ri thusa kha u alusa vhana. Naho ri kule ro vha ri tshi pfa ro vhofohololwa ngauri ro vha ri tshi divha uri vhana vhashu vha na muthu a no khou vha londa u swika ri tshi vhuya. Izwo zwo vha zwi tshi thusa kha u vhofohekanya mita uri i vhe tshithu tshithihi, zwa sumbedza Vhuthu.*

Meaning that, "We benefitted a lot from this family union. My parents and my in-laws were always there for us and our children for guidance. Even when we were away, we felt free because we know that our children had someone to look after them until we were back, said one of the parents. It also unified and brought family together and showed the spirit of Vhuthu as an African symbol".

#### 4.1.6 The role of traditional leaders

I am compelled to bring in the aspect of traditional leaders because they were part of the process in traditional child rearing. Traditional leaders were regarded as the pillar of every community. They were the ones responsible with fostering a cultural way of life through traditional schools because, they were leaders and rulers of their communities. Members of the community listen to them and carried out instructions willingly. Because of many changes brought by democracy, traditional leadership in most communities seemed to be powerless. Traditional leaders were respected by their followers. When community meetings were called to address issues concerning the community, people will attend without being forced. Activities such as *vhusha*, *mirundu*, *domba* and *musevhetho* were performed at royal councils are no longer taking place.

These activities used to help the community to raise children who became disciplined and respectful members of the community. The biggest concern of the participants was the disrespect of traditional leaders by the democratic government. Powers of traditional leaders had been reduced to zero and members of communities no longer regards those leaders. As participants argued, it was clear that the role played by *misanda* (royal councils) in guiding parents towards child rearing practices have diminished. This is so because as they say, *dzingoma*, which played a major role in modelling children to become well-mannered and responsible citizens are no longer practiced the way it was done before. One of the participants even raised the issue of young children engaging in many social ills at a young age in modern life. I probed further, asking if traditional leaders have the knowledge about legislative laws that govern their traditional affairs. I found out that, there is little knowledge about the law.

My interview with Vho-makhadzi, Vho-Mukonḡeleli, 66 years old, who by being born at *musanda* (royal family) had the qualities of being given the title of *makhadzi* (the chief's sister) who is regarded as one of the family advisers revealed that:



*Uri mahosi vho dzhielwa maanda ndi nga ri ee, kana hai, ngauri ndi vhona u nga vhabebi vha tshi khou shumisana na mahosi ndi vhona vha re na vhuḍifhinduleli ha u vhona uri vhana vhavho vha khou aluwa nga ndila –ḍe. Mahosi a vha vhusi vhe vhothe vha vhusa na vhathu vhavho. Hu vhone hu tshi nga muvhuso wo fhaḍa luvondo vhukati ha mahosi na vhathu. Ndi ralo ngauri ri wana mivhunduni ho no thomiwa zwiimiswa zwi ngaho dzisiviki dzine uya nga ha nḅe zwo imela muvhuso. Arali mahosi vhe hone a hu tei u vha na tshiḅwe tshiimiswa. Iyi nyimele ndi yone i vhangaho dzikhakhathi zwa sia mahosi vha si tsha pfiwa nga vhalanda. Hu tshi vho vhidzwa miḅangano ya musanda u wana vhathu vha si tsha ḍa. Henefhoha ndi hone he vhabebi vha vha vha tshi fanela u amba nga ha vhana vhavho na mivhundu yavho.*

Meaning that, “it is not totally true that traditional leaders lost their powers. I can say yes and no, because parents are responsible to talk about issues that concern their communities, children and their families. Chiefs don’t rule alone; they rule together with their people. It seems as if the government has built a wall between traditional leaders and the community. I say so because in communities there are many structures such as civics which represent the government. There is no need for other structures if the traditional leader is there. Situations like this are triggers of differences between traditional leaders and the people. When parents are called to meetings they no longer go. At meetings, that is where decisions are taken about the future and development of the communities and future of their children”.

She further indicated that:

*Arali mahosi vho vha vha kha ḍi vha na maanda, ho vha hu tshi ḍo vha na mulalo. Ndila ine vhana vhashu vha khou tshila ngayo aḅo maḍuvha zwo vha zwi so ngo ralo misi ya kale. Mahosi vho vha vhe na ndila yavho ya kuvhusele. Tshifhingani tsha musi riḅe ri tshi aluwa, wo vha u nga si pfe nga vhana vha re na lunyadzo. Arali a nga ita ngauralo, ovha a tshi iswa khoroni vhahulwane vha mu kaidza u ya nga vhuhulu ha mulandu wawe. Miḅwe milandu yo vha i tshi ḅewa tshigwevho tsha mulema. Tshine a tou nembelela ḥhoho yo ya fhasi a fhedza a rwiwa. A nga ḍi litshwa a lala henefho a vhoḥhololwa nga matsheloni arali o vhone a kha ḍi vha na lunyadzo. Vhasidzana vho vha vha tshi kaidziwa nga vhaḅegulu nga u tou swoteliwa.*

Meaning that, “if traditional leaders were having powers, there will be peace in our communities. The way our children are misbehaving, it was not like that in traditional lifestyle. Traditional leaders had their proper system to lead. During our time you will not hear of children who disrespect elders. If a person misbehaves, he/ she will be called to a gathering of the *magota*, *musanda* at royal kraal. That team will give judgement according to the

offence committed. If the perpetrator is a male, he will be judged by mulema judgement meaning that he will be hanged head facing down and one of the elder will be ordered to beat him and will be left there for the whole night and be released in the following day if he was naughty. Girls were disciplined by elderly women by being pitched on the inner thighs”.

The above view has been confirmed by my communication with Vhaventḁa Vho-Thifhelimbilu, 75 years old elder, who is a member of a traditional council and has been given the title of *Vho-Khotsimunene* (brother to the chief). He was introduced to me by Vho-Makhadzi who told me that he was the only eldest of those in the council. He resides at *musanda* with his family. I was shown his house which was near *pfamo* (chief’s house). Vho-Khotsimunene gave me insight about the importance of *dzingoma* as an inspiration of *u alusa vhana* (*child rearing*).

This is what he explained:

*Ngoma dza Vhaventḁa dzo vha dzo itelwa u alusa vhana kha mikhwa, u guda mishumo na u konḁelela kha zwoḁthe. Misanda ho vha hu hone hu no dzudzanywa uri ngoma dzi ima lini nahone dzi imiswa nga nnyi. Ho vha hu sa tendelwi muḁwe na muḁwe a tshi imisa ngoma hu u itela u tsireledza vhana. Ano maḁuvha a zwi tsha londiwa muḁwe na muḁwe u ita nga u kona ngauri hu na u nyadza misanda. Hezwi zwoḁthe zwo ḁa nga yone demokirasi. Vhabebi a vha tsha tenda vhana vhavho vha tshi tshina idzo ngoma ngauri vha ri vha vhona zwi si na mushumo. Fhedzi ri tshi sedza matshilele a vhana ano maḁuvha a sumbedza uri zwithu zwo tshinyala murahu nga u furaleta zwa hashu.*

Meaning that, “Vhaventḁa traditional schools were meant for rearing children for good morals such as perseverance, tolerance and others. It was at royal families where it is decided when and who is responsible for carrying out the process. Not everyone could perform the process. Only the experienced once were allowed. This was done to protect children. In modern lifestyle traditional leaders are not respected and people do as they wish. This came because of democracy. Parents no longer allow their children to go to traditional schools and they say they do not benefit their children. But when looking at how children behave presently, it is a symbol that things have gone wrong when we turn back from our culture”.

It has been argued by Matshidze (2013) that the impact made by democracy in South Africa in traditional communities has damaged the minds and behaviour of elderly people. Vhavenda people are some of the people who have been affected by this situation. This has left the younger generation without a cultural background. Traditional leaders have no courage to motivate their followers on cultural identity. On the other hand, the government is trying to revive culture through heritage activities around the country. This seems to be adding little value as most people did not know what the culture is. Many people regard culture as wearing cultural attire, eating traditional food. This misunderstanding has engulfed the present generation whereby during those celebration, youth are seen going up and down entertaining themselves their own way. Some of the traditional leaders were also seen doing the same because of their age and that they did not get proper guidance from their advisers because their advisers were those who lost hope to revive their culture. With this view, young children who were supposed to learn and copy had no one to learn and from.

The participants further argued that communities seem to be reaping the sour fruits of modern life and parents are more and more confused and have no answers. The behaviour of children seems to be out of control. The current generation of traditional leaders in most communities no longer associate themselves with their culture and are unable to carry out their responsibility to channel their community towards the right way to make it better for the next generation. All are having the hope that the coming generation might bring the solution to all the problems surrounding the community, forgetting that it is the lost generation. Most of the participants responses about traditional child rearing, acknowledge that indigenous knowledge can play an important role through allowing elders to be part of decision making in different families so that they could assist parents in rearing their children. Nevertheless, some scholars, including Mwamwenda (2003) and Whaley (2004), reveal that there are many ways that can be used to rear children. They are supported by Siyakhwazi and Siyakhwazi (cited in Ganga & Chinyoka 2017:38) who also found that studies from some African countries indicate there are no

clear cut in child rearing practices rather, a combination of tradition and modern parental styles.

#### 4.1.7 Rituals and taboos

I met an elder Vho-Litshani for a second interview. I learned that she is knowledgeable in *u thusa vhana as maine*. She is regarded as an asset because of her skill. I heard members of the community complaining that if she is no more, it will be difficult to replace her because after performing *muthuso* to a child, that child will have no health problems. She said that rituals and taboos are very important to the Vhavanḁa people as it symbolises their roots and culture as a nation.

*Kha kuambarele, mme o ḁi hwalaho o vha a sa faneli u ambara zwiambaro zwi pataho ngauri zwi a shandukisa tshivhumbeo tsha ḁwana. O vha a sa tendelwi u ḁa zwiḁliwa zwiḁwe na zwiḁwe u fana na zwi re na muvhala wa thophi ngauri ḁwana a tshi bebiwa a nga ḁa e na muvhala uyo. Hu ḁi nga u ya dzimpfuni o vha a sa tendelwi u thivhela uri mme a sa ḁo lila zwa vho ḁo thithisa ḁwana ane a nga bebwa a songo ita zwavhuḁi. Mme o ḁihwalaho o vha a sa tendelwi u vhona phukha dzi fanaho na ḁowa, pfene na dziḁwe, u shavha uri a nga beba ḁwana are na tshivhumbeo tshi yelaho khadzo.*

Meaning that, “The pregnant mother was not allowed to wear tight clothes because it will temper with the shape of the child. The child may be born deformed. She was not allowed to eat certain food, such as orange colour food because the child will develop a yellow colour. If the child was born with that colour it was regarded as a sign of certain illnesses. Attending funerals was not allowed because the mother might cry, and this may result in her giving birth to a deformed child. Watching animals such as snakes and baboons was totally unacceptable. The reason was to protect the child so that he/she be born as healthy as possible”.

*Miḁwedzi mivhili kana muthihi ḁwana a sa athu u bebwa, mme o vha a tshi bviswa ḁḁuni ya munna wawe a eḁela na vhakegulu hu u itela uri nzulele ya ḁwana i si thithisee maḁuvhani a u fhedzisela.*

Meaning that, “two months before the child was born, the pregnant mother was removed from her husband’s room to protect the child from anything that can be caused by the sexual activities”.

She further articulated:

*Musi n̄wana o no bebwa, Vho Makhulu ndi vhone vha no fhiwa p̄fanelo u thoma kha u ira n̄wana dzina. Honeha, vhana vha irwa madzina hu tshi tevhedzwa zwiga zwo fhambanaho sa: arali n̄wana o bebwa hu na muthu we a lovha hu si kale afho muṭani, Masala, Musiwalwo; musu muṭani hu si na pfano sa, Konanani, Mmbengwa, Nnyambeni; madzina a tshikololo sa, Vhumbani, Ratshili na madzina a no irwa musu hu na madakalo sa, Takalani, Ntakadzeni, Nkhumbuleni.*

Meaning that, “When the child is born, grandparents are given preference of naming the child. Children were named according to family history, for instant, *Masala, Musiwalwo* -when someone in the family passed on; tension in the family for instant, *Konanani, Mmbengwa, Musoliwa, Nnyambeni* – when there is no peace in the family; royal kinship for instant, *Vhumbani, Ramaswiela*; and happy events for instance, *Takalani, Ntakadzeni, Nkhumbuleni*”.

She continued by highlighting this about muthuso as one of the rituals. This is what she said:

*Vhavenda vho vha vha tshi dzhiela n̄tha u thuswa ha n̄wana sa izwi wo vha u wone mutheo wa vhutshilo hawe na u mu fhaṭa, zwine ano maḍuvha a zwi tsha itiwa. Muthuso wo vha u tshi itelwa u tsireledza n̄wana kha mimuya mivhi na malwadze. N̄wana a songo thuswaho u a vhone ngauri u vha a na murunzi na musu o no aluwa zwiito zwawe a zwi divhelekani. Miso yoṭhe yo vha i tshi tevhedzwa u swika n̄wana a tshi thanya.*

Meaning that, “Vhavenda people regard muthuso as an important aspect in the child’s life as it was the foundation of the child’s life and contributes in shaping the child’s character, of which in modern life it has been abandoned. The child who did not go through the process of *muthuso*, his/her character will be different from other children”.

When I asked her about the process of *muthuso*, she said:

*Hu na zwiga zwi no tevhelwa u bva n̄wana a tshi bebwa u swika kha muthuso. Musu n̄du yo no kunguluwa, hu dzhiwa gwati la khwara la lovhewa maḍini. Nga matsheloni n̄wana a ṭanzwiwa muvhili fhedzi ṭhoho na khofheni a zwi tambu. Izwo zwi itwa lwa maḍuvha mararu. Ha kona u tevhelwa*

swanzwo, *une wa vha mushonga*. Na wone u lovhewa maḡini ṅwana a ṭanzwiwa maḡuvha mararu. Swanzwo u thusa uri ṅwana a si nzwere arali mme na khotsi vho tswana. Arali zwa itea, vhakegulu vha a ṭavhanya vha zwi vhona vha mbo ḡi kumulula ṅwana uri a tsireledzee ngauri a nga ḡi fhedza o lovha. Nga itshi tshifhinga ṅwana u vha a sa athu u ḡa zwiḡiwa, a tshi khou mama mme awe. Tshipiḡa tsha muthuso tshi itwa nga murahu ha musi ṅwana o no fhedza miṅwedzi miraru. Vho Maine vha ḡa na zwine vha ḡo shuma ngazwo. Kha mishonga ine maine vha ḡa nayo hu na ine ya ḡa yo luga na ine ya ḡo dzudzanywa henefho. Hu dzhiwa mushonga wa dodzwa kha ṭhoho ya ṅwana ho itwa luthede ha itwa tshifhambano vhukati ha ṭhoho. A thavhelwa nola dza ḡodzwa mushonga. Nga thungo hu vha hu tshi khou fhiswa miṅwe mishonga ine ya ḡo shumiswa u mu aravhedza. Kha iyo mishonga hu vha ho ṭanganyiswa: tshipandḡa tsha pfeṅe , nala dza ṅwana, matoko a pfeṅe na zwikanda zwa phofu. Zwino ṅwana u a dzhiwaha, a aravhedzwa a tshi khou rembuluswa muvhili woṭhe. Nga murahu ha bviswa maxale othe ha sala miora ya mishonga ine ya dzhiwa ya ṭanganyiswa na mapfura a pfure ṅwana a ḡodzwa a itwa tshiguru a eḡela o ralo. Ḳi tshi tsha u a ṭanzwiwa nga mukegulu arali vhe hone a saathu u farwa nga vhathu. U bva zwenezwo muthuso u vha wo fhela ha sala u tou sedza uri hu ḡo bvelela mini kha ṅwana.

Meaning that, “Muthuso is a process performed by elders for the newborn baby when still young, about three-month-old. Before this, Vho-Maine will be performing other rituals to protect the child for instance when the umbilical cord falls off, swanzwo and khwara are used. These medicines will be soaked in water the whole night and in the morning the child is bathed the whole body but not the head and face. Swanzwo is believed to protect the child when the parents *vha tswana* (engage in sexual activities). If this happens, without protecting the child – *ṅwana u a nzwera* and elders easily notice that without being told and start preparing medicines and perform *u kumulula* process to save the child.

The process of *muthuso* is performed when the child is still three months old. The family traditional healer will bring along all that is needed for the process of muthuso. Some medication will be ready while others will be prepared on the scene. Vho-Maine assisted by elderly women of the family, will smear the child with medicine on the child’s head making a circle around and a cross in the centre of the head. On the other hand, the fire has been prepared burning the skin of a monkey’s forehead, *Phofus* skin, baboons’ dung, and the child’s nails. While still burning, Vho-Maine takes the child and holds him/her above the

smoke turning the child around. After that the ashes are removed from the fire and the leftovers of the burned mixture is mixed with special oil from *pfure* seeds and the child will be smeared over the whole body. In the morning, the child is bathed before people see him/her. This process was done to protect the child from evil spirit and sickness. The child on whom *muthuso* was not performed will be different from other children, he/she have a shadow over them. Even when he/she grows up, what he/she does is not good.

*Hone-ha mudzadze o vha a sa tendelwi u ya nduni musi n'wana a tshe muṭuku. Tshinwe tshifhinga o vha a tshi fanela u lindela minwedzi yo imaho nga uri hu u itela uri n'wana a thome a thanye. Vhakegulu ndi vhone vha no sedza uri mme ha khou khakhela n'wana naa.*

Meaning that, "The mother was not supposed to have sexual intercourse with her husband when the child is still very young. Sometimes the time may be extended up to three months or when the child has gone through the process of *muthuso*. Elderly people in the family especially grandmothers will monitor the mother all the time. The attire for a pregnant mother was monitored throughout pregnancy process till date of child's birth. All those rituals and taboos were very important to the Vhavenda people as it symbolises their roots and culture as a nation. A nation cannot be a good nation with lots of children who are not in a natural form, who are deformed".

## 4.2 CONTEMPORARY CHILD REARING IN THE VHAVENDA HOUSEHOLD

The purpose of this objective was to answer this question: What are the contemporary child rearing practices in selected rural households? When the participants deliberated around the issue, they argued that some aspects around contemporary child rearing practices are contrary to those in traditional child rearing practices. Some of the aspects are disciplining children through hidings; in contemporary lifestyle it is regarded as child abuse. Interviews conducted indicated that contemporary child rearing practices are largely influenced by the evolution of traditional family structures to modern family structures. Traditional family structures are extended in nature. In one structure there are units which have members of extended relationships like parents, uncles, grandparents,



cousins and other members. Santi (1990:219-32) in concurrence with other scholars, like Aquilino (1990) who indicates that extended household happens in a situation where parents, children and other family members live together.

#### **4.2.1 Contemporary child rearing practices in selected rural households**

The contemporary family household, also called the modern family is described by Ganga & Chinyoka (2017:38) as where an authoritative parenting style is practiced. They further reiterated that it is called a democratic parenting style because parents give their children firm rules and explain the reason for their rules. This is where parents respect their children's views and independent decision making. However, "children may misuse this freedom and end up making wrong decisions that can be regretful in the future" (Ganga & Chinyoka 2017:42). Papalia and Olds (2004), confirm that contemporary parents rear their children by explaining their rules and give them room to reason. When exercising discipline, rewards are also given when necessary to motivate them to do good (Papalia & Olds, 2004). This is the family where children are not taught responsibility because everything in the family is done by the nannies or caretakers. Nannies or caretakers are young girls and/or boys or elderly women who are hired to take care of the child in the absence of the biological parents. Nannies do all the household chores alone while children do nothing, even those simple chores that they can perform. Most of the time, children will be busy with playing with their phones or watching television. Their parents rarely teach their children to be responsible because they say nannies are there and are paid to do all the family chores. In some cases, children grow up as irresponsible adults because of the lack of values that a family adheres to as they follow their nannies' instructions. In contemporary families, children bond more with their nannies rather than their parents (Magagna, 1987:33-56). Under contemporary child rearing, children are respected and given rights. They attend formal schools. In some families, nannies and/or care takers are not respected and are regarded as workers. In that regard, the contemporary child rearing practices differ from family to family.



Participants gave their views why they regard traditional child rearing practices as preferable, compared to contemporary practices is that in contemporary families, children have no respect for other people especially elders. Children in these families don't regard elderly persons as their elders. Children from other families find it difficult to greet people in the correct manner. Instead they will just say good morning, standing like poles with no actions. When they meet or pass an elder on the way, they just pass as if there is no one there. To add to their disrespect, whenever they are found doing bad things, they are not ashamed and have no remorse. If an elderly person rebukes them, they say that you are not my guardian or parent and you should mind your own business. If the child is well mannered, he or she will show it everywhere. When I probed further on this issue of respect, an elder, Vho-Mushayathoni whom I met earlier argued:

*Arali ni tshi tšodou pfa nga ha vhana vha sa tšonifhi, shumisani tshiendisi tsha nnyi na nnyi ni do vhona zwine ni si zwi fune. Ndo namela bisi vhege yo fhelaho yo dala nga vhana vha tshikolo. A hu na n'wana we a vhuya a ntsendelela. Ndo ima u vhuya u swika diraiva a tshi hambela uri hu de in'we bisi i fhungudze vhathu. Hei ndi tsumbo ya vhuḍi ya uri ano maḍuvha vhana a vha na tšonifho. Nga u ofha u fhindulwa nga ndila i si yavhuḍi, a huna na muthihi we a vhuya a amba tshithu. Vha a hangwa uri zwine vha ita zwi amba zwine miḱa ya havho ya vha zwone.*

Meaning that, "If you want to see how modern children are disrespectful, use public transport like buses. You will see what you don't want to see. I boarded a bus last week. It was full mostly with school children. No child ever moved to give me a space. I stood up on the corridor until the driver ordered another bus to come and load the people who did not have seats. That shows that modern children have no respect. Because of fear of what they might say, no one can tell them to give an elder a seat. They forget that whatever they do, or their behaviour reflects their family".

What Vho-Mushayathoni is saying is that, what is happening in modern life is that parents in the contemporary families also resemble the same character as those of their children, because instead of teaching their children respect, they seem to be losing courage and focus. They seem to be focusing on themselves forgetting that they are raising the future generation. The reason might be that those parents are still young and have given birth

to children at a younger age. Sometimes is because they did not have anyone to teach them in their early childhood so that they could pass the knowledge to their children.

*Ndo mangala musu ndo ya u dalela thama yanga vhege yo fhelaho. Ndi tshi swika ndo wana muduhulu wavho o dzula kha sofa o sedza founu yawe. Ndo lumelisa nda ri aa, fhedzi nda mangadzwa nga u sa fhindulwa. Ndi tshi mu lavhelesa nda wana o vhea zwithu ndevheni. Makhulu vho vha vhe khishini. Musi vha tshi da he nda vha ndi hone, vha ndumelisa vha mu vhudzisa uri o ndumelisa naa a si fhindule u swika vha tshi tou vhidzelela. A konou dzungudza thoho a ri hai. Ndi tshi lavhelesa thama yanga matoni nda zwi vhona uri vho vhaaisala. Muhumbuloni wanga ha mbo di da liambeke la Tshivenda li no ri uyu nwana ndi khundavhalai, sa izwi a tshi sumbedza a si na mikhwa ya vhuḍi. Ndo mbo di vhona uri avha vhana vha aṅo maḍuvha vha khou itiswa nga u shaya u gudiswa maitete na mikhwa yavhuḍi u bva vha tshe vhaṭuku.*

Meaning that, “I was shocked when I visited my friend last week. When I arrived, I found her granddaughter sitting on the sofa busy with her phone. I greeted her by saying Aaa, but to my surprise she did not answer me. When I looked at her, she was having the headphones in her ears. The headphones distracted her to hear me greeting her. Her grandmother was in the kitchen. When she came to where I was, she greeted me and asked her granddaughter if she greeted me, she did not respond until her grandma shouted at her and then she nodded with her head saying no. My mind was taken aback and thought that this child’s behaviour is lack of good morals”.

The process of teaching children respect, and responsibility helps children to be able to take care of themselves and their own families and to teach their children as they were taught by their parents. In other words, the statement advocates that Africans should teach their children what they were taught in their childhood that still have value and relevance for the society to have well-disciplined and effective child rearing. Each one teaches one (Asante 1980). The view that Vho-Mushayathoni expressed was what the participants were worried about especially the parents who seem to be confused and do not know what better method of rearing to take that could save their children from the disrespectful characters. Indigenous life was full of respect between parents, children and everyone in the community. I also interacted with participants on how they view the issue of teaching children household chores. My encounter with Vho-Sikhipha, an elder, who

through his experience told me a lot. As he said during our first interview, he then went on putting emphasis on parents being the first in the life of a child and have the sole responsibility in teaching their children the right ways of life. He also highlighted:

*Kualusele kwa vhana ano maḁuvha kwo fhambana na kwa kale ngauri vhana vha ano maḁuvha vha lelwa nga vhashumi. Vhashumi vha ita mishumo yoṭhe vhana vho sokou dzula vhe kha dzi founu na dzi TV. Vhabebi vhavho a vha tendi vhana vhavho vha tshi shuma, vha ri vhashumi vha ḁo shuma mini ngauri vho tholelwa zwenezwo. Avha vhana vha aluwa vhe dzindenwa vha sa koni mishumo. Vhaṅwe vhabebi vha ṭoḁa vhashumi vha dziṅwe tshaka vhane vha si ḁivhe na luambo lwa afho muḁini. Vhana vha aluwa vha sa ḁivhi zwavhuḁi luambo lwa havho. Luambo ndi tshipiḁa tsha mvelele.*

Meaning that, “Contemporary child rearing practice differs greatly with traditional child rearing because starting from an early age in modern families, children are not taught responsibility because everything in the family is done by the nannies or caretakers. Nannies do all the household chores alone while children do nothing even those simple chores that they can perform. Most of the time they will be busy with their phones or watching TV. Their parents don’t even bother to teach their children to be responsible because they say nannies are there and are paid to do all the family chores. Children grew up as irresponsible adults. In some families, nannies and caretakers are not respected and are regarded as workers”.

The contemporary child rearing practices differs from family to family. Vho-Sikhipha’s concern highlights the idea that it is the primary responsibility of parents to raise children towards the direction that they become responsible adults so that the community may benefit from them. This then brings me to the discussions about the types of families and what role they play in the lives of their children. Throughout the engagement with participants, it was clear that traditional practices of child rearing are diminishing.

#### **4.2.2 Types of families within contemporary child rearing families**

Different types of families within contemporary child rearing families are discussed below:

#### 4.2.2.1 Nuclear family

In the traditional setup, the extended family was the core centre in child rearing but in contemporary lifestyle the nuclear family is at the centre. It is and has been part of the extended family because of the way it is composed, all members can be found in the extended family setup although in a small composition. The nuclear family is the traditional type of family structure which includes single parent families, child headed families, and grandparent families. In modern life the nuclear family is regarded as being the ideal one in which to raise children. Most of those families are modern and practice modern lifestyles. Contrary to what some participants said, my observations of the today's nuclear families are that they seem to yield some advantages. Firstly, I noted that it is common to have dual incomes which merely focused on a small family unit. I noted that under nuclear families, the parents work and join their incomes to enhance financial stability for the household (the basic family needs of housing, food and healthcare). A close observation of their financial stability also allows the parents to provide additional extracurricular opportunities for their children. Contrary to traditional child rearing, these opportunities allow children to flourish socially and develop a higher level of confidence. Furthermore, nuclear families tend to establish stronger bonds as they work together and rely on one another to overcome challenges. Some of the children who participated in the study from nuclear families indicated that they mostly get support from nannies as their parents can be with them only for a short period because of work related matters. However, when they are together, they use the time positively and if there are problems, they try to solve problems together and support each other emotionally. This provides a good learning environment for children as they get involved in decision making of their family issues at a tender age.

The participants gave their understanding about the nuclear family in child rearing practice, and they responded in this manner: An elder, Vho-Khaukanani, is the eldest of all the participants, therefore, her wisdom in traditional child rearing is very important in

my study. That is why I was compelled to go and interview her again, now giving me her view on how she sees the way children are being raised in modern life. She said:

*Hei miṭa i vha hone ngauri vhabebi vha pfuluwa vha ya dziḡoroboni, kana muṅwe mubebi a tshinyala na u dzula kule na mashaka. Avho vhana vha vhone na nga uri mikhwa na maitete a Tshivenda a vha a ḡivhi. Izwi zwi nga vhangwa nge vhabebi vhavho vha vha vha si na tshenzhemo na maitete na matshilele a Tshivenda kana vha tshi zwi dzhia sa zwithu zwa fhasi.*

Meaning that, “These type of family structures are there because parents moved away from community to township. In some instances, it might be because one parent passed on and other extended family members are staying far away from them. Children who comes from those families lack some qualities such as exposure to traditional norms and values. It is because their parents have no experience or regard traditional practices as outdated”.

Vho-Munzhedzi, who is a teacher in a primary school added that because of lack of exposure to traditional way of life, it is very difficult for children coming from nuclear families to cope at school when it comes to the home language learning process. Proverbs and idioms are learned as they are since they were there. Moreover, when children are given homework where they must consult their grandparents for assistance, they are not being assisted because their grandparents are not staying with them and even their parents cannot help them because they lack knowledge in proverbs and idioms. Therefore, it brings shame and confusion. The above statements show that elderly people are assets to the community and to the life of children in instilling the cultural norms and values in traditional families.

I interviewed Rendani, a 18 year old female youth, who revealed that she is the example of that kind of family structure.

I was the only girl in our family. We were three children. My father and my mother were in Pretoria and we were staying in Thohoyandou. Our parents come home once in a month or when they get a leave. Most of the time we were by ourselves. But we were coping. The problem that we have as children was that we were not exposed to traditional practices because there

was no adult person in the house. It was a challenge when we were with other children, when they share stories from the past told by their grandparents, uncles and aunts. At school when we were given homework about idioms and proverbs, we found it very difficult because we must find someone to help us so that we get the right answers. This situation was very confusing when as a Muvenda child you know nothing about your culture.

#### **4.2.2.2 Child headed family**

Stephens (2007) explainss that a child headed household can be described as a household where the head of the family and main caregiver is a minor under the age of 18. These minors must provide for the family and take on the responsibilities of adults as their parents have passed away, and they have no relatives to take them in. In South Africa, UNICEF reports an estimated 3.7 million orphans, with many more children living with sick or bedridden caregivers unable to provide them with the financial and emotional support required for optimal education and growth.

It has been argued by participants that a child headed family is one in which both parents had passed away and children had not found alternative guardians within their extended family or community. There are different reasons that these families exist. One of the main reasons is death of parent or both parents. In most cases these children are left alone to take care of themselves. Some of those children end up engaged in alcohol and drug abuse and some engage in sexual activities at an early age which lead to pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Participants gave their views about child headed family by noting that this type of family was never heard of in the traditional life. Most families took in children whose parents are deceased and stay with them as their own. As it has been alluded to earlier, when a family took in orphan children and took care of them, they ended up as responsible adults. This takes us back to where participants gave a Tshivenda expression which says “*nwana wa munwe ndi nwana wau*”, meaning someone’s child is your child, it takes a village to raise a child and that the child does not belong to her mother only, but to the whole community.

Vho-Tshinakaho, a parent whom I introduced earlier, in her second interview, gave me her view and concerns about children who grew up with no adults guiding them. They do as they wish, and they are a bad influence on other children.

*Kha muvhundu wa hashu hu na vhana vhane vha dzula nga tshavho, musidzana muthihi na vhatukana vhana. Muṭuku khavho u na miṅwaha ya fumi na mivhili. Nga mulandu wa u sa wana tsivhudzo kha vhathu vhahulwane vha tshila nga ṅdila ine vha funa. Muḽi u dzula wo ḽala hu tshi khou nwiwa na u dahiwa. Maitele avho a ṭuṭuwedza vhaṅwe vhana uri vha ite zwine vhone vha ita. Vhaṅwe vhabebi a vha tsha kona u kaidza vhana vhavho ngauri vhana vha vho ri vhabebi vha khou vha konḽisela. Musi ili fhungo li tshi iswa musanda kana tshipholisani, a huna zwi no itwa ngauri mapholisa vha shuma na avha vhana.*

Meaning that, “There is a child headed family in our community where there are 4 boys and a girl. The youngest is 12 years old. Because of lack of guidance from elderly people, they do as they wish. Most of the time the house is full of other youngsters doing all sorts of things like partying, drinking, and drugs. Their bad character is influencing other children in the community in a bad way. Parents are having problems of disciplining their children because now their children think that their parents are very strict. When we report this to the chief, he sometimes calls the police, but nothing is done as other children say the police are the ones doing business with those children”. She further indicated that:

*Vhana vha guda nga u vhona na u edzisa. Arali vhathu vhane vha vha tsini navho vha tshila nga ṅdila yavhuḽi zwi a kona u vha shandukisa, fhedzi arali hu si na zwivhuya zwine vha guda a zwi vha thusi tshithu.*

Meaning that “children learn though imitating. Whatever they see adults do, they think is the proper way of doing things”.

Holborn & Eddy (2011) argue that the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on families is reflected in the increasing numbers of orphans and child-headed households. More and more children are growing up with absent fathers and mothers and in child headed households. Pillay & Nesengani (2006:131-147) foundd that the experiences of children in child-headed households are expected to be worse, since parents are the custodians of nurturance, love and support. Although children who live in those families are mostly neglected, if the community can help and nature them, they can change their lifestyle and



character and become responsible citizen. The community should teach, offer role models, and instil those morals that seem to be lacking.

#### **4.2.2.3 Single parent family**

A single parent family is a family where one person is living without a spouse and where the whole family's responsibility lies upon that person. The single parent is the primary caregiver with whom the children mostly resides. In most instances, it occurs after death of one parent, or separation or divorce and the mother becomes the primary caregiver as the custodial parent, and the father becomes a secondary giver as the non-custodial parent.

According to participants, a single parent family means raising children alone without being assisted. It seems there is a vast increase of this type of family in the modern world. Some of the reasons for this family's existence are death of the partner, wanting to be independent or as a result from breakup or divorce of coupled parents.

Some parents are doing well in this type of family, but others are not doing well. Sometimes children take advantage that their single parent cannot guide or advise them. This is evident from this type of family where opposite sex exist, if a child is of opposite sex to the parent, he/she will undermine the parent.

Lufuno, an 18 year old male who is from a single parent family and is doing well and has role modelled others by forming youth groups that deal with children from single parent families. He said:

I grew up in our family raised only by my mother who was self-employed. After the death of my father the situation got worse. What I want to elaborate is that it does not matter whether a person comes from a single parent family, if a person is discipline and have perseverance, there can be positive results at the end. But if a person sees things on a negative side that person will end up nowhere. During those time, I had a friend who was staying with his



mother. His mother always complains about his behaviour. Sometimes she came to me and asked me to talk to her son because he was giving her problems. She said he come home late most of the time and when she talks to him, he does not listen and sometimes tells her that she is only a woman not his father. This is a clear indication that children can become better or worse in life not because of the type of family they come from but because of the types of people who are around them.

Vho-Mandiwana a teacher from a primary school again added:

Not all children who are being raised by single parents are problematic. There are many children who come from other types of families with good or bad behaviours compared to children from single parent's families. At a school where I am working, there is a policy which requires us to record those children with bad behaviours. Checking on the records, it is evident that the lowest number of children who are problematic are those coming from single parent's families. Children's behaviour is a result of how they have been raised in that type of family.

I also had an interview with Vho-Litshani who, as a single parent for more than 10 years, raised her children alone. Because she was employed, she spends most of the time away from home.

*Vhananga vho aluwa fhano muṭani hu si na muṭwe muthu muhulwane kana vhaṅwe vhana. Vho vha vha tshi fanela u guda kha nṅe mme avho. Fhedzihaha sa mme ndo vha ndi tshi fanela u ḍivha uri arali nda sa vha funza zwavhuḍi, vha tshi bvela nṅa u tamba na vhaṅwe vha nga ḍi vhuya vho guda zwiṅwe na zwi si zwavhuḍi. Tshinwe tshifhinga u a humbula uri khamusi sa mubebi e ethe vhana vha a humbula uri sa mme u nga si vha vhudze tshithu. Zwi ita uri vhushaka hanga na vhana vhu si vhe ha vhudi. Zwi a vhavha u vhona vhana vhau vha tshi dzhena kha matshilele o bvaho. Zwi fhedza zwi tshi u disela malwadze na mutsiko.*

Meaning that, "My children grew up in a family where there were no elder person or other children. They were supposed to learn from me, but as a mother I knew that if I do not teach them well, when they go outside, they might learn other things some of which might be bad. You sometimes think that when the child misbehaves, it is because they think that there is nothing our mother can do to us after all she is a woman. The situation got worse and the gap between my children and me grew, and the children became

uncontrollable. It is painful to watch your children going to the world where they meet other children who are involved in drugs, alcohol and sexual activities. Rearing such kind of children gives pressure to you as a parent which could cause different kind of sickness and sometimes you end up dying”.

Londani, a 18 year old male youth who was the only son to his single mother, said:

It depends on the type of family the child is growing. A parent is a parent whether single or double, he/she can raise a child in a proper way. I am coming from a single parent family and I respect my mother as a parent not as single because she was responsible and provided me with my needs as a child. She respects me, and I respect her. My mother is my role model because the life she portrayed was the life that I emulate.

Single parenting or paternal orphans did not exist in the Vhavenda community because traditional families were united and raised children in unison to develop children with good morals and behaviour for the benefit of the whole community.

A single parent family consists of one parent raising one or more children on his/her own. Often, a single parent family is a mother with her children, although there are single fathers as well. Single parent families seem to be increasing. As the word changes, more children are found to be born in those type of families. The advantage of this type of family is that the parent and children are very close and share with each other most of the time. The disadvantage of this type of family may be when the parent finds it hard to carry the burden alone to maintain children financially (Blessing 2015). Park (2007) argues that being a single parent can result in added pressure, stress and fatigue. If you are too tired or distracted to be emotionally supportive or consistently discipline your child, behavioral problems might rise. They further argue that child rearing can be difficult under any circumstances, especially without a partner, the stakes are higher because of the sole responsibility for all aspects of day-to-day childcare.

Children from other types of families other than single parent may be found in many social ills. He further claims that if the present picture looks bad, then the future looks much,

much worse! Meaning that if the present generation is not properly groomed, then the coming generation will be doomed. Children are the backbone of every society. Today's generation seems to be in trouble facing the challenges they encounter on daily basis. The reason might be because parents failed in their God given responsibility to give their children the right foundation necessary to produce lives full of achievement, productivity and true success. They have not met the challenge. Again, no-one has taught these parents; no-one has equipped them for their responsibility (Park 2007:863-877).

#### 4.2.2.4 Grandparents family

The grandparent family is one where children are being taken care by their grandparents. In most cases, grandmothers are seen taking this responsibility. Traditional families are realities of these situations. Blessing (2015) states that a lot of children are being taken care by their grandparents because their parents are not there for several reasons. Because of that, grandparents are supposed to be responsible in rearing their grandchildren as their own children. It is with great sadness that traditional families are decaying.

One participant, Vho-Tshinakaho, gave her views:

*Muta munwe na munwe na tshitshavha, zwi toda vhaaluwa sa izwi vha lupfumo. Vhana vhane vha aluswa mitani hune ha vha na vhaaluwa vho fhambana na vhanwe nga maitele avho. Zwi vhone nga ndila ine vha lumelisa ngayo na u aravha vha tshi vhidziwa. Vhabebi vha a vhone ndeme ya vhaaluwa. Vho ri gudisa zwinzhi u fana na mirero na maambeke zwi re na ndeme kha pfunzo.*

Meaning that, "Every family, community need elderly people because they are assets. Children who come from families with elderly people are different from those from families without elderly people because of their behaviour. It is evident in the way they greet people and how they respond when they are called. The parents appreciated the support from grandparents as they play different roles such as mentors, caregivers, role models, and parenting and many more. Our elderly people taught us many things such as *mirero*,

*maidoma, thai, dzi ngano* (proverbs, idioms, riddles, stories) and taboos which had educational values”.

From the participant views, elderly people play an important role in traditional child rearing through their wisdom. They use their knowledge to guide young ones even though they are not their own. Due to changes in family setups, elderly people pass with their knowledge to their graves leaving behind communities without cultural norms and values to be passed to the generation to come.

Whilst traditional families were largely extended families as reported in the previous section, contemporary families have evolved to include a significant number of nuclear families, child headed families, single parent families and grandparent headed families. My interviews with the participants probed their views regarding how the current family structure in the rural communities resulted in the neglect and/or disappearance of traditional ways of child-rearing practices. I interviewed Rendani, who used to stay with her two brothers because of working conditions of her parents who were working far from home. She said that in the past we used to stay in one area where her family was staying. This changed because they had to move to Polokwane where her father got new opportunities. This led to a new family structure and they do not even know some of their relatives. Moving to another place made them adopt what is done where they are staying now, they live a modern life.

Vhavenda Vho-Thifhelimbilu explained:

*Ndila ine miṭa ya zwino ya vha ngayo zwo vhangwa nga muvhuso wa makhwama we wa ita uri zwithu zwi shanduke. Vhaḍuhulu vhashu vha funzwa zwithu zwiswa zwi no sia vha sa ḍivhi tshithu nga maitete a kale. Ho no bvelela tshaka nnzhi dza miṭa ine miṭwe a ri ḍivhi uri ri i pfi mini.*

Meaning that, “The new family structures were influenced by the government of whites which changed things. They started forming their own family structures separate from other immediate families. They taught new things to our grandchildren. Our grandchildren seem not to like much of how we used to do things. They do not like going to the mountains for initiation, they

see some traditional games as nonsense. This was caused by these new family structure where you want to live like these whites and do not have relatives. It is difficult to tell which family structure is best. It depends on how members of that family value each other, show love and respect to each other. For the past 50 years, family structures changed dramatically. Other types have emerged which were not there before. For example, stepfamily, single parent family, and many more”.

Participants agreed that, to some extent the family structures that did not follow the traditional way of family set-up contributed to the neglect of some cultural ways of enculturating children. The new setups separated children from the other families that had duties to impart knowledge to children, like the uncles and aunts. It was also noted that most of the knowledge holders are dying with the knowledge. This death is noted to result in the disappearance of some traditional ways and practices as the knowledge holders are secretive with their knowledge.

Vho-Sikhipha noted:

*U țuwa ha vhalala zwi sia thaidzo ngauri ri vha ri si na zwe ra sala nazwo. Ngauralo zwi sia vhathu vha tshi tshila nga nđila ine vha vhona yo tea Ndi ngazwo ho đala mikhwa mivhi ya u edzisela maitele a dziñwe tshaka. Ndi fulufhela uri vhoiwe ni đo vhulunga iyi nđivho uri na lushaka lu đaho lu zwi đivhe, ndi amba nga u tou zwi ñwala kha dzibugu.*

Meaning that, “The death of the knowledge holders is really a challenge in the preservation of our culture. Most of our people who knew a lot of child rearing practices are very old and cannot talk and not very active or are dead. The most difficult issue with their death is that they have not passed on the information they had to the next generation. If the information went with them then it means, we should come up with our own ways of doing things. In most cases some people are copying from the West. I hope you would be able to talk to these elderly people to keep the information. Write a book and let it read by Vhaventđa. You would have done well, and the ancestors will bless you”.

Having spoken to Vho-Sikhipha, I felt the need to publish much of the information I got from the participants as I learnt that they do not share with anyone this precious information. More so, as some of them are dying, it dawned to me that strategic measures

should be taken to have the information passed on to the next generation to avoid losing all the information that is known about Vhavenda child rearing practices.

Some participants noted that the advent of democracy and modernisation resulted in the erosion of the traditional rearing practices. The participants agreed that South Africa is a rainbow nation and composed of diverse cultures and beliefs. As such, modernity has resulted in people having televisions, internet and radios which help in the fast spreading of new information. Moreover, every person is no longer compelled to follow some specific cultural practices as they have their constitutional rights to choose what they want.

#### **4.3 A PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE THE INTEGRATION OF POSITIVE TRADITIONAL VHAVENDA CHILD REARING PRACTICES WITH THE CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES.**

I now focus on the last objective of my study, which was to develop a program of integrating positive traditional Vhavenda child rearing practices with the contemporary practices. The proposed programme has been developed from empirical data gathered from the parents, elders, traditional knowledge holders, teachers, children traditional leaders, NGOs and social development officials. The composition of the structure was done following the six elements of the Functional theory according to Dickoff, James & Wiedenbach (1968) which have been used by others, and seem to be successful.

##### **4.3.1 Six elements of the proposed programme**

The six elements of the proposed programme are:

- **Context** – of the proposed programme,
- **Agents** – who should be involved in facilitating the activities,
- **Recipients** – who are the beneficiary in the program,
- **Dynamics** – that are the energy source, what should be in place for the programme to run effectively, and

- **Processes** – involved in running the programme and the envisaged **Outcome-** of the programme

(Dickoff et al., 1968:143)

## CONTEXT

This is the surrounding where the activity will take place. The context of this program will be the **family and school**.

## AGENTS

Nkuna (2017:125) states that the agent is the person who executes the activity. Therefore, agents of this program are **traditional knowledge holders, social development officials, NGOs and traditional leaders**.

## RECIPIENTS

These are people who receive action from the agents. In this programme recipients are **parents, teachers, grandparents and children**.

## DYNAMICS

Dickoff, et al. regard dynamics as the energy source functioning for the realization of the goal. The dynamics of this programme are **support, accountability and family cohesion**.

## PROCEDURE

This is the steps, pattern and protocol of how the program will be performed. Below are the proposed procedures: **upholding *nyaluso ya vhana* practices, conversation with other parents, guided acculturation**.

## OUTCOME

Empowering the recipients with new skills.

### 4.3.1.1 Context

This is the surrounding where the activity will take place. The context of this program was the family, community and the school. The context gives an overview of the surrounding in which the process of child rearing practices will take place. The context under which the integration of traditional and contemporary child rearing practices is therefore, constituted by family, community, and schools, wherein the process of child rearing takes place (Dickoff, et al., 1968).

#### (i) Family context

The participants described a family as a unit where the process of child rearing is centred. This is where parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents live together. Each member plays their different roles to raise children who will be responsible members of the community. “Parents are regarded as primary teachers who bond with the child immediately after birth and teach the child to talk, walk, norms and values in order to grow up as responsible adults.” (Lebese, Davhana & Obi 2010:38). Different types of families are discussed below:

- *Extended family*

An extended family is a family that extends beyond the nuclear family, consisting of parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, all living nearby or in the same household. As explained above, the extended family is regarded as the core of the child rearing process although children’s views are not taken into considerations. Children are expected to take orders from adults without questioning. This contradicts the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution, where children have the right to be heard (Acts No. 38 1996).



- *Nuclear family*

Nuclear family is a family unit that includes two married parents of opposite genders and their biological or adopted children living together. Traditionally, this family was part of the extended family. This is the family where children are reared following the modern ways where children may sometimes do as they wish. The program seeks to try to address the issue by bringing positive practices which can be integrated into contemporary practices such as teaching children household chores, and respect. The disciplining of children by every parent and community member is acceptable, as participants agree it emphasises what the Vhavenda idiom says: *thanda i khothololwa i tshe nnu* (you are able to discipline the child whilst s/he is still young). There is another maxim that says *nwana wa muhwe ndi nwana wau* (one's child is also yours). There are a few important things that the contemporary families could learn from. Under nuclear family there are other forms that form part of the nuclear family namely: the single parent, child headed and grandparent family.

(ii) School context

Schools are institutions of learning where children are imparted with knowledge. There are informal and formal schools.

- *Informal schools/Dzingoma*

Informal schools are also called home schools. In the informal schools, children are taught the values and norms of that society. It is done through different stages and genders. Some are for boys, and others are for girls. In other instances, young children attend the schools specified for them and older boys and girls are taken to schools suitable for their age group. At those schools, children are taught perseverance, respect and household chores. Elderly men and women take part in teaching children. Culture is very much considered unlike in the formal schools where the curriculum is mostly packed with western character. The participants regarded those schools as the best place where

children, when they graduate would be able to transform their communities into a better place to live. However, they do understand that culture is not static and agree that some practices do not fit to the modern life, and they agree that the best practices be selected and be integrated to the contemporary practice.

- *Formal schooling*

Formal schooling is where children are taught formal education. Most of what children are taught have been imported from foreign countries, where cultures are very different from that of the communities'. Participants argued that those type of schools brought contradictions between cultures, for instance, the Vhavenda culture of greeting is to kneel, whereas in western culture it is to stand up. When children go to the formal schools they would be confused and forced to abandon their culture and take up another culture. Home schooling differs greatly from formal schooling. Khupe (2014) points out that in formal schooling, children are confined to classrooms and allowed to go out during break time. Play is restricted and children only do what the teachers want.

Teachers are part of the school environment and are regarded as secondary parents. For those teachers who are familiar with traditional child rearing practices, it becomes a burden to them when watching children struggling with changing their home or traditional lifestyle to a formal style of doing things. One of the participants, a teacher, confirmed that there is a difference between children who come from families that are deeply rooted in their traditional child rearing style and those from families engulfed in modern style of child rearing. Those coming from traditional families show respect, when asked to do something. They do not question but do what they are asked to do, rather than those from modern families who first ask questions. Although there is a difference between the two schooling systems, formal schooling gives children the chance to learn about their rights which is not applicable in the traditional schooling system.

#### 4.3.1.2 Agents

Agents of this program are parents, elders, teachers, social development officials, NGOs and traditional leaders. Every agent has the knowledge and experience which, when combined, help in the development of this program. Several agents would be responsible for the development of the programme of integrating traditional and contemporary child rearing practices, such as: **elders, traditional leaders, social development officials (SDO), non- governmental organisations (NGOs)**

(i) The elders

Elders have the experience and knowledge of traditional child rearing practices. Their knowledge of cultural norms and values which if incorporated into contemporary practices as reflected in the interviews, may help children to grow up to responsible adults.

(ii) Traditional leaders

Traditional leaders are the custodians of the communities. They lead their communities through shared customs. They have the power to give directions on how culture and traditions should be observed and preserved. All the traditional leadership roles are vested on their shoulders.

(iii) The social development officials

Social development officials have been trained and have knowledge and skills about child development policies and policies on children's rights. They are also skilled in programme development.

(iv) The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

NGOs have knowledge about family life and have also undergone training on how to take care of the children. They have knowledge on programme development.

#### **4.3.1.3 Recipients**

Recipients are people who receive action from the agents. Children, parents, teachers, grandparents and members of the extended family in this programme are recipients. They are the ones the programme evolves around. They are the ones who needs to be natured and be transformed.

##### **(i) Teachers**

Teachers have the knowledge and skills about formal school programmes and behaviour of children. They have been trained to impart knowledge to children and could help to motivate to the department of Basic Education that some aspects of the programme be integrated into the curriculum. For the success of this program, skills of every agent are very important.

##### **(ii) Parents**

Parents are the ones experiencing challenges in rearing their children and are frustrated by the way their children are behaving. It is through this programme where they will be empowered and skilled by the wisdom from elders. Recipients should be able to trust that traditional knowledge holders/elders have experience in child rearing, and if it can be well integrated into contemporary practice, could help parents to be able to rear their children well.

The findings of this study complement what Lebesse, Maselesele, & Chibuzo. (2010:137) claim, that parents are the primary teachers of the child because together with other members of the family, they are there when the child is born, primarily the mother. The mother is the one who will teach the child how to walk, talk and other steps for example dee, dee – encouraging the child to walk and to say mma – mother. Whatever the parent

teaches the child, positive or negative will shape the child towards a better or bad adult whom the community will be proud or be disappointed.

### (iii) Grandparents

Grandparents are regarded as source of indigenous knowledge. Their wisdom in childrearing is regarded as important because it helps the child to grow up to a responsible adult with knowledge of culture and morals of his/her community. In extended families, parents still depend on grandparent's assistance in family matters and childrearing practices.

### (iv) Members of extended family

Every member of the extended family has the responsibility of guiding, nurturing, moulding, educating and train the child. The child is therefore obliged to live according to the family expectation and should abide by the rules set by all members of that family. The child is expected to respect every adult in the family. There should be family cohesion in order to progress in matters of childrearing. Family cohesion is the binding force in the extended family.

### (v) Children

Children in this programme are recipients who also need guidance on how to behave as children. They should be responsible to accept the support they are given and be able to show that they are willing to take advice from elders.

#### **4.3.1.4 Dynamics**

Dynamics is an underlying process that give rise to a set of norms, roles, relations, and common goals that characterize a group in that setting. Amongst the members, there is a state of interdependence, through which the behaviours, attitudes, opinions, and experiences of each member are collectively influenced by the other group members. In

many fields of research, there is an interest in understanding how group dynamics influence individual behaviour, attitudes, and opinions. The following are the dynamics of this programme: Support, accountability and family cohesion.

(i) Support

Support is when all agents work as a team to give support to recipients. Support from both sides is very important so that the programme be a success. Agents should support recipients by utilizing their talents, experience and skills.

(ii) Accountability

Accountability plays an important role in the achievement of every goal. This is when all role payers in this program such as agents and recipients play their role responsibly towards the attainment of the goal of finding a common ground of positive child rearing practices from both traditional and contemporary practices. Recipients can show accountability by willing and be reliable for their actions. Other agents, therefore, are responsible to deliver what they are supposed to, for instance, be available for meetings and training, and be able to provide what is needed from their side, like providing resources.

(iii) Family cohesion

Family cohesion is where the family members support each other in all circumstances. Each member of the family needs each other. The participants in the program will learn strategies on how to support each other whenever their support is needed.

#### **4.3.1.5 Procedure**

Procedure refers to the steps, pattern and protocol of how the program would be performed. Here are the proposed procedures: role identification, training, and acculturation. This is where the process of integrating traditional and contemporary child

rearing practices should be unfolded. Agents like social development officials and NGO officials play their role in preparation for the program to be successful. Involvement of all agents and recipients is very important. Planning and preparation include venue and resources. In order to be successful, the process would follow the following aspects: guided acculturation, upholding *Nyaluso ya vhana*, conversations with other parents, and integration.

(i) Acculturation

Acculturation is a process whereby a group of a different cultures try to adapt to a new culture and social life, but are still participating and still holding to their original cultural values and traditions. This might result in some changes in culture and how people socialise. Acculturation in this programme will select positive traditional contemporary child rearing practices and combine them to form one common practice that could help parents to find better way of rearing their children.

Integration

Integration is the process of bringing together two or more components into a single system that will work as one unit. In this study, the integration process means that what is regarded as good from both traditional child rearing and contemporary child rearing practices. Here are some of the practices that participants suggested: From traditional point of view, teaching children respect, working hard, giving chance the community to practice the Vhavanḁa idioms which says “*ḁwana wa muḁwe ndi ḁwana wau*” and it takes the whole community to rear a child, teaching the children perseverance for the sake of being able to have tolerance in situations that are tough and be able to succeed in life. From contemporary point of view: involving children in decision making in the family, children’s rights and responsibility.

(ii) Upholding *Nyaluso ya vhana*

The proposed program would be expected to address the following findings to uphold *Nyaluso ya vhana*.

- Role modelling good behaviour was an important traditional child rearing practice in the Vhavanḁa culture.
- Modelling respect was an important ingredient of role modelling.
- Perseverance was a virtue inculcated in children through various means.
- Children were raised to work and actively participate in household chores.
- It took a village to raise a child.
- Traditional leaders help the community in fostering culture in traditional child rearing practices.
- Rituals and taboos are backbones in traditional child rearing practices.

(iv) Conversations with other parents

Parents are the first teachers for the child. They are expected to have continuous meetings with each other in order to gain knowledge from each other on how to rear their children. This will be very important even to parents who became parents at an early age as the lack parental experience.

**4.3.1.6 Outcome**

Empowering all who are around the child's life such as parents, knowledge holders, teachers, social development officials, NGOs and elders with knew knowledge and skills



on how to rear children. Outcomes are the results of an activity. In this study, it is the results of the developed program. That is where the validity of the activity is achieved. The achievement of the outcome of this program will be meaningful when all stake holders were satisfied that the program has indeed brought positive results. Here are several factors that relates to the outcome of the programme of integrating traditional and contemporary child rearing practices: empowerment with new knowledge and skills about child rearing, teamwork and true reflection of traditional child rearing practices against government polices about children.

(i) Empowerment with knowledge and skills about child rearing

It is evident that there is a need for the understanding of the constitution. All recipients would be empowered through the program. It will give parents a better understanding of the value elderly people has in the families and in the communities. The feelings and fears from stakeholders about both traditional and contemporary would be dealt with amicably. A mutual understanding, respect and trust would be built amongst the stakeholders. Teachers would be empowered on how children will be reared traditionally, and that informal education is a foundation for formal education. The knowledge and skills that they will acquire will be passed on to other teachers and parents as they are part of school communities.

#### **4.4 DISCUSSION**

This study is about traditional child rearing practices, and as a result the findings highlighted that the practice has certain concerpts that are relevant to modern life. This chapter wrapped up the findings about traditional child rearing practices and the programme of integrating it to contemporary practices. The programme addressed factors such as context, dynamics, agents, process and outcomes. The reason to come up with the program that will integrate both traditional and contemporary child rearing practices should therefore help to consider both practices positively. By integrating those practices may help in the positive recognition of indigenous knowledge and to value those

indigenous knowledge holders in the communities. Therefore, this chapter lead me to the last chapter: Summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

Child rearing practices are associated with culture, norms and beliefs of a group. However, it has been found that due to modernisation, and globalisation, families and societies have a great concern that there is no longer connection in how children are being reared and the way it was done traditionally. Furthermore, the positive aspects of traditional child rearing practices were never circulated. As a result, it appears that traditional child rearing has no place in the contemporary child rearing practices. The intention of this study was to establish if there are areas of traditional practices that were useful, and that should be promoted. This chapter summarises the major findings from the analysis in the previous chapter.

#### 5.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS BASED ON THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The findings from the study offer a foundation from which to build on as future investigations continue to explore the traditional practices of child rearing. The findings offered answers raised by the research questions tabled in chapter 1. Therefore, this chapter demonstrates that even though the traditional child rearing practices had evolved in many respects, they are relevant. The most fascinating part in this study was that when elders related their childhood stories, they resonated with the past. During the process of the interviews, I could sense some traditionalism from their views. Some of them, indicated this by referring to the way their parents taught them traditional ways of doing things, such as greeting and obedience.

### 5.1.1 Traditional child rearing practices

In constructing the answers to this question, I drew the findings from the participants who gave their different views citing the importance of using the traditional practices in child rearing. Elderly people raised their concern about the behaviour of children in modern families. They do believe that if traditional practices can be used in families, it can bring positive changes in children's characters. One of the elders said that if children are taught at an early age, they are easy to learn anything they are taught. Although some of the traditional practices cannot be practiced due to change in life style, most practices are still treasured.

#### 5.1.1.1 Teaching respect in traditional child rearing

In the Vhavenda culture, respect is regarded as a core principle which guides children through their childhood until their adulthood, said one of the participants. Children were taught respect in different aspects, such as *u losha*, *u khotha*, greetings, and not to argue with adults. The argument was that if a child was respectful, he/she would show that anywhere. They further emphasised that a respectful child symbolises the type of family he/she comes from and a prediction of the family he/she would have. Participants cited the reason that they had successful marriages was because they respected their spouses. However, they said that, children who were respectful learnt that from those who nurtured them. That is where the Tshivenda idiom comes in which says *muri u vhavhaho u bva tsindeneni* (an apple does not fall far from the tree).

#### 5.1.1.2 Role modelling in traditional child rearing

There was a general view that it seemed that parents had forgotten that children became what they are by looking and learning from them. Traditionally, the people whom the child learned from are many, since they grew up in extended families unlike in contemporary where some families are single parent, grandparents, and child headed. What participants

were concerned about, especially elders, was that some parents could not take the responsibility of parenting as they were still young and needed to be reared too. They became parents at an early age, hence the problem of age gap. Their actions are like those of their children. Participants indicated that modern parents do things that are disgusting in front of their children, forgetting that children learn by seeing. Elderly participants raised the concern that as adults when they try to give advice, they are told that their views were no longer relevant in the present time.

#### 5.1.1.3 Teaching children through perseverance

Participants agreed that perseverance was the way in which children were taught tolerance and endurance. They agree that even though it was through hardship, it was worth it because children who pass through that process were able to tolerate tough situations, unlike those who did not experienced the situation. They further agreed that it was through that process where children when they grew up, can face the challenges and be able to solve the problems they encounter. This also prepares children to have good morals when they grow up. One elderly woman remembered well the pain she went through at *musevhethoni*, when she was about 10 years. She said she tried to run away but was ambushed and brought back and heavily punished. Parents also applied the hardship process to prepare children for tolerance.

#### 5.1.1.4 Raising children to work and participate actively in household chores

During interview sessions, it was raised that teaching children to work hard was very important to help children to learn what would help them on their way to adulthood. This was done through giving them hard work like ploughing, grinding mealies and many of which modern children could not handle.

Besides that, it built a healthy strong body. It was emphasized that teaching children to do work is the responsibility of the parents. One of the elder said that as a child he learned

to work by imitating his parents. It was like competition with his brothers and sisters to be the best.

Parents in modern families are having problems of allocating work to their children because they do not want to be regarded as abusive parents. They are afraid to be in loggerheads with the law, where the issue of child labour is prohibited. The views of participants are that overprotecting children may lead to laziness. In modern societies, more families had parents who were employed and had no choice to have someone to look after their families while they were away. In the absence of parents, children do nothing rather than to eat, watch TV and play games. As I interacted with participants, I realised that maybe the concerns of participants are valid because children are raised to build a society that everyone would be proud of. In fact, the way children are being raised contributes a great deal when they are adults.

#### 5.1.1.5 It took a village to raise a child

Vhavenda societies are communal in nature. Elderly people indicated that culture and tradition cannot be detached from communal life. That means sharing, doing things together even raising children were norms and values of the community. As indicated previously that children do not belong to their biological parents only, rather to the whole community. It means that the community is as responsible as parents are in rearing children. Although most people in the communities seem to be engulfed in the western lifestyle, those who still believe in traditional way of doing things are convinced that communal life was still the best way of rearing children.

#### 5.1.1.6 Rituals and taboos are backbones in traditional child rearing practices

Traditional child rearing practices are based on rituals and taboos as well as name giving as a foundation for culture and values. For instance, it is a taboo that a child refuses to do something for an elder even if that elder is not the child's biological parent. However,

all this, as participants argued, has been overlooked by modernisation. Names with historical meaning which were given to children are things of the past. Taboos that were followed by the mother of the child before the birth had been forgotten. Elders who had the experience and wisdom about tradition seem to have no place in the contemporary societies.

## **5.2 CONTEMPORARY CHILD REARING PRACTICES IN VHAVENḌA HOUSEHOLDS**

Rearing children in the modern ways seemed to be giving the country a major problem, especially parents. Pakiso (2018) argues that South Africa is presently going under undesirable behaviour by children. In sharing sessions with participants, it was clear that not only parents are in a dilemma about their children's unbecoming behaviour, but even members of the community were deeply concerned.

It was through interviews with participants which highlighted that contemporary child rearing had been influenced by the changes in family structures. Traditionally families were extended and composed of many relatives. This has risen to the emergence of different types of families such as single parent, child headed and grandparent. As a result, participants said that different types of child rearing practices were being used. They further argued that it resulted in the disappearance of traditional ways of child rearing practices. When this type of family structures progress, circle of traditional relationship collapses. There was a further concern about elderly who were knowledge holders in communities, whom their wisdom was being undermined. They were isolated in family decision making. It was also indicated that in many modern families, elders were no longer involved in family matters like rearing children.

The participants gave the view that modernisation and democracy contributed to the erosion of culture and child rearing practices. Modernity resulted in people exposed to many western activities and lifestyle oriented around social media. The issue of democracy was raised by some of the participants who indicated that, in the Constitution,

all people were empowered. It was through the Constitution where individual's rights were emphasised. Until today, there are conflicts about the rights. Parents no longer have a clear disciplinary method with their children.

Ganga and Chinyoka (2017:38) state that there is a need to combine traditional and contemporary child rearing practices as it is enforced by changes due to social and economic factors. As indicated in the problem statement that parents are in a confusion state as to what parental practice to employ as their roles in parenting has been taken by family care takers (Ganga & Chinyoka, 2017). Their views are an indication that there is a need for developing a programme that will integrate both practices. They further attest that some researchers observed that there is a positive change in the manner that parents rear their children in contemporary child rearing practices through games which is important in the socialization process. Contemporary families are characterized by nuclear families which have different types under it, such as single parent, child headed family and grand parenting.

### **5.2.1 Nuclear family**

As indicated by participants, the nuclear family is part of the traditional family which includes, single parent, child headed and grandparents amongst others. Most families in this category are modern and practice western lifestyle. It has been argued that in most of these families, strong relationship and parent-child bond is visible. Although there was good interaction, children from these families encounter some problems in schools when it comes to their home language.

#### **5.2.1.1 Single parent family**

When children are under the care of one parent, that family is regarded as a single parent family. The family had been established under different reasons. Some of the participants view this type of family as the one that was generally united and found ways to work



together to solve problems, such as dividing up household chores. Other participants had a contrary view that this type of family was isolated and disadvantaged in the lack of wisdom from grandparents and elderly people.

#### **5.2.1.2 Child headed family**

The child-headed family is one where children stay alone and take care of themselves, the elderly being the caretaker. This type of family is the result of a situation where parents had passed away, and close relatives could not stay with them due to various reasons. There was concern from participants that these children sometimes face different types of abuse. It was further argued that the future of these children was at stake, and as a result those children may end up involved in alcohol, drug abuse and sexual activities. A contrary view was that traditionally these types of families never existed because children belong to the whole community.

#### **5.2.1.3 Grandparent family**

Grandparent families are families where grandparents are custodians in place of parents. They are the ones responsible for the survival in this type of family. Most of the time grandparents find themselves in trouble of looking after many grandchildren due to different reasons. Participants said that children under the care of grandparents were sometimes spoiled because the grandparents felt pity for them since they lost their parents. Some participants argue that most of these children have good morals because they learn from their grandparents. From what the participants argued, I strongly believe that although modern families enjoy their privilege, it is non-compared to the sufferings they encounter through the behaviour of their children.

### 5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY FAMILIES IN CHILDRENS LIVES

#### Changing of family structure

**Evidence from participants indicate that there is an increase of changing of family structure. Families are changing from extended to nuclear whereby some types of families such as single parent, grandparent and child headed have developed. In those families, young children are becoming children at an early age. This becomes a burden to the parent who should take care of the child and the grandchild. This implies that the mother and her child need guidance to learn on how to face the challenge as the young mother does not have the parental skill.**

#### **Children laws**

The constitution of South Africa has Section 28 which include children's rights. Those rights since they were implemented, brought some misconcerption to many people because some children's rights are against issues such as corporal punishment as a form of punishment. It is through those rights that parents, elders and grandparents assume that children's misconduct is the results of the children's rights. This implies the need for training of those who are around the child's life so that they get skills and knowledge about children's laws.

#### **The influence of technology**

Technology is regarded as positive innovation. However, it does also have its negative side. Participants rued that there is no conversation/communication between parents and children in some families. Most of the time there is silence because parents and children are busy with their phones. Parents are unable to be there when children need their attention. Physical presence has no place in those families. It implies that there is a need for parents on parenting and technology. Children are to be guided on how to use technology effectively for their benefit.

The above statements are evident that although, the family structures are in an evolution process, it implies that those who are responsible and who are around the child's life, if they could be there for the child.

#### **5.4 PROPOSED PROGRAM OF INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL VHAVENḌA CHILD REARING PRACTICES TO THE CONTEMPORARY**

The proposed program was developed following the different aspects by (Dickoff et al., 1968) which is incorporated by the following components: context, agents, recipients, dynamics, process and outcomes. As it was referred by Dickoff and other researchers that the six components are the backbone towards achieving the goal. The context is referred to as the environment whereby the activity will take place. The family, community and schools were identified as preferred environment where the activity can take place. Agents in the program are the elders, teachers, community leaders, government officers, non-governmental officers and other leaders of community structures like churches. The recipients in the program are the parents who would be assisted in the parenting styles.

Dynamics are regarded as sources that ensure the success of the program which are, support and accountability. Progress is referred to as a procedure that the program should follow to reach the positive effect. It is composed of role identification, perseverance and modelling respect. One other building block in the program is the outcome. This is an important aspect because it rolls out the result that the program would benefit the participants and the communities at large. This includes empowering parents with parenting skills. The participants felt that it was their responsibility to take what they had learnt back to their communities. Through meetings they achieved the goal set for the programme. Those aspects which had been dealt with in the program, if well-articulated can positively impact the way children are reared.

## 5.5 EVALUATION

This study aimed at exploring the traditional child rearing practices of *Nyaluso ya vhana* in Vhavenda families. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives were adhered to: traditional Vhavenda child rearing practices, contemporary child rearing practices in selected rural households and a programme that would facilitate the integration of positive traditional child rearing practices into effective contemporary child rearing practices.

An attempt to meet the above objectives have been generated through interaction with participants through one-on-one interviews. The findings reveal that traditional child rearing practices is the foundation for child's life. Participants gave their arguments in this objective by saying traditional child rearing practice is the practice which the family and communities needs towards producing children who became adults with responsibilities.

### Objective 1: Traditional child rearing practices

Participants gave their arguments in this objective by saying, traditional child rearing practice is the practice which the family and communities work together towards producing children who became adults with responsibilities. Although elderly people started by blaming parents for not rearing children in the traditional way, they further noticed that parents needs to be educated on what does it mean by traditional child rearing practice. It also came to the elder's senses that parents are to be educated and skilled in child rearing.

### Objective 2: Contemporary child rearing practices in selected rural household

The second objective have been achieved when participants acquired the knowledge about different types of families and how they have developed. This is where participants blamed the democracy and technology for the ill discipline of children. It is this previous objective that gave birth to the third objective for developing a programme for facilitating

the integration of positive traditional child rearing practices into effective contemporary child rearing practices.

Objective 3: A programme that would facilitate the integration of positive traditional child rearing practices into effective contemporary child rearing practices.

A proposed programme was developed whereby all the process were followed so that it becomes successful. Its success was made possible through involvement of all stake holders. The programme was an achievement as both practices benefited from each other through integration of ideas. The most important thing about the programme was that will be an ongoing process where parents, elders, grandparents, teachers, community leaders and all members of the community will benefit through training. Tshivenda culture will be recognized from generation to generation and elderly people said they will die happily knowing that the wisdom they have will be passed on from generation to generation.

## **5.6 CONCLUSIONS**

In line with the first question, the participants do not only suggest indigenous knowledge to be taught to children but also suggest that learning through an orientation towards respect would strengthen the theoretical knowledge that children currently learn at school. This broaden the idea of including IKS in the school curriculum.

Elders also saw it as important to teach children while they are still young. It was highlighted by a participant that elders are the assets of the community and should be given chance to demonstrate the wisdom they had through rearing children and giving advice to young parents. To reach a consensus about their take on traditional child rearing practices, this study created an opportunity for participants to voice their thoughts about role modelling, respect, perseverance and working hard to shape the character of the child.

However, as indicated by participants, some practices might not fit in today's circumstances, such as respect by *u khotla*, as walking trails have been replaced by streets with cars moving up and down. Most suggestions from communities around the Vhembe District can be legitimate resources for developing relationally driven curricula which could make a huge contribution to relevance and cultural responsiveness (Ladson-Billings; Malcolm & Keane, as cited in Khupe, 2014). Although traditional, child rearing might be regarded by many in modern life as outdated, there are a lot that can be learned that can help the young generation to grow up as responsible in a society that can be proud of them.

The findings also imply that this might be an eye opener to the policy developers as developing their policies may be easy as more information on traditional child rearing practices would be available. The parents are guided on how children were reared and what practices need to be applied in order to raise children who would be the assets to the family and community. As commented by participants, integrating traditional and contemporary child rearing practices could also see children to stay away from acts that will lead them to be problem to their own communities. Parents may be able to guide their children through traditional norms and values.

The findings from objective one and two were used as building blocks for the development of the programme. The findings assisted me to answer the research questions. The developed programme might be of significance in helping members of the community on how children were reared traditionally and try to empower parents on how to rear their children using certain practices from traditional practices. Parents and community members might be able to respect elders and their wisdom. The Department of Basic Education might utilise the programme in the school curriculum. The elderly people might be skilled on issues around children's rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Culture, norms and standards of the Vhavanḁa might gain momentum. Other researchers might utilise the programme to further investigate on traditional aspects for instant, the role of elders in contemporary societies.

There is a great need not to abandon traditional child rearing practices in contemporary household. This helped me to better understand how families are transformed over time based on contextual changes and parental needs to provide essential care for children in ever transforming world. As Africans, there is a need to tell our own stories for the sake of the coming generation, so that they could learn about their culture and tradition. If we do not, others would tell our stories the wrong way. Although there were limitations in conducting interviews with some of the participants, the findings demonstrated that traditional practices help children to grow up as responsible adults and asserts of the community.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, I wish to make the following recommendations:

### **5.7.1 Recommendation to families**

Family members are the primary agents to help the child to develop into a responsible adult person. I, therefore, recommend that parents together with other members of the family to mould, mentor and educate the child by instilling the Tshivenda culture and norms which was regarded by participants as the best tool. This can be achieved if those who are at the forefront of rearing the child be good role models.

### **5.7.2 Recommendation to the community**

Traditionally, the community is regarded as the secondary agent and is responsible to guide the child. The obligation of the community is to help parents and family members in raising the child to be a better person in future as they say it takes the whole village to rear a child. I, therefore, recommend that the community should organise activities which would be a place to educate children. Elders in the community should be involved in that process.

### **5.7.3 Recommendation to policy makers**

Policy makers should develop policy guidelines that are relevant to the environment in which the child is being developed. Members of the community should be fully involved during the development process. It should be taken into consideration when policies are developed that language is of paramount important. Using local language may help members of the community to feel that they own the policies. Children's age group should be considered so that proper policies match the age of children.

### **5.7.4 Recommendation to schools and churches**

As part of the communities, schools and churches also play an important role in child rearing. I therefore, recommend that children's programs in churches be developed which include traditional way of teaching children respect, and to do house chores. School curriculum should be developed in a way that include traditional activities such as games and songs. I also recommend that church leaders and members be workshopped about the importance of traditional child rearing practices so that they do not undermine them.

## **5.8 CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE**

The study made both imperical and theoretical contributions. It is imperical in the sence that, a lot has been said about child rearing practices across the globe. Little has been documented however about traditional Vhavenda way of rearing children. This study provided insights in the positive aspects of traditional Vhavenda child rearing practices. Theoretically, the study used raw data collected from elders, indigenous knowledge holders and others who have more experience in areas of child rearing. The knowledge was gathered through direct contacts with the participants and observation. The findings from participants contributed to the development of the programme which saw the integration of traditional and contemporary child rearing practices.



## 5.9 IDEAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is needed in child rearing practices in order to find some of the answers that this study could not answer such as: creating an environment whereby elders are positively involved in matters of rearing children.

For that reason, recognition of traditional child rearing practices is strongly emphasized. As indicated by participants that traditional child rearing practices has been too long undermined, it is therefore necessary that those pillars in traditional child rearing practices be revisited. A co-ordinated ongoing training programme on childrearing practices that will include other members of the community who were not part of the initial training such as churches and civic organizations.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX A

#### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Topic: Traditional Practices of *Nyaluso ya vhana* in Venda Home Setting: An Afro-centric Perspective**

**Principal Investigator:** Murovhi Avhurengwi Florence-PhD Student

**Co-Investigators:** DR Adv. Matshidze PE- Head of the Department of African Studies in the School of Human and Social Sciences.

Prof V.O. Netshandama, Director: Community Engagement  
(University of Venda).

#### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the traditional child-rearing practices in Vhavenda families.

#### **Brief Introduction:**

Family, community, culture and traditions play an important role in raising children. In most traditional African cultures, child rearing was a societal agenda. Parents, including other family members are more responsible for *Nyaluso ya vhana* (child rearing). In addition, traditional home settings for Vhavenda in the past made it simple for families to guide children towards the right direction in life, because of its extension; every member of the family is responsible for the task of rearing the child.

#### **Contact information**

**Principal Investigator:** Murovhi AF: 0799683706

**Co-Investigators:** 1. Dr. Matshidze PE: 0159628131

2. Prof. Netshandama VO: 0159629058

## APPENDIX B

### CONSENT FORM

#### **Traditional Practices of *Nyaluso ya vhana* in Venda Home Setting: An Afro-centric Perspective**

I, Avhurengwi Florence Murovhi, (A PhD candidate at the University of Venda) am carrying out the above-mentioned research for academic purposes. You are kindly invited to participate in this study.

#### **1) Procedures**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name), understand that participation in this research is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. I may be asked to answer questions contained in a questionnaire as well as face-to-face discussions interviews.

#### **2) Right to Refuse Participation**

Participation in this project is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw at any time. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the process and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me or of another researcher.

### 3) Confidentiality

The research being done in the community may draw attention and if you participate you may be asked questions by other people in the community. We will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that we collect from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Only the researchers will know what your number is and we will lock that information up with a lock and key. It will not be shared with or given to anyone.

### 4) Risks and Benefits

If the discussion is on sensitive and personal issues, such as reproductive and sexual health, personal habits etc. then an example of text could be something like "We are asking you to share with us some very personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you don't wish to do so, and that is also fine. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview"

### 5) Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about *nyaluso ya vhana* in Vhavenda. You will not be provided with any incentive for taking part in the research.

### 6) Signature

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

With my signature, I affirm that I am above 18 years of age and that I have received a copy of the consent form to keep.

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### **Traditional Practices of *Nyaluso ya vhana* (childrearing) in Venda Home Setting: An Afro-centric Perspective**

You are welcome to this interview. Therefore, feel free to ask any questions concerning the words and other things related thereto so that you answer questions properly. As you will remember from the consent form, all conditions stipulated in there apply to this interview. Therefore, I encourage you to give your independent views.

- Do you have any questions to ask the researcher before we start the interview?

### QUESTIONS

- 1) What were the traditional practices regarding child rearing?
- 2) What is the contemporary child rearing practices in selected rural households?
- 3) Which program would facilitate the integration of positive traditional Vhavenda child rearing practices to the contemporary child rearing practices?

**Thank you for your participation.**

## APPENDIX D

### LETTER OF GRATITUDE TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

I would like to pass my gratitude to you as a participant for taking part in my research study. The information you have provided me with, will be analysed together with those of other participants. I hope through the information you provided; this research study will provide answers to the questions raised to assist in rearing children who will be asserts of the community.

Yours Sincerely

Murovhi Avhurengwi Florence