

Abuse of Men's Rights in Selected Xitsonga Drama Texts

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DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2022.13.S01.163

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the violation of men's rights in selected Xitsonga drama texts. The study is guided by qualitative approach. The approach involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions or experiences. In this study purposive sampling is employed. The researchers deliberately choose who to include in the study based on their ability to provide the necessary data. Data are collected using content and document analysis from sampled drama texts. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research methods, documents analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. The advantage of document analysis includes, efficiency which means that it is not time consuming but is more efficient than other research methods. Its effectiveness entails that it is less costly and makes it the method of choice. Thematic analysis is also used as the method of systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across dataset. The process involves a careful more focused, re – reading and review of data. Two main reasons to use thematic analysis are its accessibility and flexibility. *Nhlonipha* theory is tested in this study. *Hlonipha* can be described as politeness register originating from Nguni and primarily used by Zulu women before and after marriage (Rudwick and Msibi, 2016). The motive behind using this theory is that if you *hlonipha* you cannot violate another person's rights but you will have to respect them. The study found that men become victims of abuse, and the violation of their rights is just as criminal as the violation of the rights of their female counterparts. This study also inspires harmony and peaceful coexistence among consumers of its content. It is recommended that more studies of similar kind should be undertaken to influence humanity to desist from violating the rights of other human beings.

Keywords: Man abuse, woman abuse, child abuse, human rights, violation of rights, *hlonipha*.

INTRODUCTION

The violation of human rights is an ongoing global concern that has remained unresolved over a long period of time until this day. Every day, people violate other people's rights either wittingly or unwittingly. Human rights abuse is caused mainly by relational circumstances between the perpetrator and the victim. Rachel, Levin and Penn-Kekana (2002:1603) state that "a huge population number of abuse victims consists of women and children". Tjaden and Thoennes (1999:93) concur with the above assertion when they mention that "within the United States, American women will experience violence by an intimate partner sometime during their lifetime". They further aver that American women are much more abusive than any other women in the world. This research aims to investigate abuse among men as they do not, out of shame and fear, report cases of abuse that they suffer at the hands of their wives or female partners.

Before the dawn of democracy in South Africa, domestic violence was overlooked by the authorities and the government of the time. It was only with the advent of democracy in 1994 that, the issue of domestic violence was exposed. This has led to the enactment of the "Domestic Violence Act of 1998", which seeks to eradicate the violation of human rights. However, this research is confined to the violation of men's rights as opposed to a comprehensive study that incorporates the abuse of women and children's rights.

As the violation of human rights became an international challenge, nations such as South Africa have sought and found ways of combating this scourge through the establishment of the "Human Rights Commission" which oversees human rights, freedom and equality as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).

Women and children enjoy more protection from the laws of the country than their male counterparts. Even though the violation of men's rights is not a new phenomenon in society, male victims have always kept it in the closet and never spoke about it in

public (Josolyne, 2011:4). The Nguni culture contributes to this situation where male victims are usually shy to declare publicly that they suffer abuse at the hands of their spouses or female partners. This understanding is also buttressed by what is stated from the Bible in the book of Ephesians 5:22-23, that man is the head of the family and that he has power over women and children by Pizzey (2007). That is to say, females are 'weaker vessels' compared to their male counterparts. Realizing the stigma that affects men, there is a need for a study of this nature to be undertaken to create public awareness about this scourge in society.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Often when the issue of the violation of human rights is raised, a mental picture of the violation of the rights of women and children is conjured up. It is a mental stereotype that children and women are always the victims of male perpetrators. The rights of men are violated on a daily basis worldwide (Pizzey, 2004). Men suffer abuse and suppression in society but, unlike their female counterparts and children, they are reluctant to declare publicly that they are being abused. This unwillingness to report among men stems from the fear that no one would lend them an ear, let alone believe them. Subsequently, a stage is reached where men become oblivious of the fact that their rights are being trampled upon. They eventually resolve to take it upon themselves to solve their own problems as they arise. Cases relating to men abuse are a rarity in the courts of law as men do not disclose any of the forms of abuse they suffer as they do not want to come out in the open to lay charges due to the fear of being ridiculed by warrant officers and authorities. Thus, affected men end up suffering both physically, psychologically and spiritually. Some eventually become mentally disturbed. In this study, the abuse of men by both women and fellow men is a critical problem that will be dealt with.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pickard (2013:26) describes works of research as "critical discussion or evaluation of all significant publicly available reading materials," meaning the review and analysis of literature or works conducted relating to the subject under investigation. Literature review assists in understanding what has already been done and simplifies the manner in which the researcher should conduct the research. The literature review was categorised into woman abuse, child abuse and man abuse to enable us to easily locate this research in correct category.

ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

The subject matter of this study is male abuse in selected Xitsonga drama texts. In order to understand the subject matter, the study is guided by the theory of *Hlonipha*. *Hlonipha* can be described as politeness register primarily used by Zulu women before and after marriage (Rudwick & Msibi, 2016). In tracing the origin of *hlonipha*, Luthuli (2007) points the connection that can be drawn between its meaning and an *inhloni* (hedgehog) where the word *hlonipha* is derived from the animal's tendency to cast its head on its chest and looking round shyly. Furthermore, in Kubayi and Maluleke (2017), De Kadt (1998) traces the origin of *hlonipha* as a Nguni word to the noun *inhlonipho* (respect, politeness) and is defined to be "a way of registering social relationships in order to code the asymmetrical power or status relationship between social entities" (Childs, 2003:179). The motive behind using this theory is that if you *hlonipha* you cannot violate another person's rights but you will have to respect them. With regards to *ubuntu*, Kubayi (2013:28) says that "*ubuntu* is located on the connectedness between people, making it impossible for one to exist without the other". Kubayi and Maluleke (2017) contend that a man who does not earn *inhlonipho* from his wife will equally not earn deference from his children and society in general.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study sought to investigate the violation of men's rights in selected Xitsonga drama texts. To address this topic thoroughly, the researcher will employ and be guided by qualitative research approach. The researchers asked questions about 'what?', 'why?' and 'how?' (Downe, 2005). Denzin (2005:10) states that "qualitative research implies the qualities of entities and on

processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured.” According to Mcmillan and Schumacher (1993:250), “qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audiences’ range of behavior and perceptions with reference to specific topics or issues”.

SAMPLING METHOD

Morse (1997:127) describes sampling as “the deliberate selection of the most appropriate participant to be included in the study, according to the way that the theoretical need of the study may be met by the characteristics of the participants.” The participants enable the researcher to achieve the aim of the research. According to Patton (1990:1197), “sampling involves the studying of the information-rich cases in depth”.

The sample of Xitsonga drama texts on violation of men’s rights themes are selected using a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data (Parahoo, 1997:232). With regards to purposive sampling, Alvi (2016) argues that it is not a mutually exclusive category of sampling rather all the techniques other than the aforementioned are purposive in nature. The participants are selected with a purpose in mind. In other words, only selected drama texts with experiences of men’s abuse will be analysed in this study. The two texts selected for this study are: *I tatana wa hina* (1997) by KT Ngobeni and *N’wamayengani*(1992) by MT Nkhwashu

DATA COLLECTION

Hofstee (2009:117) states that “once you have data whatever nature, you have to do something with it in order to turn into evidence ... to turn it into information you have to analyse it”. In this study, data is gleaned using content analysis and document analysis from the sampled drama works indicated on section above.

DATA ANALYSIS

The study employed content and document analysis to analyse the data. Contents is categorized according to different themes. Conclusions and recommendations were made from the analysed data.

Abuse is when a person makes a bad or wrong thing to another person. It is eventify so when we look into *I Tatana wa hina*(1997) (He is Our Father) by Ngobeni KT. Mahatlani’s rights are violated in numerous ways by other characters in the play. He is emotional abused by his sons when they fail to bring home his herd of cattle especially due to the absence of his beloved cattle that belongs to his ancestors. He inquired from his wife the where about of his cattle and instead of her to give him a positive response she just “hleka” laugh and say “kona mi nga vilela ku ri ku va kona mhani ntsongo kwale Xilungwini. Kasi mi ri a hi swi tivi xana? (p.2) meaning that she is aware that he has another wife in his working place. So why do he worry? Mahatlani feels ridiculed when he discovers that his wife knows about his other relationship. Mahatlani feel heavily troubled by his sons until his wife tries to comfort him by saying “ Mavutana, nkatanga, horisani mbilu, vafana ni ntlhambi wa vona va karhi va vuya” (p.2) meaning (Mavutana as a clan name called Nkuna, calm down my husband. Our children are on the way with the entire herd of cattle).

Besides Mahatlani we encounter Bamuzi whose rights a trampled upon by Mahatlani himself. Mahatlani says “I mhaka leyi ndzi nge n’wina mi nge mi hlantswekile byongo a mi pfuni nchumu. Mi pfalekile mahlo hikuva a mi pfuni nchumu. Se u sungula ku ndzi nyika swipimelo emutini wa mina (p.12) meaning that is the reason why Mahatlani calls educated people a useless and blind. Bamuzi did not have a right to dictate terms to Mahatlani what must he do in his household. Mahatlani is emotionally troubling Bamuzi just because Bamuzi was there to fight for Khangela who is the son of Mahatlani. Mahatlani denied to let Khangela attend school.

Mahatlani also experiences abuse in the form of neglect. Khensani fails to follow the wish of her husband. Mahatlani wanted to treat his children by not giving them food to eat as a punishment for not bringing the entire cattle home in time but instead his

wife Khensani says “va tshikeni va dya va xurha. Va ta kuma na matimba yo tlhelela enhoveni” (p.3) meaning (to let the children eat for them to have energy and enough strength to go to the veld and look for stray cattle. Here Khensani is denying to follow the instruction given to her by his husband and that action is seen to be above the rights of Mahatlani.

In addition, Eunice a second wife of Mahatlani also trouble her husband when she says “loko u ndzi vona ndzi xiphunta xo havela magume. Le ka hina eTranskei a swi ambariwi sweswo” (p.28) meaning that (do you think that I am stupid person who can wear ridiculous clothes that are taboo to wear in Transkei where I am from). The failure to wear Vatsonga traditional clothes by Eunice that are bought by her husband looks to be insubordination and did not settle well to Mahatlani.

Mahatlani is financially abused by Eunice when she says “sweswo a swi tirheli mina. Xa wena i ku pfukela ebankini mundzuku leri xaka u ya yi teka. Phela ndzi va tshembisile leswaku loko u fika hi ta vhela hi va tlhava hi yona” meaning (I don’t care. Tomorrow you must go to bank and borrow money. I promise to pay them immediately when you arrived). It is a must that Mahatlani must borrow money that his wife wants. Eunice overspent her husband money and within the spur of a moment Mahatlani become bankrupt. Due to his bankruptcy, Eunice says “xuma xi herile, a ndza ha voni vununa bya wena handle ko vona wanuna wo ambala maburuku ntsena. Vununa bya wena byi khulukile ni mati ya lwandle” (p.64) that he is no longer her husband at all. He had lost his manhood and he is just a man because he wears trousers.

Eunice denied Mahatlani sexual relationship eventhought he is his husband. Eunice trampled the rights of Mahatlani when she says “mina u nga ha ndzi vuli nsati wa wena hikuva u mukhalabya” (p.64) (don’t call me your beloved wife because you are old man). The marital abuse that Mahatlani receives from Eunice is too heavy to be beard by him. Eunice denial to take good care of Mahatlani is heartbreaking, she says “u ri ndzi nga swi kota ku ongola kokwa wa mina. U ngo bola u lo tshama, u ngo nuha mbwee (p.66) meaning (do you think I can take good care of you. I cannot do that and you are too stinky). Mahatlani is failing to get a better treatment he is supposed to receive from his wife as expected and in itself, that show a kind of male abuse.

Male abuse is also exposed in *N’wamayengani (The Betrayer)*. In the play, Biriviri the wife of Xitlakati denied to give her husband food to satisfy his hunger. She says that “ndlala yi ta n’wi swonya mali ndzi lo bohela hi nkhamu” (p.9) meaning (he will suffer hunger while money is hidden in my inner pocket). Biriviri refuses to share her spoils with her husband that forms an abuse or neglet. Biriviri worsen the pain to Xitlakati when she says “ku suka namuntlha va ta hanya hi rikoko ra xilondza” (p.10) meaning that (from that day they will survive by eating the scrub of the wound due to the lack of food). The action taken by Biriviri of denying to provide and supply food to her husband is a sign of abuse to her husband as she points the scrub to show that she had plenty but they will survive with a very little food or nothing at all. To rub the wound with salt, Biriviri says “u nga hakameri etilorini u ta dya yini? I mani a nga ta swi kota ku singilela wena u lo mbaa! Laha mutini (p.3) (why don’t you abide trucks and go to work. What will you eat. Who will support you while sitting at home?)

Again, Biriviri is emotionally abusing her husband Xitlakati. She says that “u munhu wa ku huma phexeni leswi u nga tani xana? Mhaka ya wena a ndzi yi kholwi swinene. Ndzi hlamuseli kahle” (p.1) (do you think you are fit to be pensioner? I don’t understand and believe your matter. Thoroughly explain it) Xitlakati being a pensioner can no longer work that Biriviri knows very well even that he is waiting for his pension payout and at that moment he is bankrupt. His rights a violated by his wife. As Xitlakati is no longer working and his wife does not believe him, that is enough to emotional trouble to Xitlkati as is ironically that Biriviri was the one who is supposed to support her husband during the trying times but not.

Biriviri promise her husband to “ndzi lava ku ku khavangela nhloko leyi ya ribye loko u ri hava tindleve “(p.31) meaning that (Biriviri want to chop his hardened head as he fails to listen). Biriviri wants to brutally assault her husband that shows another form of abuse. He is about to be chopped while he wants to go and see her in her new home.

Besides psychological abuse we also discover a marital abuse of Xitlakati by his wife Biriviri. Biriviri divorced Xitlakati and relocated. She builds her own home. She prevents her husband by denying an opportunity to see her by saying “u nga ti karhati hi ku ta u ta ndzi pfuxela, loko ku ri mhaka ya xivongo yona u nga ti pandzisi nhloko hi yona, ndzi wansati ndzi ta ti vonela” (24) that Xitlakati must not bother himself by going to greet her and on top of that he must not worry about marital surname because she is a responsible woman. The marriage between Xitlakati and Biriviri finally breaks up and Biriviri being a catastrophe who violate Xitlakati’s rights.

Biriviri continue to abuse Xitlakati emotionally by saying “u lumiwa hi yini hikuva ri ta tlunya mina ku nga ri wena” (p.12) that Xitlakati must stop to worry because the one who will suffer is her but not him. That kind of response create a void in Xitlakati’s heart as he was denied the privilege of being with his family.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will be significant to the readers, students and literary critics in general. In addition, the study will influence humanity to desist from violating the rights of other human beings. Since literature is a scene or mirror in the life of human beings, this study will inspire harmony and peaceful coexistence among consumers of its content. The study will also be an aid, resource or a support material, especially to students aspiring to conduct research. Furthermore, the study hopes to reveal to all and sundry that men can also become victims of abuse, and the violation of their rights is just as criminal as the violation of the rights of their female counterparts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the study was to investigate the violation of men's rights in the selected Xitsonga drama texts. The objectives was to critically analyse the types of male abuse, to reveal the perpetrators of male abuse, examine the causes of the violations of human rights, the consequences that are experienced by victims of male abuse and the action that are taken by the victims of male abuse. The offenders with their rude actions were clearly brought forward or demonstrated. The findings of the study were derived from both literature review, the research and the data that was collected through purposive sampling from the Xitsonga drama texts. This study recommends scholars to further studies with the following researches: Statistics of male abuse in Limpopo Province, interview Xitsonga drama authors, male student abuse from University of Limpopo from 2010-2020 and the historical abuse background of male educators at schools.

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