

The Physical Features and Importance of Women That Is Depicted on Zulu Clan Praise Names

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is that most scholars are not aware of the physical features and importance of women that is depicted on Zulu clan praise names. The clan praise names in themselves code hidden information that would be a story, history, very long which talks about women. The main aim of the study is to alert people about the physical features and importance of women that is depicted on Zulu clan praise names. Research findings indicate that women feel significant when their physical beauty is acknowledged. This study found that females can protect themselves through self-defence if they are trained and can also protect their loved ones. Research findings also showed that women are very important in growing the nation and can protect their families by using their wisdom.

Keywords: Zulu nation, clan, clan praise names

1. Introduction

According to Bryant (1965:15) clan praise name is common to every member of the clan. It was usually the personal name of some ancient celebrity. Usually, Zulu clan praise names include names of some of their kings and experiences that were encountered by people of that clan. Zulus believe that there are always connections between the living and the ancestors, (Cebekhulu, 2003). They believe that ancestors have great influence on the lives of the living and they connect with them by their clan praise names. The living use clan praise names to connect with the ancestors. All clan praise names have meanings. They have important history of the family, (Makhambeni, 1989).

However, some Zulu people, are today unaware of the meaning and structure of their clan praise names. This paper investigates the physical features and importance of women that is depicted on Zulu clan praise names. This research study aims to investigate the physical features and importance of women that is depicted on Zulu clan praise names. The researcher looked work of other scholars who wrote about Zulu clan praise names. Scholars such as Malibe (2009), Mzolo (1977), Sikhosana (1997), Khathi (2002) and Zwane (2012, 2015) have based their discussions on some of the Zulu clan praise names. They state that as far as Zulu culture is concerned, the selection of clan praise names is influenced by many factors. Most of these factors are diverse among cultures.

In this paper, the researcher has used a qualitative approach, interviews, which form part of a survey method. Interviews were arranged with the Zulu cultural experts and adult Zulu people who perform rituals that accompany clan praise naming. This research demonstrated how women are importance in Zulu nation and how they are appreciated. A study of the Zulu clan praise names reveals that women are respected and are thanked with their work of growing the Zulu nation. Clan praise names show that without women the nation would die and no more future leaders will be born. Physical beauty of women is noted and talked about on Zulu clan praise names.

2. Methodology

Qualitative research method will be used. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research helps to collect data needed to those who participate in research, in the area they live every day. Qualitative researchers collect data the time the participants are in a normal condition, they look what they are doing or what they say, (Welman & Kruger: 2001).

Creswell (2009:175) states this:

Researchers do not bring individuals into a contrived situation nor do they typically send out instruments for individuals to complete. This up close information gathered by actually talking directly to people and seeing them

behave and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research. In a natural setting, the researchers have face to face interaction overtime.

This method of research is in line with the paper because it will help to find information that would answer important questions. It was necessary for researcher to go to rural areas to speak with people who have knowledge about clans and clan praise names. During discussions with participants, the researcher did not intervene the time participants were telling him their knowledge on research, they spoke freely.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133) indicate that qualitative research is done by the researcher, he goes to the participants in a daily condition without saying something that is not true because he is there as a researcher. This study is conducted in rural areas, cultural experts and older people were the participants who gave information. The researcher had semi-structured interviews with rural people at KwaHlathi and gave him the information they had.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2000, 2007); Creswell, (2009); Denzin & Lincoln, (1994) argue that qualitative researchers often collect information required by research using interviews, looking at the participants actions, and also use the information that is written. Information found on written material has been found in the books, thesis, dissertations, newspapers and journals. By qualitative method the researcher is able to get new information he did not know, (Cohen, Manion and Morrison: 2004).

Yin (1987:82) argues this about qualitative research:

Qualitative methods are particularly well suited for examining instances of self-regulated learning as events because they involve rich, holistic descriptions, and do not make assumptions, intra-individual stability, and are oriented to revealing complexity.

Yin's quote makes it clear that the researcher should not make assumptions. Participants should be allowed to talk without any disturbance. Researcher's unnecessary intervention is not needed.

As the researcher had already explained, information required by this study was collected on participants (who are adults living in KwaHlathi) there is no prediction or assumption that took place as interviews took place.

2.1 Data Collection Methods

For participants selection purposive and snowball sampling were used. Calmorin and Calmorin (2008) indicate that in purposive sampling a participant is selected by the researcher because s/he is representing the whole population. Snowball sampling focuses to a non-probability sampling technique of recruitment, whereby participants are requested to take part in the research by assisting the researcher in finding other people who have knowledge that can be useful in the research, (Faugier and Sergeant: 1997). A non-probability sampling is a sample method that does not give all the participants in the research the same opportunities of being selected.

As the researcher used both snowball and purposive sampling, he started by meeting and talking to participants who have knowledge about his topic, and they assisted him to find other participants who have important knowledge about his research. This procedure was applied to all participants. When the research is conducted it is easier when participants are speaking the language of researcher, (Kruger: 1988). This research went well to the researcher because both participants and the researcher were speaking the same language, isiZulu.

The study sample was done to 20 community members from KwaZulu-Natal, at Ladysmith, KwaHlathi rural area. That place is a rural area with Zulu people who are still believing in and practicing their culture.

2.2 Data Collection

Interviews took place in the places that suited participants. IsiZulu language was used to conduct interviews because all participants were speaking isiZulu as their Mother tongue. One hour was spent on each interview. The interviews were recorded and records were kept in a safe place.

2.3 Semi Structured Interview

The type of interview used is semi-structured. Semi structured interview is also called guided interview because the researcher guides the interview with questions to ask, (Flick, 1998). The rules or conditions are the ones that allow the researcher to be able to make questions that help him to get required answers to the research, (Flick, 1998:76).

A planning of questionnaire of semi-structured interview schedule is made with the questions that the researcher would ask. De Vos et al (2002) describe the schedule of interview as the questions that are designed to direct or lead the interview. This enables the researcher to resolve the open questions he will ask on the participants, (Holstein and

Gubrium, 1995:76). The researcher did this because he wanted to make sure he will ask all the questions that needed to be answered in the study.

An interview or discussion method can be based on participants and their method of answering questions. The researcher asks open questions and participants can start anywhere to answer them. When the researcher tries to continue explaining how he understands a specific situation, the researcher must allow participants to express themselves in the way they wish. When the comment of the participant is not clear, the researcher should ask him/her to clarify it, (Barnard et al, 1999).

In other words, this type of interview requires a variety of open-ended-questions so that the participant cannot find himself responding by answer that is one word. The participant should be given a chance to say as much information as he could. De Vos et al (2002), argue that in a semi-structured interview, the researcher is able to ask further questions, feel affected or eager to hear about it, coming while discussing and participating to get a complete picture with what he wanted to know.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theory is a combination of suggestions and ideas for some topic a researcher works on. This is seconded by Mitchell and Jolley (1988:21) when they say:

A theory is a set of propositions from which a large number of new observations can be deduced.

Mitchell and Jolley say that the theory can be considered as suggestions where many ideas can be derived from.

Mfeka, (1998:06) say this about theory:

Injunalwazi ingumbono womunye umuntu othathwa njengovuthiwe futhi owethenjiwe ukuthi ungayisisekelo sombhalo obhalwe phansi.

‘Theory is an idea of someone considered to be mature and reliable that can be the foundation of the written text.’

Mfeka say that theory is an important idea of a scholar that can be used by other scholars in their research.

Theories that are used in this research paper are oracy, feminism and womanism. More information about these theories is discussed on the following paragraphs.

3.1 Oracy

Oracy focuses on the literacy of the words that are said by mouth, (Bukonya, 2001). Oracy concentrates on oral literature. Oracy is as significance as writing and reading, (Okpewho, 1992). Every person has something to say by his mouth. It is the task of the community to assist the person to voice his/her opinion because it might be useful to the whole community. When people are saying things, it is very important to them to be confident, (Bukonya, 2001). When people are confident it becomes easy for them to voice their thoughts. When people are allowed to say things, they come up with brilliant views. Ong (1982) says it is very important to write down oral work, because people might end up forgetting some important part of it, if it is not written.

3.2 Feminism

This term is most popular in Western and European countries when discussing women or texts and things that affect them.

Peck and Coyle (1993: 170) argue this about feminism:

Feminist criticism is concerned both with the representation of women in literature and with changing women’s position in society by freeing them from oppressive restraints. Central to those restraints are essentialist definitions of what it is to be a woman.

Peck and Coyle argue that feminism focuses on that women are important and they need to be given chances like men. It says women voices need to be represented, listened and given opportunities. It exposes that when women can be freed from oppression they can do lot of good things.

In addition to above Peck and Coyle (1993:173) state this:

Feminist criticism works with shifting agenda. It questions the patriarchal order of society but is ready to accept and work with the provisionality that is the

consequence of questioning or abandoning that old, containing fiction.

Peck and Coyle emphasize that feminism is against patriarchy. They say patriarchy society limits and disadvantage women to do what they are capable of.

Bressler (1994:103) discusses this about feminism:

Feminism goal is to change this degrading view of women so that all women will realize that they are not a no significant other Women, feminist declare, must define themselves and assert their own voices in the arenas of politics, society, education, and the arts. By personally committing themselves to fostering such change, feminist hope to create a society in which the female voice is valued equally with the male.

Bressler say women developed the feminism. Even though the feminism has become a superstition against undermining women by men, using them to find out what they needed, initially feminism focuses on white women. Men were undermining voices, ideas, and the importance of a woman, making them insignificant in society. The feminism developed where women insisted that their voice needs be heard. Those women also insist on women's writings to be considered but it does not mean that they are seeking to be better than others, but they want everyone to be treated equally and their voice to be welcome to the public.

Driver, Ryan and van Zyl (1982: 203) say:

The initial impulse to current feminist literary criticism was the desire to use literature as a means of giving autonomous value to women as experience by helping women and others perceive the political, economic and social oppression to which women were subjected, as well as to attempt to bring about new standards against which women would be measured and of dispensing with old standards.

Driver, Ryan and van Zyl point out the idea that the creation of feminism focused on empowering women by giving them power to express themselves in texts. They had to convey their feelings to what they see in politics, economically and globally and depressing. They also wanted to try to raise the quality of women to be counted.

3.3 Womanism

This term of womanism can be defined as it deals with everything associated with females. Before focusing on womanism, the womanism origin needs to be looked. Nkumane (1999:49) states this about womanism:

Womanism as a literary theory is not to be used as a wrecking ball with which to demolish and do violence to African literacy texts; rather, it is employed as a key which to unlock meaning in their multiplicity and paradoxes.

Nkumane says womanism theory talks about African woman. It says black women are very important to the community because they play crucial roles.

Nkumane (1999:49) also argues this about womanism:

Womanism, then, must be understood to be linked with mature behavior, which is different from that of a young girl. A womanist is, according to this definition, any black woman who displays bold, daring, adventurous and determined actions.

Nkumane says womanism is against undermining of black woman in their community. Women role is unique as there are things that can be done only by them in their societies, like being pregnant, giving birth and giving babies breast milk.

There is a link between feminism and womanism, but there is a difference as feminism speaks of all females, but womanism focuses to black women of Africa only.

Hudson-Weems (2001:146) concurred to what Nkumane argues about womanism:

African womanism is an ideology created and designed for all of African descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of African woman.

Hudson-Weems definition supports Nkumane about that womanism focuses directly to African women. The way

womanism it is, it is based on traditional culture of African women. It highlights the different needs and situations faced by women. Women also like men face challenges that make them to work hard.

Sander (1995:26) says this about womanism:

In essence, a womanist is a black feminist who is committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female.

This means that a woman plays an important role in developing life of both male and female. This is supported by clan praise names of Nkabinde and Duma as it is depicted that a woman breast feed both male and female babies. This will be seen when the researcher analyses the clan praise names of these clans.

Nkumane (1999:28) argues this about womanism:

The fact that womanism aims to promote her survival of the entire black people suggest that a womanist should possess qualities of being challenging and bold, being inquiring, pushy, and straining towards the survival of the whole community. The idea involves love of ones... people. To be good womanist, we must be universalist toward ourselves as a people, as a nation and love ourselves.

Nkumane says womanism focuses on promoting women, it against undermining of women. Women can do quality work and they need to be given opportunities. For communities to survive they need women. Successful community is the one that supports women and allows them to show what they are capable of.

4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

The majority of the participants were males. Sixty percent were males and forty percent were females. As participants were twenty, twelve were males and eight were females. Both males and females had important information about the research that is why both were used. The following clan praise names were selected to pick up the physical features and importance of women that is depicted on Zulu clan praise names.

Other Majozi clan praise names according to Malibe (2009:115):

Mfazi owancelis' ingane ngaphesheya komfula
Mabelemade
'Woman that feed the baby across the river'
'You of long breasts'

These clan praise names of Majozi are the same as of Mthombeni, Nkabinde and Sangweni which are written below. Their analysis is written under Sangweni's clan praise names.

Other Mthombeni clan praise names according to Sithole (1982:79):

Mfaz' omabel' amade
Oncelis' umntwan' ngaphesheya komfula
'You of long breasts'
'That feed the baby across the river'

These clan praise names of Mthombeni are the same as of Nkabinde, Sangweni and Majozi as it is said above.

Other Nkabinde clan praise names according to Malibe (2009:70-71):

Nina bakwaMabelemade,
Oncelisa umntwana
Engaphesheya komfula
'You of long breasts'
'That feed the baby'
'Across the river'

These Nkabinde clan praise names are the same as of Mthombeni, Sangweni and Majozi as it is said above.

Other Sangweni clan praise names according to Sithole (1982:102):

Nina bakwaMabelemade

Ancelis' umntwana ngaphesheya komfula

'You of long breasts'

'That feed the baby across the river'

The hyperbole is used in these sentences to express the good work that is done by females of Nkabinde, Sangweni, Mthombeni and Majozi, which is feeding babies, by their breasts. These clan praise names of Sangweni show the importance of females, as they feed babies with their breast milk.

Other Zwane clan praise names according to Sithole (1982:124):

Nina bakwaMfaz' oshaya abafana ekwaluseni

Ngingakaze ngimbon' olokotha lesenzo

'You of a woman who beat boys in shepherding'

'I have never seen the one who do that'

These clan praise names of Zwane show the power of females as they have the power of self-defence when there is a need. Zwane clan praise names show that females can defend themselves from males if they are trained. These clan praise names show that females are not weak they are strong enough to face their enemies without assistance of their male relatives or husbands or friends.

Other Ngcobo clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:75):

Mashiya amahle

Sengathi azoshumayela

Amavula nkungu kuvele ilanga

'Beautiful eyelashes

As if he is going to preach a sermon

The clearer of mist so that the sun appears'

These clan praise names of Ngcobo show the physical beauty of the women of this clan. They say they have beautiful eyelashes which contributes to their facial beauty, and the face beauty is such that it clears the mist so that the sun appears, i.e. they claim that females of Ngcobo are most beautiful under the image of the sun.

Other Mthiyane clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:126):

Mantungwa nibahle

Nibahle ningembethe

'You are nice looking, Ntungwa people

You are nice looking even when naked.

These clan praise names of Mthiyane show the physical beauty of the females of this clan. These clan praise names say it clear that females of this clan looked nicely, well structured, as they say they are beautiful even when they are naked. They say the beauty of females of Mthiyane does not rely on clothes, they are beautiful naturally.

Other Chiya clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:101):

Kwahlamba ngentusi

Abanye behlamba ngamanzi

'They who wash with milk

While others wash with water'

These clan praise names of Chiya are the same as of Mthethwa both "*Ubisi* and *Intusi*" is referring to milk. The analysis is written under Mthethwa's clan praise names.

Other Mthethwa clan praise names according to Malibe (2009:110):

Mahlamba ngobisi,

Abanye behlamba ngamanzi.

'They who wash with milk

While others wash with water'

On these clan praise names of Chiya and Mthethwa they mean the girls of this family are very beautiful and they look like they bath with milk. On the second sentence, they mean they do not see any other clan that have beautiful girls like of Chiya. They emphasize that the females of these clans are more beautiful than others, as they say females of other clans look like they bath with water while theirs look like they bath with milk. On the second sentence, they mean they do not see any other females of other clans that can compete with theirs in terms of having beautiful females.

Other Sibiya clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:87):

AbakwaSibiya ngankomo

Abanye bebiya ngamahlahla

'They who make fence with private parts

While others fence with branches'

These clan praise names of Sibiya showed the wisdom of women of Sibiya as when the enemies came to kill Sibiya men. Women of Sibiya fence with their private parts and when the enemies saw the private parts they went back and stop what they aimed to do. Men of Sibiya's lives were saved by the females of this clan as enemies were about to kill them all. Men of Sibiya did not want to go and fight their enemies because they have realized that their enemies were more dangerous.

Other Mabaso clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:128):

Ulanga phuma sikothe

Abantungwa abahle

'The good looking one

The good looking Ntungwa people'

These clan praise names of Mabaso show the physical beauty of the women of this clan. The first sentence is directed to the females of Mabaso which has an idiom that talks about their beauty.

The sentence "*Ulanga-phuma sikothe*" is an idiom which best describes the beauty of Mabaso's females.

Other Hadebe clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:126):

Abakwazitho zimhlophe

Mashiya amahle

Niye nabuthathaphi ubuhle obunje?

'Of the people whose legs are white

And nice looking eyebrows

Where did you inherit this sort of perfect beauty?'

These clan praise names of Hadebe show the physical beauty of the females of this clan. Like the Ngcobo they measure physical beauty in terms of legs and eyebrows. They mean females of this clan are very beautiful naturally.

Other Mkhize clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:127):

Amambo amhlophe nezandla zawo noma

Mbo omhlophe othe qwa

'The white skinned MaMbo people even as to their hands Or

Spotlessly white skinned Mbo

These clan praise names of Mkhize show the physical beauty of the females of this clan. These clan praise names mean they measure physical beauty of females in terms of white skin in their body that is spotlessly. These clan praise names say females of Mkhize are light skinned which adds to their natural beauty.

Other Manana clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:127):

Liswati elihle lelimhlophe

Ondlebe tikhanya ilanga.

‘The Swazi who is white and good looking
Whose ears reflect in the sun.’

These clan praise names of Manana show the physical beauty of the females of this clan. The image of whiteness is used throughout the expression of females beauty and suggests spotless. They say on Manana’s clan praise names they have light skin. They believe white skin play an important role in a female’s beauty.

Other Mtshali clan praise names according to Mzolo (1977:128):

Ihlabangane elimhophe
Elinjengezihlabathi zolwandle
UHlabangane ozandla zimhlophe
Zinjengamasi avutshwe ngochwebeni
‘Hlabangane that is white
Like the sands of the sea
Hlabangane whose hands are as white
As sour milk mixed with purity.’

These clan praise names of Mtshali show the physical beauty of the females of this clan. On the clan praise names they say women of this clan are beautiful and simile is used when they say they are white like the sands of the sea. Zulu people use the simile of sands of the sea when they are referring to beautiful females.

Other Msweli clan praise names according to Malibe (2009:120):

Geza ngegolide abanye begeza ngodaka,
Sigeza ngenhla abanye bephuza ngezansi
‘They who wash with gold while others bathing with mud’
‘They who bath above and some drink below’

These clan praise names mean the females of Msweli are very beautiful; their beauty is as if they wash themselves with gold. They are even look like they bath on top of the river while others bath below. They say Msweli’s females look beautiful as if they bath first with water and others bath with the same water after they have bathed themselves.

5. Conclusion

The study revealed that women are very important to Zulu nation and their physical beauty need to be appreciated because they feel important about that. This study found that females can protect themselves by using their physical power or wisdom. Research findings indicate that Zulu nation highly respect females. Women are treated special to Zulu people because even if they are working and are paid more salary than their husbands but the Zulu culture says the men should support them unconditionally. Zulu culture says men should threat their wives like queens every day. In Zulu culture the man who cannot protect, support and take care of his wife is a useless man. Women like to be told by their husbands how beautiful they are daily because it makes them smile, feel happy and loved. The women role is important to Zulu nation because without them the nation won’t grow. Based on Zulu culture there is a belief that God created a man and a woman to ensure that the nation grow and Zulu people believe that one needs another to enjoy life in this earth.

In Zulu culture if you are a man you can have everything but if you do not have a wife, you are taken as you are not a man in good standing. A married man is more respected because they encourage men to marry and take care of their wives.

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