Interview Five - Student and young community member of Ga-Masemola (Pseudo name: Miss Student)

Agreed to recording; documentation of interview and disclosure of her identity.

We settled down and with her permission, I asked if we can start with the interview. The researcher then explained what the research study was about and the purpose of holding the interview and presenting the study information documents and interview consent forms. After all ethical matters were addressed, the researcher then begun the interview and recording thereof.

20 June 2022

Place: Her home residence

**‘Wena wati getela’**

Q1: What is tradition?

Tradition for me is about where I come from so, I don’t get lost. It informs me and others of where I come from, who I am and where we are located. When someone meets me, they are able to tell that I am BaPedi because of how I speak, what I am wearing and how I carry myself.

Tradition consists of my value system and what I believe in. Our ancestors pass their wisdom and knowledge through our traditions. Many secrets and truths are transmitted through our tradition.

‘Bu ela’, the things that you are ‘de ela’. These are protocols one should follow in their life journeys whether as a man or a woman. There are protocols for having children, marriage, death etc.

For example, when you are pregnant, it was taught that you should not stay at your parent’s home. You should rather carry your pregnancy term at a distant relative or your paternal family. It was believed that if you do not do this, you may give birth to an unwell child or a stillborn. This was to protect both the mother and the child against potential harm both seen and unseen.

Our surnames come from a long lineage of ancestors who had rights and responsivities in the community which were defined by these surnames. That’s why there is so much pride in our tradition because we can trace it back to our ancestors who lived before us through our surnames and duties in the community. That’s why it is important to know ‘se reto sa genu’. So, you can trace your family lineage and know where you come from.

Clothing, songs, language, folktales,

Our ancestors are mediators between us and the Supreme being. They are our middleman, that’s why we cannot forget them. We have to include them in anything we do.

Tradition is what brings us together. It is what keeps us united.

Q2: What does tradition mean?

It is your identity, your history, ‘se reto sa genu’ and ‘le mila’. It is the rules and protocols you follow in identifying yourself and the purpose of your life in your specific tradition.

Q3: What is the value of tradition?

It locates you with your people both physically and spiritually. It moulds you into a responsible member of society who can respect and coexist with others in your given community.

Q4: What is traditional authority?

‘Bokgoši’ is leadership of the people. People cannot lead themselves and a Kgoši cannot lead with those who follow him. So traditional authority is traditional leadership of the people according to their chosen customs and traditions.

If we all decided to lead ourselves, we would have problems, there would be chaos. There would be disorder. So, we need a divine leader, the custodian of the soil and land. Someone who is going to lead us according to how we want to be led. How we want to be led is informed by who we are, where we come from, where we are and the types of lives are ancestors lived.

It is the Kgoši who is birthed for this role and only he can lead us the people of Ga-Masemola. Not any other place but here.

Q5: Where does traditional authority come from?

Growing up we were taught that historically there were great wars and bloodshed for the royal position. A Kgosi was someone that could conquer and defeat others.

This is as much as I know about where our ‘Bokgoši’ comes from.

Q6: What is the basis of traditional authority?

Leadership and respect

Q7: What is a traditional community?

It is hard for me to say because I live in Ga-Masemola and this is the community I know. I do not call people who grow up in cities as township communities, so for me, a community is a community. Just because we are in Ga-Masemola where some might consider rural or underdeveloped, by nonetheless, we are a community.

The difference between this community and others is that we are guided by our customs and traditions, and the rules and protocols that come with those customs and traditions. This is what makes us a community. A common language, history, identity and how we love and respect each other in the pursuit of our lives. we hold similar values and belief systems.

Q8: What characterises traditional authority and traditional leaders in Ga-Masemola?

It is our traditional rules and laws. We are guided and led by ‘Mošate’. They are our elders.

Our tradition and customs teach us to respect, love, be empathetic and be united with each other. We exist as a community and not selfishly. We are characterised by having a Kgoši and ‘Mošate’ who led us through tradition and customs.

Q9: Why do you follow traditional authority?

Bokgoši ‘bu a alana’. Everyone in Ga-Masemola speaks the same language as me and looks like me. My parents were born here and many of my forefathers were ‘ndunas’ and foremen for royal kraals. This is how we choose to lead our lives.

Q11: How do you practice tradition?

Living in this community and following and adhering to the rules and protocols. I live peacefully with everyone and I respect everyone. I have also been to ‘dikomma’.

Q12: How would you describe a day in your life?

There is nothing different from my life and that of someone living in Mamelodi. The only difference is the leadership system I live under and where I live.

I live a normal life any daughter who is a student, lives with her parents and has children.

Q13: How would you describe Ga-Masemola?

It is a quiet community where the people are friendly and respectful. The people are humble and very hard working considering that we do everything for ourselves. Just because we need water, roads, and other things does not mean, we have stopped living.

It is a community of responsible people who know who they are and where they are going.

We find pride in practicing our customs like dikomma, we attend each other’s weddings and support each other through the different life stages that one goes through.

Q14: What are some of the challenges in the community?

The challenges affecting our communities are the same challenges affecting various black communities in South Africa, unemployment, lack of service delivery, lack of opportunities, lack of support from government and the undermining of our ‘Mošate’ by foreigners and the municipality.

I would say we do not have a municipality here. Most of our challenges can be fixed by the municipality because they are mandated to do the above, but because they undermine ‘Mošate’, they don’t provide for us. They don’t understand the ‘Mošate’ is a stand-alone.

We are suffering because we are led by a Kgosikgadi. We have chosen her as our leader and denying us services won’t make us choose the municipality because they have money. It will only draw us closer to her because she knows us and what we are going through as a community and she is there to listen, to mediate, to guide and to adjudicate between us.

It is the municipality’s job to create jobs. We are sent to the municipality to hand in our CVs, but we are never called back.

Q15: How would you go about fixing these problems?

We first have to have a municipality. The municipality has to include Kgošikgadi so that it is structured according to our communities. The current model of the municipal structures and systems is not working.

Everything we do in the community we involve our Kgosikgadi, so the municipality also have to include the ‘Mošate’ for it to work well. If the municipality can consult the Kgosikgadi and us in their projects, you going to see a big difference. Like us in the community, when we do anything, we consult. We consult our leaders and our community. This is so that people will support us in whatever we are doing or going through.

The problem is that the municipality and some of our leaders take money from people who come to the community to start businesses, but businesses that don’t grow or contribute to our community. We do not want people who are going to start businesses here and take our money to their home countries, we want parts of it to be re-invested in the community and environment where those businesses are operating. We want to be able to start our own businesses and create our own jobs. Whether through community- private partnerships or the community having shares in the projects that start in our community.

The problem now is that they don’t want us to be independent and do things for ourselves as young people. They want us to get R350 and child grant money, but for us not to be able to stand on our own. We can do things for ourselves, the problem is that we need financial support and skill development institutions.

We must build tertiary institutions here so we don’t have to travel to Pretoria or Polokwane for higher education. We need things to be built in the community, to support the community.

Q16: When do you approach a traditional leader? Why?

I have mentioned earlier that we do to our Kgosikgadi for various things, the things that can happen in our lives, we go to her. When we are hungry or thirsty, we go to her. We tell her we need jobs and water. Any challenge you can think of; we go to her.

Q17: Do you want to be governed by traditional authority? why?

Yes, our Kgosikgadi is very loving and supportive. I want to be led by her because she represents each and everyone one living in Ga-Masemola and the villages that are under her leadership. We live in peace here.

Life has many challenges, but, we know she will never forsake her role and her people. Living under a Kgoši means that our tradition and customs guide us in our everyday lives.

Q18: How does traditional authority govern the community?

Through our tradition and customs

Q20: Is it effective in governing the community?

Yes, because she is fulfilling her role as ‘Kgošikgadi’. We don’t fight amongst each other. We respect each other. We support each other and we have a common outlook to life.

Q21: What does it mean to be traditional community member?

It means to be part of a community which is built on a common history, identity, values and many other virtues which we the people of Ga-Masemola see as good and worthy of upholding

Q22: What is the value, if there is any. Of being a traditional community member?

You get to live out your true self, true identity and live in harmony and peace with others. We are principled people if I may say.

Q23: Should you be governed by traditional authority?

Yes.

Q24: Do you have a say in the governing of the community?

Yes

Q25: What kind of say?

I can participate in our community meetings and I can approach our Kgosikgadi when I experience problems in my life or in the community.

Q26: How do you perceive the relationship between traditional leaders and councillors?

It’s not good because the municipality undermines our Kgošikgadi. They undermine us people living in this community because we choose our tradition.

The municipality is non-existent in Ga-Masemola.

Q27: What problems do you encounter when working with traditional leaders?

In every leadership structure, you’ll find that even the leaders themselves do not always agree with each other. Even here in Ga-Masemola, we sometimes do not agree on matters with our leaders.

Some of them are greedy, some of them do not listen to us young people. Our problem is that we don’t always agree with each other or see things the same way in matters like the Mall project.

With the Mall project, the community had agreed that we need a mall and the matter was finalised that there would be a mall. But it ended up not happening. Some people have said that the problem was some elders in the ‘Mošate’, others say it was taxi drivers who stopped the project.

‘Bokgomane’ can stop a project from happening because they are our senior elders and have authority in the community. This can be good or bad, depending on the reasons why they stop projects. We as a community if we decide on something together, no one except the ‘Kgoši’, must be able to turnover our decision. With the mall project, we still do not know the reasons for it not happening.

If the Kgoši and the ‘Bakgomane’ do not approve of you or your project, it means that you will never be able to start something in the community. If one person from the above does not like you, they can influence your things negatively because of their authority, which is a problem.

Their decisions are final in the community, even if those decisions are detrimental to us as unemployed people, there is nothing you can do about it because they are our Traditional Authority.

More can be done by our leaders to fight for our community needs. We need our leaders to also start realizing that they have the power to lobby for the community in places where we as people do not reach. They are in the position of meeting decision makers.

Q28: What problems do you encounter when working with councillors?

They do not listen to us, they always make promises, but do not keep them.

Q29: From your experience, is the partnership between traditional leaders and municipal officials effective?

No, we do not have a municipality here.

Q31: Why do you say so?

They think they are superior than our Kgosikgadi. They want bribes for them to do good in our community.

Q32: According to you, how can traditional leadership play a more significant role in the

community?

The way that the municipality operates now must be reconsidered because they have structures like those of ‘Bokgoši’ and it’s not right. They must work together with our ‘Kgoši’s and not compete with them.

I believe that all of those who are part of our Traditional authority agreed and worked together, our interests in the municipality would be heard.

Q33: What are the factors that have hindered the effective cooperation between

traditional leaders in this area?

I believe greed. Some of them also take bribes like the municipality. They allow certain people to do things and do not allow others. They give projects and business permits to their relatives only.

Q34: From your experience, to what extent does traditional authority play a role service

delivery and development in the village?

When we have a problem about water, we take it to her. We take it to her because she will take it up with the municipality because they do not listen to us.

The Kgosikgadi does not have the resources to do things for us, but she takes up our matters with the ones who should be bringing service delivery.

Q35: How can a more meaningful and dynamic relationship be created between traditional leadership and the relevant role players in local and rural governance?

The different leaders in the community work together, especially our Kgošikgadi. She attends all invitations from churches, schools, the clinic and other leaders in the community.

I believe if we can work together on matters, we would go far. The problem now is that people are competing with ‘Mošate’, even some of the ‘Bakgomane’ and that causes problems. The problem now is that everyone is competing with Kgošikgadi and there is not agreement between people who practice diKomma and Christians because Christians think they are closer to God, forgetting we are all the Kgošikgadi’s children and God’s children. If we can prioritize the things of the community and not of the church or western education, we will achieve more.

The people of the community believe in education and taking their children to school. But, we do not consider where these children will work after their qualifications. We must unit in community governance and development. We must all work together.

Q36: In your opinion, what does the practice of traditional customs give rise to in the

community?

Q37: How would you describe the relationship between traditional leaders and other

leaders in the community? (Religious, educators, etc)

Q39: Do you know about the Native Administration Act of 1927?

No

Q40: Do you know of any colonial or apartheid policies or legislations?

No, I just know the constitution.

Q41: Is there anything you would like to add?

We need a municipality to do the things they promise to do because we pay extra now because we don’t have water, we are unemployed and the community is experiencing problems because of new people who have come here. ‘Bokgoši’ can bring about a better change because of what the structure represents. But, even if our ‘Mošate’ is tasked with service delivery. We in the community will want to be part of the structures. The ‘Mošate’ can be the senior leaders, but the community and the ‘Mošate’ will have equal say in finances, development projects and all the other functions that we might want. They will be our Traditional Authority, but we as the community we form part of the economic and development committees. This is so that no one has more power than the other one when it comes to resources and economic and development decisions.