Interview Seven - Retired teacher, community leader and member of Ga-Masemola (Pseudo name: Mr Teacher)

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

22 June 2022

Place: Masemola Traditional Council Court Hall

Q1: What is tradition?

Tradition is the norms and customs, the things that nations follow, when they do the things concerning that nation.

It can attire, it can be activities like songs, our culture of institution of Komma for boys and girls at a certain stage of their lives. It is the things that people voluntary follow without coercion or force.

Q2: What does tradition mean?

It is the presence of order and not chaos. Continuing with the things that work to maintain order and stability

Q3: What is the value of tradition?

We get to continue with the customs and culture that we were born into.

For example here in Ga-Masemola, on the seventh month, we do not conduct weddings. It is a practice for long ago that we continue to practice. When I was born, I found this already being practiced. So I followed this law.

You get to continue with the things that work and bring order and stability in the community

Q4: What is traditional authority?

‘Bogoshi’ is leadership.

Q5: Where does traditional authority come from?

It originates from the royal bloodlines. So bloodlines from the ‘Mošate’. If you are born from a Kgoši, you can be Kgoši.

With us we have a Kgoši who marries his principle wife, from another royal kraal. He can marry ten or twenty wives, but they cannot bear the next ‘Kgoši’. He has to marry the one we call the candle wife. The candle wife, will give birth to the next Kgoši.

Q6: What is the basis of traditional authority?

We have the Kgoši as the ruler and then we have his subjects. They are ‘Bakgoma’ and ‘Bakgamana’. The children of the Kgoši who are not diKgoši. They form the foundation of the Royal Council. They are the advisors to the Kgoši.

Here is the structure:

Kgoši and Makgoši

Bakgoma (sons of the Kgoši but they are not entitled to rule)

Bakgomana (their fathers were Bakgoma, the children, they assist the Bakgoma)

DiKgoro (clans- groups of clans that make up Masemola- they assist the Kgoši. A Kgoši cannot make a final decision without consulting dikgoro)

Community

Q7: What is a traditional community?

A community which falls under a Kgoši. The municipality does not have control over this community.

There may be councillors and a mayor, however, the ruler is the Kgoši.

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

Leading in good faith. They have love and respect for people. They want to serve people.

There has to be continuity and safeguard of our traditions and they ensure that.

Q9: Why do you follow/ obey traditional authority?

This thing called a precedent, you find it existing. You are born into a family which also fought these precedents. You follow the protocols and customs you found existing or prevailing where you are born.

Here this precedent is respecting the Kgoši. There is this saying which goes ‘mo ngatja Kgoši, ke mo tlogi’, meaning that if you don’t follow the directives of the Kgoši, you better leave.

You cannot break the chain.

Q11: How do you practice tradition?

I am aware of the things that are happening in the village. For example if there is a death case in the community, I have to go there and see the bereaved family.

If the Kgoši would like to see me, I have to go see her and practice being obedient. I have to practice my tradition by going to her. If she would like to send me somewhere or task me with something, I have to oblige and show that I respect her. I have to obey without problems, unless I have a reasonable reason as to why I cannot fulfil what she has asked of me.

Q13: How would you describe Ga-Masemola?

I was born here, I live here. The people of Ga-Masemola are peace loving. They respect the Kgoši and each other.

We will never hear that the people are marching or protesting. We follow our rules.

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

There are many challenges, water shortage, loadshedding, dirt roads, unemployment especially the youth, it’s very high.

Q15: How would you go about fixing these problems?

We try in many ways, if we know there is someone looking to employ people or start a project that could create employment, we communicate with those without jobs and share the job specifications and encourage them to apply or contact the project owner.

We have committees in the community which are tasked with for example the water crises.

Before the community would hold regular meeting where we would gather together and discuss our issues and concerns and come up with solutions.

Now this role has been taken over by the municipality, however, they do not do so.

We now take up matters to the councillors in the community.

There is no point in taking matters such as the water crisis to the Kgoši because she has no authority or power or the resources to fix these challenges. She does not have the ability to supply people with water.

So we have to wait on the municipality to take action on such challenges. It is they role.

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

When we want new projects like funding projects. When the roads get bad to approach her to approach the municipality on our behave to push the mayor to do something. Her role is limited to only advising the municipality, so we ask her to table our concerns for us at that level.

When we want her and the Royal Family to be aware of something in the community.

We also approach her and offer advice on some decisions taken or to be taken.

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

Yes

Why?

There is order, stability and continuity.

Q18:How does traditional authority govern the community?

Through customs and the accompanying practices and laws, respect, love and consultation.

Q20: Is it effective in governing the community?

Yes, in as far as her roles in the community. she is leading properly.

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

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

Q23: Should you be governed by traditional authority?

Yes

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

Yes, because if there are burning issues or problems in the community, they use to call us all. Come and advise us. Abuse cases, cases between husband and wife.

Q25: What kind of say?

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

It differs between people; however, ninety percentage of the people respect each other. They may hold different views or work different and do not agree on these things, but on a people-to-people basis, they respect each other.

They are fighting politically, but not in their co-existence. Difference of ideas only.

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

When you approach our leaders, they will not easily say no to you. They will listen and advise you accordingly.

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

The problem is that the municipality deals with political issues, so if you do not belong to their party, it rises problems for you. However, we can advise them sometimes on issues without political issues affecting their ability to listen to you.

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

No because often do not consult diKgoši and this has consequences for any planned project. They do not work together with diKgoši.

Q31: Why do you say so?

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

community?

Traditional councils are not compensated enough, they only get a stipend. If the municipality could have a budge for them, they will be better position to help even more people.

In Ga-Masemola, our traditional council adjudicates everyday matters between community members. They really help the community, and the Kgoši. They also allocate stands, but they only receive R500 each month. They leave their homes, workplaces, to come and attend to people every Tuesday and Thursday.

The majority of those who attend and sit in are unemployed and uneducated. If there was a budget, the Kgoši could appoint them and compensate them with enough.

That’s why some even take bribes from stands, because they need the money. R500 cannot support a family, but R1500 can help alleviate people’s situations. People can sacrifice and attend

Q33: What are the factors that have hindered the effective cooperation between traditional leaders in this area?

Lack of resources to compensate traditional equitably. These people work on a voluntary basis, so their frustrations that some receive a stipend while others do not. People need something to take home.

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

delivery and development in the village?

In the delivering of service, our traditional leaders play a role because the communicate with the Kgoši when there are needs in the community. she takes matters further either with the councillor involved or the major. People tend to attend meetings called by the municipality when she specifically askes him or is in attendance herself. She encourages people to engage with the municipality and also engages on their behalf with the municipality.

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

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

Order, peace and continuity.

Q37: How would you describe the relationship between traditional leaders and other leaders in the community? (Religious, educators, etc)

There is respect as I have said earlier between our Kgoši and other leaders because we all respect our ‘Moshate’. We may not agree on political or religious issues or even understand each other, but we still respect one another.

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

No I do not know it.

Q40: What can you tell me about it?

Q41: Is there anything you would like to add?

The role of legislation is to give guidance to diKgoši and their traditional councils. It guides them on how to do things according to the Constitution. If you contravene the laws of the constitution, you may be dethroned, prosecuted, arrested or be fined.

It guides them in relation to development, acquiring funds, etc.

Bokgoši has changed significantly after 1994, many things have changed. Before ‘Bogoshi’ was depended on the community’s contributions. We call these ‘madume’. You go to ‘Moshate’ one contributes R2, the other R20. The Kgoši depended on that. But presently, Magoshi get a government salary monthly. On top of that they get transport, subsidized cars.

BRAIN WASHING- AN African person cannot write a good book. We have historians who can write, because the whites own the printing system. They decide who can write and print their stories.