



**Midlands State University**  
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**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

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**GROWING UP IN A HLENGWE SOCIETY: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF  
CHILDHOOD IN MWENEZI DISTRICT SOUTHERN ZIMBABWE**

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**BY**

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**A Dissertation submitted to the Midlands State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of Bachelor of Arts in History Honours Degree**



**MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear family members Linda Tongwashe and Senzeni Mpfu. To my late father (ElekiaMpfu) and mother (Violet Nkomo), ndinoti zororai murugare vabereki vangu. I also dedicate it to Br J Kamwana who acted as my father since 2006 and sponsored me.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

A.I.C	African Initiated Churches
BR	Brother
D. A	District Administrator
M.C	Male Circumcision
N.C	Native Commissioner
N.A.Z	National Archives of Zimbabwe
T.T.L	Tribal Trust Land

## **ABSTRACT**

*A Social History of Childhood in Mwenezi district is a detailed study of human evolution from birth to puberty. The Zimbabwean definition of a child as anyone below the age of 18 was used in this research. For the sake of knowing who are the Hlengwe the researcher starts by giving the History of the Hlengwe. First chapter gives a full detailed research about the origins, migrations, effects of Mfecane on Hlengwe societies, coming of colonialism and economic disempowerment of the Hlengwe and a detailed research about the Chitanga dynasty. The second chapter will discuss the social life of a child from birth to weaning. Issues such as the principle of naming the child, birth of illegitimate children, curse of twins, diet, medication, weaning among others. The third chapter will discuss the social life of child from weaning to puberty. Here the research discusses informal education in the form of taboos, riddles, proverbs and games. Girls' initiation (khomba) and male circumcision (ngoma) and the marriage custom will also discuss. After a description of a human being from birth to puberty a brief of undesirable practices (harmful social practices) will be given. These include marriage by abduction, girls' initiation, property inheritance, marriage via the Holy Spirit, appeasing the avenging spirits using human being among them. Finally the research will discuss the changes on the undesirable social practices due to modern influences such as the idea of children's rights. The way forward to the undesirable social practices which are still practiced is also discussed.*



## **INTRODUCTION**

When colonialist settled in Zimbabwe, they divided the country into two parts which were Mashonaland and Matabeleland. They forgotten that not all people in Mashonaland are Shona people and not all in Matabeleland are Ndebele people. This resulted in everything being ‘Shonalised’ in Mashonaland. When historians write history they had forgotten a tribe which is rich with cultural heritage and that forgotten ethnic group is the Hlengwe.

It is now the role of this research to write a social history about the forgotten ethnic group. Historians and oral traditions clam that the Hlengwe people are part and parcel of the Tsonga people. In Zimbabwe, the Hlengwe inhabit parts of the south east Lowveld which is part of the low lying country and includes most of Mozambique between the Save and Limpopo Rivers. Most of the Hlengwe population of the Lowveld lives on islands or along some of the great rivers that flows through the Lowveld namely the Bubi, the Lundi, the Mwenezi and the Shengane in Mozambique. This research is an attempt to give an elaborate social history of childhood among the Hlengwe which now the main ethnic group in Mwenezi southern Zimbabwe. This ethnic is largely neglected by scholars but its rich with cultural heritage.

Therefore it is now the objective of this research to reveal the social life-hood. The dissertation will be particularistic and deal with Hlengwe under chief Chitanga in Mwenezi. The researcher commenced by giving a detailed history on the origins, penetration into Zimbabwe, coming of colonialism and displacements of the Hlengwe by settlers. The Chitanga dynasty will also be elaborated.



The social life of childhood can be traced from the day of birth to marriage. The role of indigenous knowledge systems in the life of the Hlengwe will be analyzed. The traditional hospitals and the role of the midwives will be evaluated. The children of the Hlengwe were not named without certain considerations. A name is something that should be earned, not given in a silver plate. The principles used in naming their children will be highlighted. It was their culture that a child must be given gifts in the form of money and other material. The purpose of the gifts will be highlighted. Hlengwe people survived by traditional medicines and the power of traditional healers were appreciated. Their medications will be discussed with special attention to nhova and ruzoka.

After weaning children were sent to their grandparents to stay there. With their grandparents they were being taught several duties. The role of children, informal education, body marks and initiations at the puberty stage which are regarded as a preparation for a life as an adult member of the society will be discussed.

Not all social practices in a society are beneficial to everybody. There are some of the practices which are harmful to children such as marriage via the Holy Spirit, child pledging, appeasing of the avenging sprits using human beings among others will also discussed. Strategic measures by the government and non-governmental organisations to mitigate child abuses will also discussed.

## **The area of study**

Mwenezi is a small district situated in southern Zimbabwe. It is bisected by the River and the A4 highway, the main thoroughfare that connects the town of Beitbridge, on the border with South Africa, to Masvingo. The district was divided into two parts for political reasons, namely Mwenezi West and Mwenezi East. The research focuses on Mwenezi east. The Hlengwe under Chief Chitanga will be studied.

## **Statement of problem**

Legal scholars and historians have tried to deepen our understanding of the Hlengwe people in post-colonial Zimbabwe but the social history of childhood has not attracted the same research interest and attention.

The researcher found it interesting to investigate and analyse the social history of childhood of the Hlengwe under chief Chitanga in Mwenezi District. The aim of this research is to discuss the social organization of the Hlengwe focusing on children from mother's womb to the puberty stage. The fact that Shangani/Hlengwe is considered as a minor language it is marginalized yet it had useful activities which are still in use today.

## **Purpose of the Study**

### **Aim**

- The research seeks to fill the knowledge of the social life of the Hlengwe from birth to puberty stage

## **Objectives**

### **To**

- Trace the origins of the Hlengwe and their settlements in Zimbabwe.
- Analyze the evolution of man from birth to weaning.
- Evaluate the transformation of child into adulthood.
- To analyze child abuses and measures to mitigate those abuses.

### **Research was guided by the following Questions.**

- What are the stories related to the origins of the Hlengwe?
- What are the traditional ways of child upbringing?
- What is done to transform children into adulthood?
- What are the similarities and differences Hlengwe male circumcision and modern circumcision?
- What amendments should be done to enhance children rights on a Hlengwe society?

### **A Review of available Literature**

Tarugarira has noted that, the Europeans imposed their languages and discarded the indigenous languages as gibberish or gimcrack. Culture clashes and contestations which characterized imperialist battles in Africa denigrated indigenous and some of these languages ultimately perished into unrecorded oblivion<sup>1</sup>. Hlengwe is one of the languages which were turned into Shona by the colonial government. Most of the researches therefore focus on the Shona forget to write History of the Hlengwe.

Bannerman was the first person to give detailed studies of the Hlengwe of the Lowveld in Zimbabwe. He traced their origins using Henri-Junod's research. He traced them from Mozambique. He also tried to give a proper ethnical identification of the Hlengwe by arguing that they are not Shangaan people.<sup>2</sup> This false ethnical identification persisted even in this modern world. The only problem with Bannerman is that he only focused on political issues.

Allan Wright who was a native commissioner in Nuanesti recorded how he dealt with the Hlengwe from 1958 to 1968. He failed to record the social life of the Hlengwe. As a district commissioner he failed to acknowledge children in his writings.

William Wolmer studied the Hlengwe and he mainly focused on the economic aspect of the Hlengwe.<sup>4</sup> This means that the social life of the Hlengwe was neglected by scholars and it needs scholarly research.

T H Chisi gives a detailed study about how the Hlengwe were economically disempowered by the colonialist<sup>5</sup>. He also gave detailed information on their pre-colonial economic activities. But still he ignored children and the social aspect

Junod's research on life of the Bantu was based on the culture of southern African tribes. In his research he talked about the different cultures of many black tribes of Southern Africa. He did not get into too much detail on their lives as he had to talk about so many cultures.<sup>6</sup> During his time some of the tribes were not yet fully developed like the "Hlengwe Tribe, which he referred to as the "Tsongas or Tongas".

However the afore-mentioned scholars failed to appreciate the role of children in the society. This research will try to expand on what other authorities or researchers have already done, but it is going to look at the issue of social from another angle. Using their works I decided to come up with a detailed research of social history of childhood among the Hlengwe under chief Chitanga in Mwenezi East.

## **Research Methodology**

According to F Sibanda, the Hlengwe/ Shangani community is a closed society to ‘outsiders’ this can hinder the researcher from getting correct information<sup>6</sup>. Hlengwe people are not comfortable to share their social life. The researcher decided to use interdisciplinary approaches in collecting data between June and October 2014 among the Hlengwe in Mwenezi district. Primary sources in the forms of official documents produced by settlers, archival files and newspapers found in the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) were used. These include books written by J.H Bannerman, B. Bvekenya, H Junod, A. Wright and many others.

### **Personal interviews**

The research will be conducted through an interview. Data to be collected will be from primary sources who are people who are the custodians of Hlengwe culture. Interviews to be conducted will be of open-ended type or what is called in-depth interview, which allows the respondent to give as much information as possible without any form of limitation. This form of interview is comprised of unstructured and semi structured questions. The questions will give respondents latitude to answer in their own way and viewpoint. They will be free to tell their story or allowed to respond at length without any limit to the information sought.

Hlengwe to be interviewed will be approximately 30. These will be selected as follows:

- 10 village heads will be interviewed for the origins of the Hlengwe.
- 10 old female and male will be interviewed for social activities.
- 10 children will be interviewed for their experiences.

Secondary sources such as dissertations, journals and newspapers will also be used where necessary.

### **Research ethics**

To ensure confidence among the interviewees the researcher will reveal his ethnicity. Interviewees will tell the use of the information which they are giving the researcher.

### **Significance of the study**

Despite the volumes of studies by anthropologists, ethnographers and historians no one tried to focused on the Social History of Childhood in Mwenezi. The significance of this study lies in its approach of the Hlengwe. This research seeks to reveal the social history of childhood and it links social practices to indigenous knowledge systems. This will go beyond the existing sheer increment of positivistic narratives that only serve to discuss the economic and political history of the Hlengwe. It is hoped that the study shall proffer objective and impartial information regarding the resilience of traditional social analysis situated in a scientific understanding of the Hlengwe and transformation due to the ideas of human rights.

## **Scope of the study**

### **Introductory chapter**

#### **Chapter One: History of the Hlengwe**

The chapter traces the origins of the Hlengwe, their migrations and penetrations into Zimbabwe, the effects of Mfecane on Hlengwe communities, coming of colonialism and displacements of the Hlengwe, give a detailed history of Chitanga dynasty, Chitanga communities after the third Chimurenga.

#### **Chapter Two: Upbringing of Hlengwe Children under Chief Chitanga From birth to weaning**

The social life of Hlengwe children from birth to weaning with special references to traditional birthing, twins sacrifices, naming of child, treatment of Chinyokola, nursing, diet and traditional weaning.

#### **Chapter Three: From weaning to puberty**

The transformation of a child from childhood into adulthood will be discussed. The major aspects to be discussed are traditional dressing, body marks, and roles of children, informal education and initiations (Khomba and Murundu).

#### **Chapter Four: Children abuses and measures to mitigate them**

The chapter discusses the abuses of children by the Hlengwe. Abuses of children such as appeasing avenging spirits using honest souls, marriage via the 'Holy Spirit', wife and husband inheritance among others. The chapter concludes by give measures to mitigate child abuses.

## **Summary and conclusion**



### **Limitations of the study**

A number of factors may hinder the research to be properly carried out and these are as follows:

- Securing financial resources is likely to be problematic in this area of study;
- Distance and importantly time might be a problem due to college commitments;
- Since a little has been written about the Hlengwe especially in Mwenezi ,lack of literature for desk review will cause problems ,to the researcher to entirely conduct the innermost of the research;
- The study relies much on the willingness of the elders of the Chitanga community to disclose their information.
- Language can also be the hindering factor since the researcher is Karanga grown in a Hlengwe community. Shangani is mostly maintained in family and community circles, chiefly as a spoken language with no publications produced in it in Zimbabwe. The only written material in it consists of texts such as informal letters by literate speakers using their own orthographies

## END NOTES

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5. F.Sibanda: Beyond Identity Scars: Reflection on the Vitality of Shangani Male Circumcision in the Context of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, Journal of Emerging Trend in Educational Research and Policy Studies 4(1)
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## **CHAPTER 1: HISTORY OF THE HLENGWE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is an attempt to give a detailed history of the Hlengwe. The researcher gives views of different scholars on the origins on the Hlengwe. The chapter traced the Hlengwe from Mozambique and their penetration into Zimbabwe using relevant sources and oral interviews. After discussing the migrations of the Hlengwe and their penetration into Zimbabwe Hlengwe pre-colonial societies will be analyzed. As the researcher is more interested on the Hlengwe under Chitanga, Chitanga society will be discussed in detail.

To commence with, Hlengwe is a sub-dialect of the Tsonga which means wealth. The Hlengwe dialect is a transition between standard Tsonga and Tshwa<sup>1</sup>. According to Jordan the Hlengwe stem from the northern of the six main clans of the Tsonga which now occupies Portuguese East Africa from the Sabi River down to St Lucia Bay.<sup>2</sup> Their territory extends east of Bubi River into Northern Transvaal and Portuguese territory south of the Sabi River. In Zimbabwe, the Hlengwe inhabit parts of the south east Lowveld which is part of the low lying country and includes most of Mozambique between the Save and Limpopo Rivers.<sup>3</sup> Most of the Hlengwe population of the Lowveld lives on islands or along some of the great rivers that flows through the Lowveld namely the Bubi, the Lundi, the Mwenezi and the Shengane in Mozambique.<sup>4</sup>

First the Hlengwe societies both in Mozambique and Zimbabwe were disturbed by the Mfecane. First they were defeated by the Shangaan and began to be referred as the Shangaan. Second it was the Ndebele who made them their raiding and tributary state.<sup>5</sup> Finally it was colonialism

which gave them a final blow. Their colonialist removed them from their areas. This resulted in the separation of the Hlengwe people.

There is a significant paradox in these Hlengweni areas, the Save-Runde and Mwenezi River sub-regions, is that in both Hlengwe perceived their forced removal as a loss of heritage – they left behind their hunting grounds, religious shrines, birthplaces and so on – such that the two areas continued to have a heritage value long after their original inhabitants had lost them.<sup>6</sup> Their feelings are minutely recorded in written colonial sources, and their conception of heritage, submerged by dominant white discourse on what and who ought to determine heritage, remains consigned to memory and minute record.

## **1.1 ORIGINS OF THE HLENGWE**

Bannerman traced the origins of the Hlengwe from Mozambique and he said they stayed there for the whole part of the second millennium.<sup>7</sup> Others argued that they were once staying in South Africa in the Transvaal region especially in the Kwa-Zulu Natal area. According to Hlengani Mabasa and Mukhacani Maluleke, archaeological evidence points to a continuous occupation of the areas between St Lucia Bay and all land as far as the Lebombo (Livombo) mountains.<sup>8</sup> This was from at least the thirteenth century, probably at 1250.

Early Portuguese documents of shipwreck sailors indicate that Tsonga Communities were already based between Maputo and Saint Lucia Bay by 1550<sup>9</sup>. Scholars who traced the Hlengwe from the Transvaal they gave Nqaba as the big chief. Hlengwe oral traditions also claim that the Hlengwe were part of Ronga of Northern KZN and Maputo region of Mozambique.<sup>10</sup>

Bannerman and Junod believed that Tsauke was the first king of the Hlengwe.<sup>11</sup> Junod argued that, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century or early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Tsauke their first king moved towards the Shengane River.<sup>12</sup> In the Shengane River they met another Tsonga clan called the Sono. Tshauke became married to a Sono daughter who the chief of the Sono by that time. They spend many years staying with Sono in a cordial relationship. The Sono knew how to cook their food, the Hlengwe did not: they were still ignorant of fire and used to eat their porridge raw (uncooked food). This brought more problems than solutions to their relationship. The son of Tshauke who was later referred as Shioki Xhahumba stole a glowing cinder from the Sono and brought it home in a big shell. The Sono were unhappy with the stealing of fire and declared war on the Hlengwe. It was unfortunate for the Sono because the Hlengwe, having gained new strength because they had been eating cooked food, won the victory.<sup>13</sup> After the defeat of the Sono they were forced to move eastward which was far away from the Hlengwe.

According to Junod quoted by Bannerman the interaction of the Hlengwe with the Sono brought about the origins of the Tsauke / Mlilo stories which are still believed in. Junod goes on to say that by this time the Hlengwe were divided into four main clans, namely the Tsauke, Mbezana, the Mavube and the Magumane. They claim ancestry from Xigombe, Sengwe, Chikwarakwara, Vurumela, Chitanga, Mpapa and Magudu.<sup>15</sup> There is a general belief that Matsena was their last common ancestor.

## **1.2 MIGRATION OF THE HLENGWE INTO ZIMBABWE**

Hlengwe penetration into Zimbabwe has not received much of scholarly interest. Scholars, who tried to give a detailed study about Hlengwe migration into Zimbabwe, agreed that the Hlengwe

migrated from Mozambique into Zimbabwe in two groups. This was probably during the time of Matsena. Bannerman using Junod's work argues that during the time of Matsena one group of Hlengwe under Xigombe started to infiltrate into Rhodesia along Nuanetsi and Chengane / Chefu River.<sup>16</sup> Matsena died in AD 1751 according to Bannerman. He came out with this date using Junod's 30years as the average number of years in a generation of Hlengwe chiefdom. Other Hlengwe chiefs had separated from Xigombe and entered Rhodesia in the Save/ Lundi junction area and settled in the Chiredzi, Sangwe and Ndanga areas. These were Sengwe, Tsovani and Chitsa. Wolmer believe that the Hlengwe people first advanced up the Lowveld rivers (Save, Runde, Chiredzi, Mkwadini and Limpopo) from the coast of Mozambique into south-eastern Zimbabwe.<sup>17</sup>

On the other side Houser quoted by Bannerman confirms this intrusion of the Hlengwe and said that one drive occurred in the Save-Lundi area and the other up the Limpopo into the Pfumbi area of chief Matibi.<sup>18</sup> There they find Vanyai of the Shoko totem in the area north of the Limpopo which was called Banyailand. The Nyai people were defeated by the Hlengwe. The defeat of the Nyai by the Hlengwe was detailed by Smith and Beach who say that the Hlengwe migrated into south eastern Zimbabwe and conquered its inhabitants between 1750 and 1850.<sup>19</sup>

Nowadays people confused the Hlengwe with the Shangaan of Soshangani. A detailed study of the results of the Mfecane proved that, the Hlengwe entered into Rhodesia prior to the rise of the Gaza Empire of Soshangani. According to Bannerman, the Hlengwe entered Rhodesia from Mozambique prior to the rise of the Gaza kingdom and their migration was from areas comparatively close to Zimbabwe where Hlengwe people had been living for many centuries,

speaking their own Tsonga dialect. This was probably eighty to hundred (80-100) years before the turbulent Mfecane.<sup>20</sup> He goes on to say they entered Rhodesia in two groups at that time a Southern group entering along the lower Nuanetsi/Mwenezi and a northern group entering around the Save-Lundi junction. NC Forrestall at Chibi believed that the ancestors of the Chitanga and Vurumela dynasties entered Rhodesia at the same time and separated at the same time of Hokwane.<sup>21</sup> Wright also believed that the sub-chief called Ngwena led the Hlengwe in Present day Zimbabwe.<sup>22</sup> However it needs to be noted that Wright only give Ngwena as the sub-chief who came with the Hlengwe into Zimbabwe because he worked with the Chitanga dynasty.

It is historically proved that for all the centuries the Hlengwe stayed in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, they have assimilated other cultural groups who came to live with them in the South East Africa region. These included the Shona (Tembe-Karanga and Baloyi), the Sotho (Shiburi/Xivuri), the Manganyi, the Mazibuko (Mabunda and Maswanganyi), the Chopi and Ndaou (Mashaba, Sithole, Moyana, Miyambu and Simango).<sup>23</sup>

### **1.3 PRE-COLONIAL HLENGWE SOCIETY IN ZIMBABWE**

When the Hlengwe arrived into Zimbabwe they found it being scarcely occupied by the Shona. This was the time when the Rozvi state was no longer powerful after the death of Mambo Dombo Lakona Chingwangu.<sup>24</sup> They overcame or assimilated the Shona populations that were thinly scattered along the rivers or permanent sources of water where high relief meant there was slightly more rainfall. Bannerman also believed that when the Hlengwe came into south-eastern Zimbabwe they found it being occupied by the Ndaou and the Pfumbi. They invaded the area and displaced the Ndaou and Pfumbi.<sup>25</sup> These Shona people were either adopted the Hlengwe dialect

and culture or withdrew into the highlands. For instance the Shona people were push away from their important ancestral shrine called Gonakudzingwa of the Mapokole lineage.<sup>26</sup>

By this time it was generally agreed that the Hlengwe were divide into three sections which composed of the ruling class of Chauke clan with nzilo or fire as their totem and humba (snail) who were Tsonga speaking. This clan is still in leadership today. They were followed by the Hlungwana or Sono of the Tihlanga (reeds) totem. The third were the Nyai and the Baloyi and the Nyai were the Shona and the Baloyi were of Shoko totem.<sup>27</sup> Both Hlengwe dynasties traced from the following ancestors. Thus from Chauke, Xioko Xhahumba, Xinyorhi Xhahumba, Tsandza Chawani, Nyox Yamalwani, Xitsaka Chamipfi, Kanga Tsela RiByeni, Bangwani, Matsena.

Before the colonization and subsequent land apportionment of Zimbabwe, the Hlengwe were a riverine people, mainly found along the Mutirikwe, Runde, Save, Mwenezi, Bezi, Mukwasini, and Chiredzi rivers. Some were found mostly around the larger hills such as Bendezi, Mateke, Sagwari and Chivumburu where rainfall was slightly higher.<sup>28</sup>

Chitsa and his people had for close to a century lived in the area that is now called Gonarezhou, south of the Chilonja Hills between the Save, Runde and Chiredzi Rivers. Their area extended to the Save-Runde Junction close to Mozambique. Their neighbors were the Mahenye people who lived south of Ndowoyo.<sup>29</sup>



Chitanga and Mpapa were living in the so called 'European ranching' area between the main Beitbridge-Harare road and the present day Matibi Tribal Trust Land. According to Jordan they came from the Chivumburu Hill on the Cold Storage Commission ranch.<sup>30</sup> According to Wright Chitanga was recognized as the senior chief of the Shangaan of Matibi and of all the lands enclosed by the Lundi and the Nuanetsi rivers and the Portuguese borders. He had three headmen which were Mpapa, Msuvamele and Chilonga. Chief Sengwe lived in Sengwe area and Wright believed that he was the headman of Gezani and Samu in the lower Nuanetsi near Malipati.<sup>31</sup> Dumbo who was related to Chitanga lived north of the Nuanetsi River.

#### **1.4 EFFECTS OF MFECANE MIGRATIONS ON THE HLENGWE SOCIETY**

It was Mfecane and its consequences which challenged the organization of the Hlengwe in Zimbabwe. First it was Soshangani Kozhikode (born Soshangani Nxumalo) who was a commanding general of the Ndwandwe army under King Zwide kaLanga. Following the defeat of Zwide's army at the Battle of Mhlatuze River by King Shaka of the Zulu, Soshangani had realized that he won't be safe in Zululand, he decided to lead a remnant of the army and of the Ndwandwe people northwards away from Shaka's Zulu hegemony.<sup>32</sup> He carved out an Nguni empire of conquest known as the Gaza Empire (or Gaza), named after his grandfather, which would later significantly expand to cover areas over present day southern Mozambique, parts of Mpumalanga and Limpopo in South Africa. The rise of the Gaza Kingdom was based primarily on military conquests, particularly the Hlengwe and Ndaus peoples, who would be absorbed into the Nguni Gaza Kingdom.<sup>33</sup>

The Gaza Kingdom comprised parts of what are now southeastern Zimbabwe, as well as extending from the Sabi River down to the southern part of Mozambique, covering parts of the current provinces of Sofala, Manica, Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo, and neighboring parts of South Africa. The Gaza Empire brought more problems than solutions in history.<sup>34</sup>

The rulers of the Gaza Empire challenged the Hlengwe and changed their social organization. First the Hlengwe were defeated by Soshangane and became a tributary state to the Gaza Empire up until the time of Mzila. The Hlengwe and other defeated groups adopted the culture of the Shangaan. It was because in the Gaza Nguni Empire some Hlengwe occupied a secondary status in the social stratum as *baShangane*, subjects of Soshangane.<sup>35</sup>

It was in this social pyramid that a false historiography had begun concerning the Hlengwe and other conquered groups which were now identified as the Shangaan people. They are commonly referred to as the 'Shangaan', yet that is distortions of the truth for the Hlengwe were not originally Shangaan people. The identity of the Hlengwe became problematic up until now. Historians and other players began to call the Hlengwe people the Shangaan. The word Hlengwe became less used and the term Shangaan became more frequent.<sup>36</sup> Even the Hlengwe people they began to call themselves *baShangane*.

According to Wolmer the term Shangaan came to be adopted by the Hlengwe and other conquered groups as a praise name.<sup>37</sup> The Hlengwe willingly adopted the Shangaan identity in order for them to have good reputation as the Shangaan were referred as the conquerors and to have better job opportune on the Rand as Shangaan were good miners. According to Harries after

the late 1850s the anglicized version of Shangaan had come to stand for Tsonga-speaking in South Africa and had a stereotypical reputation as good mine workers.<sup>38</sup> He goes on to say that Shangaan identity was, in part, constructed by the miners themselves. According to Wolmer the mines deliberately promoted divisions along ethnic lines by providing ethnically segregated barracks and fostering ethnic competition as a divide and rule strategy. Thus Shangaan ethnic identity is a complex product of social memories of romanticized Gaza State, which was codified and fixed by the colonial masters.<sup>39</sup> Even in post-colonial Zimbabwe Hlengwe people refer to themselves as the Shangaan. Even in the education curriculum Hlengwe is not recognised as an official language to study in schools. Shangaan is seen as their official language by the government to be studied in schools. In universities such as Great Zimbabwe they offer degrees in Shangaan not in Hlengwe. Hence the Hlengwe are now struggling to retain their identity.

Strictly speaking according to Bannerman the Hlengwe are not Shangaans.<sup>40</sup> Mtetwa concurs with Bannerman and says, the only people in Zimbabwe to be called Shangaan are those of Chief Mpungu, a descendent of a younger brother of Ngungunyane who were settled in Gwenzi and subsequently moved to the east of Chisumbanje and Speak Ndau.<sup>41</sup> Peter Forrestall (NC at Chibi) and Ekstein (NC at Ndanga) had seen the difference between the Hlengwe and Shangaans. NC Ekstein in his report said that, in the Southern part of the district (the Lowveld down the Save-Lundi junction) lived a tribe called Hlengwe with a sprinkling of Shangaans among them. The tribe is quite the Makalanga.<sup>42</sup> Probably these Makalanga were those who were found and assimilated in the Lowveld by the Hlengwe.

## 1.5 THE CHITANGA DYNASTY

Like what I had said earlier that the Hlengwe migrated from Mozambique into Zimbabwe, for the Chitanga dynasty oral traditions claim that they moved from an area called Mavhuwe in Mozambique. They are related to Chitanga-Mayinga who is in Mozambique near Chikwarakwara.<sup>43</sup> They were led by Chitanga Ngwena who settled in the area around Sagwari and Chivumburu mountains. Most historians confused the relationship between Chitanga and Mpapa. NC Wright says that, Mpapa calls Chitanga mwana and it was Mpapa who plays the role of kingmaker in the Chitanga dynasty.<sup>44</sup> For Bannerman, Mpapa was the headman of Chitanga who reported all serious cases to Chitanga.<sup>45</sup> From the oral evidences gathered so far Chitanga and Mpapa shared the same ancestors. It was only when they came in Zimbabwe that there was a leadership crisis and they separated.<sup>46</sup> Mpapa and was the headman of Chitanga.

There were serious clashes between Chitanga and Mpapa which resulted in wars. For instance Chitanga fought with Mpapa and Mpapa called a Shangaan chief Mzila who killed many people of Chitanga. In return Chitanga called the Ndebele who also killed the people of Mpapa.<sup>47</sup> In 1970 they agreed on the boundaries from Mabukutani Borehole straight across the road at Chipalanini, Chigele Hillock and Makata Dame.<sup>48</sup> However the agreement on boundary failed to solve problems which came with the Jambanja. The war continues today. When the farms were taken by the black majority in 2000 they fought over boundaries in resettlement areas. They fight over areas such as Edenvel, City waters and Iron wood. Both claims they claim these areas and it happens that if Chitanga install a village head in the area Mpapa will also install his own village head in the same area.<sup>49</sup>

While Chitanga and his people were in what later called European Ranching area they respected Shona who were near their area. For instance Chitanga paid tribute to chief Madzivire and Neshuro.<sup>50</sup> However this changed when Chitanga began to fight with Madzivire.

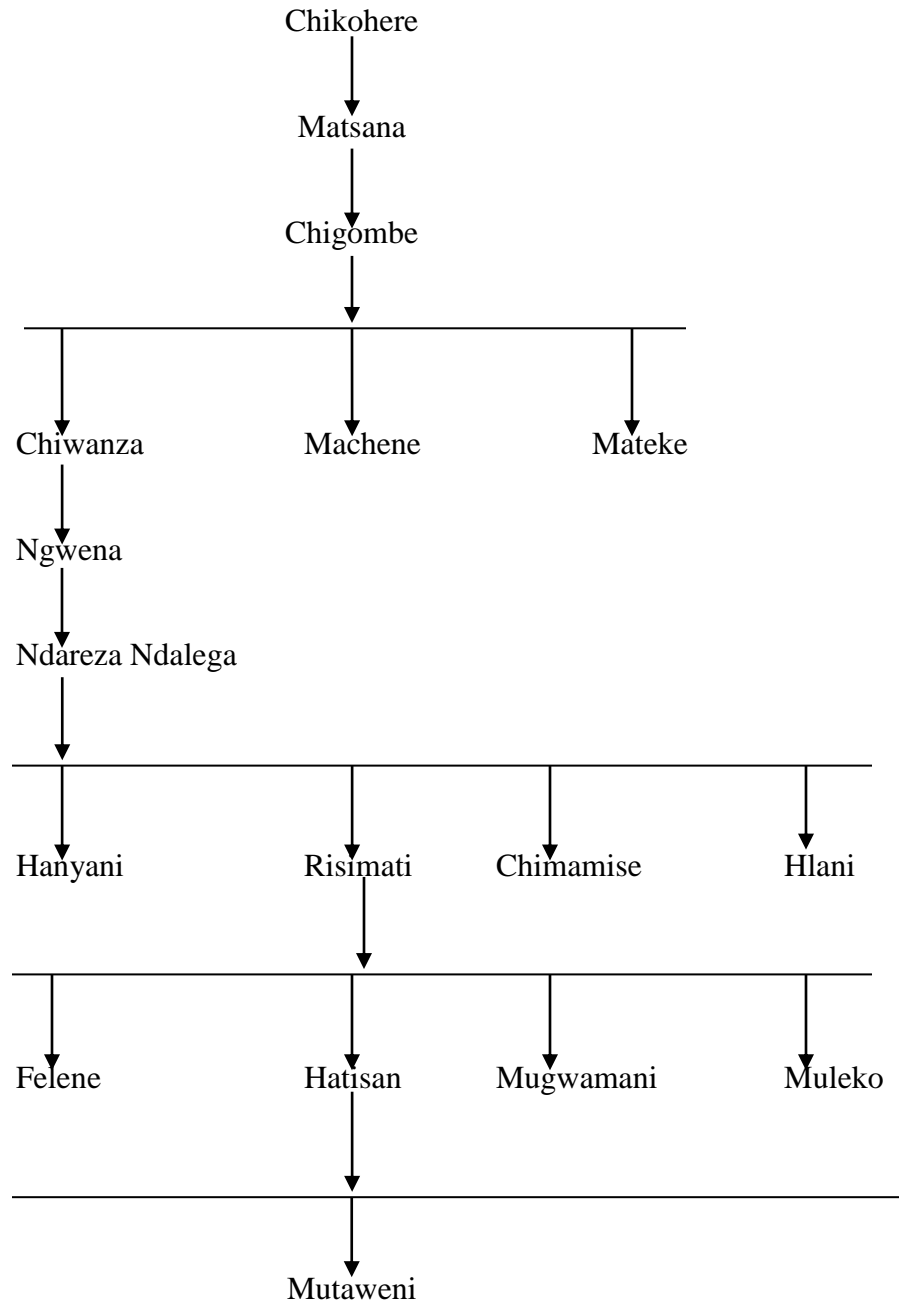
The Hlengwe respect the first wife as the real mother of the home, she is almost the queen of the home, her husband and home people highly respect her because she took her husband's boyhood and became father of the children. The son will inherit chieftainship if the chief died. This chieftainship goes from brother to brother until that line is complete and then returns to the chief's first son.<sup>51</sup>

The first date which was recorded by the whites in the Chitanga chieftainship is 1910 when Ndondo Hlengani was appointed as chief by the whites. He was the one who moved with his people from European ranching area to Matibi II after the creation of ranching areas. This will be discussed in the next chapter. Ndondo Hlengani died in 1953 and buried on the Sagwari Mountain.<sup>52</sup> He was succeeded by Risimati Mtsini who was popularly referred as Chisimati. Oral traditions claim that it was the Shona of Chief Neshuro who called him Chisimati because he was too short.<sup>53</sup>

Chisimati died in 1960 and he was succeeded by his young brother called Chimamise Maranele. Chimamise was appointed as acting chief in 1960 and in 1964 he was appointed as substantive chief. Also in 1972 Chimamise Maranele was made senator chief.<sup>54</sup> Chimamise died in 1982 was succeeded by Hlamalani Chipala Mashibwe who was a nephew to Chimamise.<sup>55</sup> Feleni I the son of Ndondo Hlengani was the one who was supposed to succeed Chimamise but he was too young

to accept chieftainship. Hlamalani Chipala Mashibwe was succeeded by Felene Ndondo on March 1984. Felene Ndondo died in 1992 and Sanduka Ndalega was appointed as chief in 1993.<sup>56</sup> Sanduka Ndalega was succeeded by Tonias Chauke on 09 April 1996.<sup>57</sup> Tonias Chauke was replaced by Erinos Tasara Hlambela on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1997. Hlambela was acting chief, because the person who was supposed to succeed Tonias Chauke was too young.<sup>58</sup> Erinos Tasara Hlambela was succeeded by Felene Chauke II in 2005. The Chitanga family tree will be illustrated by the following diagram.

NAMES OF THE CHITANGA ANCESTORS



PER 5/NTI/CHITANGA 2/73 OF 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY

CHITANGA KRAALS IN MATIBI ONE AND MATIBI TWO IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

CHITANGA

1 Chitanga	8 Mudzingwa	13 Musengi
2 Shugera	9 Gwenamo	14 Masivamela
3 Mkachana	10 Tonono	HEADMAN MPAPA
4 Helani	11 Chigova	1 Zambo
5 Nathlelema	12 Velema	2 Mapimele
6 Mandevu	13 Mabila	3 Ndari
7 Chibaya	HEADMAN	4 Ponyoka
8 Kutanga	MASUVAMELA MATIBI	5 Chavani
9 Matsimbi	2	6 Chivali
10 Mukahamela	1 Sipacheni	7 Bumbura
11 Mafanele	2 Furumela	8 Ndavani
12 Mufuni	3 Mutando	9 Mugoyani
HEADMAN CHILONGA	4 Madakadai	10 Njinga
MATIBI 2	5 Mapikure	11 Nkalaluma
1Chilonga	6 Chiviko	12 Yingwani
2 Rangani	7 Bauli	13 Majefule
3 Zabeni	8 Pachipo	14 Mushiyi
4 Makaiya	9 Chihosana	15 Madzimure
5 Mbezura	10 Chihosi	16 Chingweni
6 Chitsange	11 Mashamba	17 Pahlela
7 Mushonyi	12 Kwai	18 Pahlela



19 Pahlela	30 Mabikwa	41 Nsumele
20 Bete	31 Mabandi	42 Panganai
21 Takawira	32 Mapfumo	43 Vivinga
22 Jona	33 Charuza	44 Banditi
23 Kandira	34 Gwanetsa	45 Mutombo
24 Bisani	35 Miscellaneous	46 Pfumari
25 Takunyai	36 Mathlaviro	47 Tobayiwa
26 Gundani	37 Mapfumo	48 Risimati
27 Ranganai	38 Sibezwile	49 Hasani
28 Mushakanda	39 Matisa	50 Chintatu
29 Munyuki	40 Hayisa	

## **1.6 INTERACTION WITH THE WHITES AND DESPLACEMENT OF THE HLENGWE**

The occupation of Zimbabwe by the BSAC in 1890 and the delineation of the Anglo-Portuguese border with Mozambique resulted in the Hlengwe people being split amongst Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa and South Africa. When the Pioneer Column occupied Mashonaland in 1890, Hlengwe country was divided among a number of chiefs and sub chiefs, who included Sengwe, Gezani, Tsovani, Chisa, Masivamele, Ngwenyeni, Chilonga, Gudo, Mpapa, Xitanga and Furumela.<sup>59</sup> All had their clearly marked boundaries.

Hlengweni area was seen as dry and inhospitable for the whites. The white were focusing on mining in other areas rather than Hlengweni area. When mining proved to be not viable as was

expected by settlers, they decided to focus on the agricultural possibilities.<sup>60</sup> This was beginning of land alienation by colonial master in Hlengweni area. All Hlengweni boundaries had changed because of the colonial land alienation systems.

According to Wolmer there were three main categories of land represented in the in the south-east Lowveld. In the argot of Zimbabwean land designations these were: State land and it covers areas such as the Gonarezhou National Park and Malipati Safari Area which were under the management of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. Second there were communal areas and large scale commercial farms. The communal areas form a broad arc separating the national park from the commercial farms and extend west along the Limpopo River (Ndowoyo, Sangwe, Matibi ii and Sengwe and Chipise, Diti and Mtengwe respectively).<sup>61</sup>

Chisi says that, the appropriation of land among the Hlengwe was a gradual process with about three clear phases: 1890-1908, 1908 to the 1930s and the period after World War II.<sup>62</sup> These phases relate specifically to the periods that the Hlengwe were directly affected by the land policies because they differ slightly from the times that the people in other parts of Zimbabwe especially Matebeleland and the Highveld were also directly affected by the colonial land policies.

By the 1898 Order-in-Council, the BSA Company was obliged to set aside adequate land for the whites throughout Zimbabwe. According to Gann, Native Commissioners (NCs) throughout the country began the difficult task of demarcating reserves.<sup>63</sup> At this stage the areas under Hlengwe chiefs Tsovani; Gezani, Chisa and Sengwe were set aside as Alienated Company Land. The areas

under Chilonga, Masivamele, Ngwenyenye and Mpapa were made part of the Matibi Reserve, which was established between the Runde and Mwenezi Rivers and stretching all the way to the border with Mozambique.<sup>64</sup> The BSAC'S drive was to create a white rural bourgeoisie, which by developing the country would raise the value of its assets. The creation of a white rural Bourgeoisie impacted negatively on Hlengwe access to and ownership of land

Chitanga and Mpapa's Hlengwe were the first to be directly affected by colonial land alienation. The company took a greater part of their area to establish the Nuanetsi Ranch. In 1919 a large group of Mpapa's people were moved *en masse* from their Chivumburu hills location into the Matibi II Reserve to make room for company cattle coming into the Nuanetsi Ranch .Chitanga and his people were moved from the same area to Matibi 2 TTL and fell under Neshuro and Ngari.<sup>65</sup> They settled in areas which Forestall the first NC of the area had described in 1900 as, '*... waterless and uninhabitable*'.

Chisa Moved from Gonarezhou into Sengwe. According to Chaumba, the Gonarezhou became a highly contested area.<sup>66</sup> Chisa people were not prepared to live their ancestral home land. It was in 1975 when the Chitsa found it that it is impossible to return to their area. Even the Mugabe regime in 1980 reaffirmed the status of national parks rather than returning alienated land to the Hlengwe.<sup>67</sup> By 1954, they were still resident in the game designated area. When Magumbe was appointed chief of the Chitsa people by Mr. Leatt in 1957, his people were still occupying Gonarezhou Crown Land. This area included Lundi River No. 4 Pool and Tembohata pan near the border junction of Mozambique.

When Alan Wright was appointed Native Commissioner (NC) of the remote district of Nuanetsi in 1958, he immediately put into motion a programme meant to incorporate a wide area of Gonarezhou into game land. It was during his tenure as NC of the district (1958-1968) that the Gonarezhou dream came to fruition.<sup>68</sup> As an ultra-conservationist, he embarked on a programme of curbing poaching in Gonarezhou.

By 1966 when the 'game scheme' was taking shape, Headman Ngwenyene of Marumbini and his subjects were still in the game area resisting eviction. They argued that their "great-grand fathers were born there, lived there and were buried there" and so were going nowhere. They had lived along the banks of the Lundi River since before colonial occupation and had over the years spread to Chiredzi River and to the other side of the Sabi River into the Mahenye area. Ngwenyene's people were forcefully evicted from the Save-Runde confluence (Marumbini) in 1968 to make way for Gonarezhou National Park. They were moved further south to the Sengwe Tribal Trust Land. They have mixed with the Shonas who settled there in 1958 from Masvingo as a direct result of the Land Husbandry Act of 1951.<sup>69</sup>

According to Tavuyanago and Makwara the Park is surrounded by villages of disgruntled displaced Shangani people. These villages include Shilothlela, Malipati, Chikombedzi, Boli, Muhlanguleni, Chibwedziva, Chitsa and Mahenye.<sup>70</sup>

In Tsovani's area a farm and two ranches were established in 1911 and this affected eight kraals (villages) with a total adult population of 665.<sup>71</sup> A major development in Tsovani's country was in 1919 that later significantly altered Hlengwe position on the land was the application by Thomas Murray McDougall to buy land between Mutirikwe, Runde and Chiredzi Rivers for his

sugar project.<sup>72</sup> The BSAC gave him 120, 000 hectares of land between the Mutirikwe, Chiredzi and Runde. Tsovani and his people were moved from Triangle and Hippo Valley Estates to Ndanga District and fell under Duma and they have Magatsi as their headman.

During the construction of Bangala dam those who were on the surrounding areas such as Nyajena Tribal Trust Land were moved to Magudu.<sup>73</sup> It was built to provide irrigation water to the farming estates on the Lowveld to the southwest, around the town of Triangle, where the main crop has been sugar cane. In the area along the border with Mozambique, Masivamele and some of his people were moved into the Matibi II Reserve in 1920.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore it needs to be noted that by 1975 most Hlengwe chiefs and their people had lost their lands to the whites and had moved into areas specifically demarcated for African settlement. These areas were not suitable for human settlements (remote, very dry, infertile and some uninhabitable).

### **1.7 ESTABLISHMENT OF HLENGWE SOCIETY IN MATIBI 1 BY CHITANGA**

Chitanga like other Hlengwe chiefs was affected by the European racial land alienation (commercial farms). Around 1919 Nuanetsi/Mwenezi was demarcated as a colonial ranching area. Chitanga and his people were being ordered to move away from the newly created ranch.<sup>75</sup> They were just removed from areas around Chibumburu and Sagwari without anywhere to go.<sup>76</sup> Chitanga was separated with his headmen and they became paramount chiefs on their own areas.<sup>77</sup> They were no longer considered to be the Headmen of Chitanga.<sup>78</sup> They were now put under Chiredzi district.

The removal of the Hlengwe from European Ranching areas led to the spread of the Hlengwe in Shona and Pfumbi societies according to Matsimbi. Matsimbi goes on to say some of them went to Mberengwa, Maranda and Mazetese areas.<sup>80</sup> Without anywhere to go Chief Chitanga Hlengani negotiated with chief Neshuro who gave him a small portion from the Harare-Beitbridge road to Masogwe and Lundi River<sup>81</sup>. Chitanga gave Chief Neshuro a virgin girl, sheep and clay pot/hahlana as a sign of kuluva or nhema mutondo.<sup>82</sup> It needs to be noted that the practice of Kuluva is being practiced nowadays. For instance all village heads which were installed by chief Chitanga on September 2012 gave him cattle as a sign of kuluva. Even if a person purchase land in the resettlement areas will give the chief cattle as Kuluva or Nhema-Mutondo. Sheep was a very important animal in a Hlengwe society.

### **1.8 CHITANGA SOCIETY AFTER THE THIRD CHIMURENGA**

February 2000 heralded a dramatic change in the physical and political landscape of Chitanga. In 2000 there was a massive farm invasion by the Zimbabweans in an attempt to utilize land which was not fully utilized. This brought benefits to the Chitanga dynasty and the rest of the Zimbabweans. The once called European ranching area returned back to the Chitanga Chieftainship. The area of Chitanga now stretches from the Lundi River, Masogwe, Bubi River, Mateke Hills, share boundaries with Gezani, Mpapa and Chilonga.<sup>83</sup>

Because of the farm invasions now Chitanga have 10 headmen. These are Galoni, K Sibanda, Gavhuri, Justice Chauke, Lawrance Chitanga, Njelele Ndlovu Chindeche, Chiipepe Tseki, Alick Murefu, Chitsa and Hlaisi. People under Chitanga are not exclusively Hlengwe. They are now mixed with the Ndebele, Karanga, Ndau, Pfumbi and Venda.<sup>84</sup>

Due to the fact that the land reform was open for any ethnic group, the Chitanga area is now inhabited by different ethnic groups. This changed the political set up of the Chitanga. The Shona people are now included in the court by Chitanga. For instance the most influential headman is a Shona called Kenneth Sibanda.<sup>85</sup> The Chitanga dynasty had unique way of presenting their issues to the Hosi/Chief.<sup>86</sup> Upon entering the chief's homestead one must shout saying Hlezana and the person who is at the Home reply and Mlilo wachisa. All offences have to pass through Mkachana and he presents them to the chief. The chief had a final say and decide on the judgment.

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## **CHAPTER 2: UPBRINGING OF A HLENGWE CHILD UNDER CHIEF CHITANGA**

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the upbringing of a child by the Hlengwe under Chief Chitanga in Mwenezi. The life of child is discussed from the mother's womb to puberty stage. The traditional methods applied in the upbringing of a child will be analyzed. Issues such as the birth of the child, naming of the child, sacrifice of twins, treatment of diseases affecting children, diet and the weaning process will be discussed

### **2.1 STEPS TOWARDS THE BIRTH OF A HLENGWE CHILD**

#### **2.1.1 THE DILATION OF THE UTERUS**

Dilation refers to the widening or opening of the uterus.<sup>1</sup> It was believed that Women who have prepared themselves mentally, emotionally and physically throughout the 9 months term of pregnancy will usually have few problems when the time for delivery comes. When a Hlengwe woman was pregnant she was given special medicines to avoid complications during delivery. This practice started earlier when they were still in Mozambique and is still being practiced. According to Mkachana those who believe in traditionalists were given herbs such as Muparadza makore and elephant dung<sup>2</sup>. These medicines help the birth canal to expand so that the child can come out easily. Those who believed on the powers of God were given holy water and a string to tight their waist until the day of delivery.<sup>3</sup> This practice started with the introduction of African initiated churches in the Hlengwe area.

### **2.1.2 DAY OF DELIVERY**

According to Edward, on the day of delivery when the expectant mother begins to feel the pangs of childbirth, the husband sends for the midwives, if the grandmother of the woman be alive, she was the only usually sent for but if she was not available the midwives were called from the neighboring areas especially relatives<sup>4</sup>. According to Junod, The midwives were called tinsungakati.<sup>5</sup> The Shona call them Nyamukuta. Usually these ladies were not professionally trained but they learnt from their elders for that duty.<sup>6</sup> Birth takes place in the woman's own hut if at her husband's kraal or in her mother's hut if a first child.<sup>7</sup> According to Junod, they chose an old hut as the place for the delivery (phulukwa) is generally the back of the hut (mahosi) where the pregnant woman lives.<sup>8</sup> If it is difficult, the Sangoma will consult his divinary bones which will reveal a good place for the delivery. In some cases a prophet can be consulted to give a prayer for the mother.<sup>9</sup> During the whole labour, it was a taboo for the mother to eat or to drink anything. There was a general belief that she would kill the child if she did so.

As soon as the child has made his/her appearance the midwives cut the umbilical cord using a traditional knife.<sup>10</sup> The knife which was used was not sterilized. They tie the umbilical cord with a bark string about one inch from the navel and cut the cord with a split grass or native razor. The length of the cord determines the size of the penis.<sup>11</sup> The little sore were anointed with oil usually from the fat of a sheep. The bit of cord remaining with the baby is cared for with great attention.<sup>12</sup> It generally falls off at the end of the first week and this is the signal for the end of the period of confinement. The after-birth, if the placenta is not out the mother will be given herbs or muti which will help it to come out and generally buried deep behind the hut on the spot where the birth has taken place.<sup>13</sup>

However the midwife doesn't have any formal training on how to attend pregnant women. Many are highly experienced in well woman care including how to recognize and respond appropriately to complications of pregnancy. Due to the lack of education in some midwives, the way many attended the delivery was risky for women and their babies, leading to poor health outcomes and even death.<sup>14</sup>

Nowadays Traditional birth attendants are often older women, respected in their communities. They consider themselves as private health care practitioners who respond to requests for service. As these traditionally nomadic people are forced to assimilate into a more Western model of society and healthcare, younger generations display a movement away from cultural birthing practices and towards a more standardized approach to labor and delivery.<sup>15</sup> The birth of a child is usually celebrated by the entire family. As women opt for more modern healthcare, they are often flown from remote areas two weeks before their due dates to urban hospitals. They are only allowed to bring one support person which further contributes to the disruption of family involvement.<sup>16</sup>

## **2.2 SIGNS OF ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH**

When birth is protracted or difficult, suspicion at once fall upon the mother of having been unfaithful to her husband and that the pregnant is that of a lover.<sup>17</sup> Among the Hlengwe too much complications is a sign of illegitimate child. The midwives know that if it takes time without delivery they must force the mother to confess.<sup>18</sup> The mother will confess secretly to the principal midwife in order to spare herself the pains of a difficult birth, as it is taboo to bear a "

child of adultery" hiding the fact it would cause the mother untold suffering.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, if the delivery lasts too long, the midwife will begin to have doubts as to the legitimacy of the child.

When an illegitimate child is born without this delay, he/she will come to the light with his hands closed and refuse to take the breast.<sup>20</sup> The midwives again will force the mother to confess. This confession is strictly private. The midwives will consider it a professional duty not to divulge the secret to anyone, even the father. But the mother must confess, as it is absolutely necessary that the true father of a child be known on the day of its birth. Nowadays confession is still being practiced after the child refused to take breast. Even nurses in hospitals force women to confess if they think that she had committed adultery. Even if the mother had committed offences such as stealing she is supposed to confess.<sup>22</sup>

### **2.3 PREMATURE BIRTH**

When a child shows no signs of life, the midwife smears the body with castor-oil and lays it in the sun and watches for any sign of life.<sup>23</sup> This is a true incubation. Only children survived had survived.

### **2.4 TRADITIONAL BELIEF ABOUT TWINS**

Long before colonialism and some decades of colonialism the Hlengwe had a false belief about the twins. They believed that if a woman gives birth to twins, it was an omen.<sup>25</sup> By that time something terrible was likely to happen according to their belief. In order to prevent misfortunes to the community twins were killed. It was believed that long ago both twins were killed by the Hlengwe but as time goes on only one child was killed.<sup>26</sup> It was the duty of the old women to kill

twins. After the kill them they buried them along the river in soft soil. There was a belief that if twins were buried in dry land the country will not receive rainfall for a long period. The mother of the twins was cleansed by the Sangoma.<sup>27</sup>

## **2.5 NAMING A CHILD**

A name is a word or term by which a person or thing is commonly and distinctively known. It gives someone an identity that is different from one individual to the other.

According to Sachiti among the Hlengwe/ Shangaan a name is something that should run deep in the veins of an individual and means a lot in their culture. It is something that should be earned, not given in a silver plate.<sup>28</sup> According to Junod on the day of birth or on one of the following ones the child receives his/her name (Lina).<sup>29</sup> Names which were given to children after birth were not important. They were changed after the initiation ceremonies. However it needs to be highly that initiation school nowadays are not prevalent in Hlengwe areas.

Here are the methods which were used in the naming of the child. Firstly the parents can give their children names of departed members of their tribes. These were done as a remembrance and wish their kids to imitate them. According to Edward this was done in order to have continuity in the family<sup>30</sup>. Sometimes the bones (Hakata) were resorted to and the Sangoma must find out the name of the ancestor whose name the child must take.<sup>31</sup> For instances they were given names such as Ndondo, Risimati, Hlengani and so on.

Secondly they named their kids after certain chiefs. According to Junod, frequently the parents like to recall a name of the old times (pfusha bito dja khale), the name of one of the ancestors, because it is a nice thing; to remember them. They go so far as to consult the bones. A name is proposed and if the bones in falling do not give a favourable indication, another is tried till they feel sure that the die "has spoken".<sup>32</sup>

Third, a member of the family can asks the favour of giving his name to the new born child. A friend of the family may do so and gave that child some gifts (rupfumbidzo).<sup>33</sup> He/she will "name himself/herself in the child" (kutitshula ka nwana).<sup>34</sup> This fact will establish a special relation between this person and the child, a relation which bears some resemblance to that of a godfather to his godson.

Like what I said earlier all these birth-names were abandoned later on, generally at the circumcision school or at the age of puberty in the clans where the custom of circumcising has disappeared; boys and girls then choose new names. The men and women who undergo the initiation adopt a new name. So do those subjected to the treatment for possession who takes the name of their pretended possessor when he has made himself known.

## **2.6 TREATMENT OF CHINYOKOLA**

The illness called chinyokola (fontanel) is a serious one amongst the Hlengwe people, particularly children. They believed that chinyokolawas (that which is on top of the head) due to malicious witches who interfere with the human head.<sup>35</sup> As a result, the Hlengwe apply different medicines on the delicate part to combat this illness. Chinyokola/Chipande or nhova (fontanel)



has varied symptoms diagnosed by elders or special diagnosticians. The child may vomit after sucking milk from the mother and becomes too weak. The eyes may turn white. Another symptom is the presence of sores on the upper part of the mouth. When these symptoms have been positively interpreted, herbal treatment is applied by the elder.<sup>36</sup>

There are many methods which were used to cure Chinyokola. The Sangoma covers the upper part of the head with a black wax. The black wax was a mixed of several roots and the most popular was the roots of a Leguminacea called Nwamahlanga.<sup>36</sup> Others burnt 'Leaves of the mubvamaropa (bloodletting) tree. The ashes obtained after burning were mixed with fat obtained from the seeds of the mufute (castor oil) shrub or obtained from sheep tail. The mixture of the ashes and oil was then rubbed onto the affected part of the head and this restored the health.<sup>38</sup>

Chinyokola/Nhova is a dreaded disease in the Hlengwe communities even in modern time. As a result, parents seek powerful protective medicines for their young children. However, those children who have been medicated pose a serious threat to the health of other children who were not prevented for it. According to Mkachana once the unvaccinated child gets nearer to medicated he/she gets ill as soon as possible.<sup>39</sup> The children are believed to cause such problems are the ones who are treated by which Witch doctors. With the spread of African initiated Churches, prophets also play a part on the treatment of Chinyokola. According to Hetisani, 'here we have prophets who give us rabiro that we can use to cure our children.'<sup>41</sup> On the same note, Libombo is of the belief that prophets helps in the treatment of chinyokola.<sup>42</sup>

## **2.7 THE NURSING PERIOD**

The nursing period start from the day of birth to the day of weaning. The little child has been taken out of the confinement hut<sup>42</sup>. He is now allowed to go outside. The child is nursed by the mother; she carries it on her back in a specially prepared skin. These were usually made from sheep, goat or duiker or other small buck skins.<sup>43</sup> There was no fixed time for the baby it is allowed to take the breast at any time as it wishes. When a mother has to leave her child for a short time, she squeezes a few drops of her milk on his neck in order to prevent him feeling thirsty. When she has been absent for more than one day (it can only happen when the child is able to eat some solid food) and returns home, before nursing the child again, she heats a bit of broken pot in the fire and squeezes into it a little milk from each breast. A mother not having enough milk use a kind of shrub called neta as a medicine.<sup>44</sup> The shrub which is a Euphorbiaceous contains milky sap. The liquid evaporates. About three months after child birth the parents resume conjugal relation, but conception must be avoided until the child is weaned<sup>45</sup>.

## **2.8 DIET**

There is nothing like a diet regulation amongst natives and they would deem it a cruelty to refuse the breast to a crying child. The Hlengwe believe that milk alone would never suffice to make a child grow: Nwana a kula hi miri, the child grows by medicine, such is the adage which is universally met with. The child will not drink ordinary water but water added with medicines. When the child is able to eat solid food it was given thick porridge with a variety of relish. Bannerman observed that fish was added to their diet. Wright also noted that the area was wealth in game they also enjoy venison and crocodile, which they bake in a delicious groundnuts sauce. The unusual aspect of their diet is their love of the Mopani worms found in the Mopani forests of

the Lowveld.<sup>46</sup> These are either dried fried in butter, which is a taste experience. According to Wright they supplemented their diet with edible wild fruits called wkakwa, suma, miwuyu and magake.

## **2.9 WEANING**

Weaning can be defined as the gradual process of introducing a mammal infant to what will be its adult diet and withdrawing the supply of its mother's milk.<sup>47</sup> The process takes place only in mammals, as only mammals produce milk. The infant is considered to be fully weaned once it no longer receives any breast milk (or bottled substitute).

Among the Hlengwe a whole year, even more will elapse after the child can be weaned. The child was first supposed to learn to speak, to walk and it is only when the child is intelligence sufficiently developed to allow him to run small errands that the date of the weaning will be fixed<sup>48</sup>. First of all, the father looks for a young ntjopfa tree which has only one root. The root of this tree is said to have the property of making people forget.<sup>49</sup> The mother cooks a pot of porridge in which she has put the medicine. This will help the child to forget the breast.

The very day of his weaning, the child must leave the village of his parents and go to stay with his grand-parents. A little mat, a few clothes have been prepared for him and the grandmother comes to take him. If he is a first born, he must go to the parents of the mother; the second one will be received by the parents of the father. The mother will smear her breast with pepper (beriberi) so that he may lose taste for the maternal milk<sup>50</sup>.

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## **CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD FROM WEANING TO PUBERTY**

The chapter gives a detailed study of social life of childhood from weaning to puberty stage. The life style of a child discussed with specific reference to traditional dressing, social role of children, and informal education in the form of taboos, riddles, proverbs and idioms. The body marks which give a difference between Hlengwe and other groups such as tattoos and piercing of ears will also be discussed in detail. The chapter concludes by discussing the girls initiation and boys initiation.

### **3.1 CHILD WITH GRANDPARENTS**

In a Hlengwe society during the first years after weaning, which extends from the third to the fourteenth year, the child stays with grand- parents.<sup>1</sup> The very day of his weaning, the child must leave the village of his parents and go to stay with his grand-parents. A little mat, a few clothes have been prepared for him and the grand- mother comes to take him. If he is a first born, he must go to the parents of the mother; the second one will be received by the parents of the father. A girl goes back to her mother when she is able to grind grain and the boy when he is big enough to herd.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.2 DRESSING**

Traditionally men wore skins and these are still worn for ceremonial occasions. Women wear the distinctive minceka and two rectangular cloths wrapped around the body so that each cloth is taken under one arm and tied on the opposite shoulder.<sup>3</sup> The cloth can be decorated with beads, embroidery, safety pins and other items of interest. The women wear a layered knee-length skirt

folded over to give the appearance of a very large waist and hips. Wright says Shangaan/Hlengwe were bare breasted with fine features, shining skins and well-rounded limbs, miniskirts a fashion which was copied by the Europeans.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.3 INFORMAL EDUCATION**

According to Chigidi, every society and every culture has its own ways of socializing with its own children so that they may grow up to be responsible and socially compliant citizens.<sup>5</sup> These are the ways in which the norms and values of society are inculcated into the new members. And thus part of a lifelong process of inculcation to ensure that an individual is socialized, since it is through this process of inculcation that one learns the principal values and symbols of the social system in which he/she participates. Haralambos and Holborn note, ‘every culture contains a large number of guidelines that direct conduct in particular situations.’<sup>6</sup> Mugebisa maintain that traditional education aimed at initiating the young generation into values and techniques which characterised the life of a particular society. According to Busi cited in Shiluvane it was the goal of education to include this sense of belonging which was the highest value of the cultural system. The young were educated in and for the community’s way of life.<sup>8</sup> The Hlengwe children received informal education in the form of idioms, taboos, proverbs, riddles and games.

#### **3.3.1 IDIOMS**

It was the role of the mother and the aunt to teach Hlengwe children certain idioms which are needed by the community. The Hlengwe mother teaches her child to use certain idioms of respect in circumstances where he/she direct word is considered to be disrespectful. For example the mother taught her children the right forms of speech in addressing elders. In a Hlengwe

culture any older male was/ is always addressed as Malume (uncle), Tatana (father) or Kokwani (grandfather) while any other female person was addressed as Hahani (aunt), Kokwani (grandmother) or Mhani (mother).<sup>9</sup>

### **3.3.2 TABOOS**

Taboos were part and parcel of the Hlengwe's informal education. Tatira looks at Shona taboos and argues that they were a useful way of keeping check on children.<sup>10</sup> He notes that children spent a lot of time on their own looking after animals, and so on and it was easy for them to do the wrong things away from the watchful eye of the elders, so taboos came in handy and ensured that children did not behave in a wayward manner. The Hlengwe people have conservative taboos.

### **3.3.3 PROVERBS**

The other means that the Blacks used to teach their youngsters included among others proverbs, riddles, folktales, songs, legends and myths. Proverbs can be defined as summary statements of generalized truths that have been accumulated through the experiences of preceding generations.<sup>13</sup> Their educational value lies in the fact that they are used by elders to teach youngsters about experiences of the past that they should emulate or avoid. The table below gives proverbs in Hlengwe and their meaning in English.



**Table 1.1 Hlengwe proverbs and their meaning in English**

<b>HLENGWE</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
Ndlopfu a yi fi hi rivamburin'we	An elephant does not die of one (broken) rib	When in trouble, a man should try all efforts to find a solution.
N'wana wa nyoka i nyoka.	The child of snake is a snake	A child of a bad person might be a very bad person.
Mbutiyaxihaha yitswalelientlhambini	a A secretive goat does not give birth in a midst.	Keep a secret do not say it where there are many people
U ngatekimali u bohelaenengeni wa mpfuvu	Do not tie money in the leg of hippopotamus	Do not lend your money to people who do not pay back.
Matimbayangwenya i mati	The strength of crocodile is water.	A man has power when he is supported by his people
N'wanawoka a ngarili u ta fela a dzobyeni	A child who does not cry will die unnoticed at the back of his mother.	If you do not raise your voice (in a form of a complaint), you will not be heard.
Mbutiyidyalahayingabohiwakona	A goat eats where it is tied	A person must use properties of a place where he is working.

### **3.3.4 RIDDLES**

Riddles were also used to foster quick thinking on the part of the youngsters of the Hlengwe. Riddles have proven that Indigenous Knowledge Systems not something that is static, but a form of education and entertainment, that some people today call edutainment, that is a combination of education and entertainment.<sup>14</sup> The search for solutions to riddles challenges the Hlengwe child to think abstractly, broadly and deeply while their figurative language gives the child the chance to uncover their meaning through a reasoning process. The answer to a given riddle acts as a conclusion of the logical process and it is often a one word answer which both precise and clears to the participants. According to Libombo the person who answers many riddles than other is more sophisticated than others.<sup>15</sup>

### **3.3.5 SONGS**

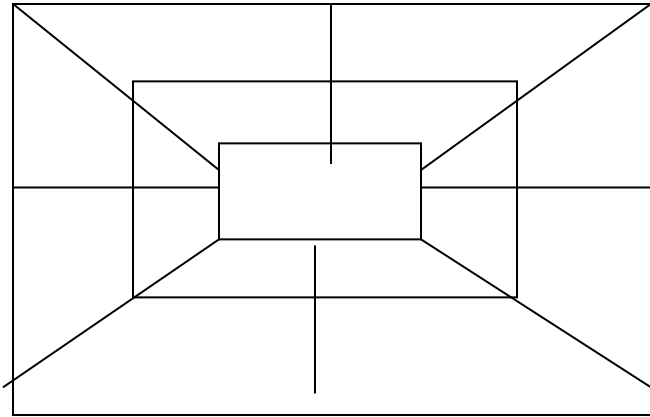
Songs are another tool that was used as a form of education. They could be used to memorize the qualities of a good wife/husband as is given in the songs 'Take your pick' or to teach about chiefs and trees that are found in one's area of residence.<sup>16</sup>

## **3.4 GAMES PLAYED BY HLENGWE CHILDREN**

There are many different games which were played by the Hlengwe and some of the game depends on gender. The present authors observe that many social skills can be learnt through traditional children's games.<sup>17</sup> The games also provide the children with opportunities for mastery of play. They have the opportunity to continue practicing a skill until they are proficient at it.

### 3.4.1 CHECKERS/TSORO

Checkers is the most game played by the children of the Hlengwe. It needs to be highlighted that this game is common among the Bantu people and is mainly played by men. The game is like the modern chess. The most common checkers was played by two players with 12 stones each. This is elaborated by the following diagram.



#### Stage to play Checkers

##### Stage 1

Each player in turn places one of his stones at any intersection of any lines on the board not already occupied by the opponent's stone(s). The placing of these stones requires one who is intelligent. The stones are placed to form a line of three stones either horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Each time a line is completed, the player takes any one of his opponent's stones. When a line has been formed a player may move away one of its stones on his next go in order subsequently to complete the same line again by moving back.

##### Stage 2

When all of each player's 12 stones have been placed on the board, play consists in moving around the stones on the board, one space at a time along any line in order to complete rows of three stone above and thus reduce one's opponent number of stones.

### **Stage 3**

As soon as any player is reduced to three stones only, he has the right to move any of those stones directly to any intersection on the board even though his opponent who has more than three may still having to move once space at a time. As soon as either player is reduced to two stones he has lost for he can no longer form lines of three.<sup>18</sup>

#### **3.4.2 NHODO**

This game is played by girls in the age range of about five to thirteen years old. The girls sit cross-legged round a hole in the ground. Those who play collect a pile of stones and scoop a semi-circular hole about six inches in diameter in the ground.<sup>19</sup> When they play the game; they can use small stones or fruit seed as play implements. One bigger stone or seed is used as the *mudodo* that is not allowed to hit the ground as it is thrown up and is caught<sup>20</sup>. She throws up *mudodo* and while it is in the air scoops out onto the ground all or some of the stones from the hole. If one misses picking and in the process drops the *mudodo*, she passes the chance to the next player who also tries to win the round without dropping the *mudodo*. When this game is analysed as an indigenous way of knowing, it shows that it teaches numeracy. Each player is taught to count since as each picks the stones, she does pick the stones singly, in twos or in higher numbers. This shows that the player learns to count in an orderly manner in an ascending order.

### **3.5 ROLE OF CHILDREN**

The infant is on the way to become a boy or a girl. During the first years to this period which extends from the third to the fourteenth year, he/she stays with his grand- parents. They now

teach a child to do work depending with his/her sex. According to Phillips a child can learn a lot of skills from its parents.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.5.1 GIRLS

The major duty of Hlengwe girls were to make sure was available for the family. She was taught how to grind grains into flour. This flour was used to cook their porridge (sadza). The girl child also sweeps the hut, wash plates, pots, gather firewood and winnow.<sup>22</sup> The following photo is an illustration of duties which were played by Hlengwe children.

**Fig 1.1 Showing Traditional roles of Girls**



### **3.5.2 BOYS**

Hlengwe boys were taught to do jobs which were done by the fathers. The first of young boys was to herd goats. When the boy grows enough, he will begin to herd cattle with the elders. During the herding of live stocks the boy learn the science and nature of the bush. After that he will begin to catch birds and hunt will life. According to Wright they fish and snare game supplemented the few bags of sorghum they got from hand cultivated plots rich in alluvium<sup>23</sup>. According to Libombo young boys' snare and killed animals in large numbers. These boys used dogs to locate pathetic little animals by smelling. Animals such as elephant, buffalo, kudu, nyala, waterbuck, klipspringer, hippo, wild dog, eland, wildebeest and warthog were killed.<sup>24</sup> The hunting tradition was nearly ended by the colonialists who created the Gonarezhou National Park and make hunting a serious offence. The hunting mentality is still among the Hlengwe people. This was evidenced in the new resettlement when many animals were killed by them.

### **3.6 BODY MARKS AMONG THE HLENGWE**

Each and every ethnic group had its own distinctive marks. They enabled them to know each other during the time of war with other ethnic groups. For instance the Venda was identified using some eleven marks on their faces. For the Hlengwe it was ear piercing and tattoos which differentiated them from other groups.

#### **3.6.1 THE PIERCING OF THE EARS**

Scholars agreed to disagree on the origins of ear piercing among the Bantu people. According to Bannerman the Hlengwe begin ear piercing after they were being assimilated by the Shangaan people of Soshangane. Oral traditions claim that the Hlengwe children can be pierced at the age

of eight. According to Hove the Hlengwe borrowed the culture of the Shangaan. There are two ways of performing this, either by a proper piercing of the lower lobe with a thorn or by cutting it with a knife. The operation is performed in the winter by a man who knows how to do it.<sup>25</sup> It is important to note that some of the traditions modified to suit the modern world. The ladies of this world like ear piercing as a beautifying feature among them.

### **3.6.2 TATTOOING**

Some of the traditions were shared by the Bantu people maybe it's because of the Bantu migration which resulted in the fusion of cultures. The Hlengwe practice body tattooing. Traditional tattooing in African culture is series of intricately designed patterns that carry major cultural implications, where the body displays the strength of the inner character.<sup>27</sup> Tribal lineage, maturity; spiritual protection; political/social status and personal strength are all indicated through the art of African tattooing. The origins of tattoos in Africa can be traced from Egyptians and it is being said that the Egyptians began ink tattooing as far back as 5,000 years ago<sup>28</sup>. Unlike Hlengwe cultures, Egyptians limited the practice of tattooing to women. The tattoos found on the women of Egypt were spiritually symbolic and protective and dot patterns and geometrically aligned lines were found across the breasts, belly and upper thigh.<sup>29</sup> The most common and known method of tattooing involves ink, which is practiced worldwide today.

Tattooing was a body mark which differentiated the Hlengwe from other groups of people. It was usually done when the child was about eight years of age.<sup>30</sup> The pattern was first marked on the skin with spots of white wood ash, an incision is then made on each of the marks with a native razor and soot was inserted into the wound.

Historically and culturally tattoos have been applied both as marks of distinction. Tattoos can indicate age, marital status, power and class, and outside the group they may distinguish friend from foe<sup>31</sup>. Tattoos were symbols of beauty that simultaneously ensured they were of no value to neighbouring tribes. For men; it has been used historically to indicate the standing members of a specific tribe. The bigger the stretching, the higher the ranking the male had.<sup>32</sup> As for women, ear stretching is more for decorative purposes and also signifies when a girl has reached womanhood. These purposes are still important and used today by many tribes and cultures.

Their tattoos were keloid in form and were produced by female artisans who lifted their client's skin with a fishhook, thorn, safety pin, or finger and then the tip of the epidemoid fold was sliced one or more times with a razor blade or broken piece of glass. The Hlengwe tattooist then rubbed ground charcoal mixed with castor oil or red ochre into the wounds to darken them.<sup>33</sup>

Between the 1920s and the 1940s, however, steel needles quickly replaced the traditional cutting tools in Hlengwe and tattooing became far less painful for the client.<sup>34</sup> This shift also resulted in tattoos that were less textured than those of past times and because they were less tactile, the sexual connotations once related to body modification were lost.

Indigenous tattooing has all but disappeared globally, but in recent years tattoos have experienced something of a renaissance in Europe and North America. The reasons for this are not clear-cut but it is apparent that tattooing in the ancient world has many things in common with modern tattooing. Today, people choose to be tattooed for artistic, cosmetic,



sentimental/memorial, religious, and magical reasons, and to symbolize their belonging to or identification with particular groups, including criminal gangs

### **3.7 PUBERTY STAGE**

Puberty stage is a very important stage on the social life of the Hlengwe people. There are traditions which were passed from generation to generation which many children do not like to miss. According to Junod, in a great many Bantu tribes, the age of puberty is marked by ceremonies of girls initiation often accompanied by male circumcision.<sup>35</sup> This is where informal instructions were given to the children who are regarded as a preparation and necessary preliminary for a life as an adult member of the society. These practices are still practiced by the Hlengwe and even non-Hlengwe societies practice it. The male circumcision is now being recommended by the government as the best way of preventing sexual transmitted diseases.

#### **3.7.1 KHOMBA**

Khomba is a practice which was like by men because to them it was of great advantage during sexual intercourse. Khomba is seen by the Hlengwe as the rite of passage into womanhood. This practice can be dated back to the time of Tshauke. The Portuguese documents claim that this practice was practiced long ago in Mozambique.<sup>36</sup> It was practiced by other Bantu groups such as the Pedi in South Africa and the Remba in Mberengwa. Komba survived for generations because all girl wish to be seen as real Hlengwe with a culture which is different from other cultures. Khomba was a prerequisite for a Hlengwe child to be married. Hlengwe girls have to be initiated at the onset of puberty. Hannam cited in Shoko who research on the girls' initiation among the

Remba defines Komba as Kuibva, which means ripe.<sup>37</sup> Shoko believe that Komba rite is intended to move a mature girl (mhandara) from the state of girlhood to that of womanhood.<sup>38</sup>

The girls who qualify to go for Komba were those who have commenced menstruation. This is an indication that the girl is mature and is capable of getting married and bearing children.<sup>39</sup>

There are two qualifications which are menstruation and virginity. Junod observed that, when a girl comes of age, she confesses to her mother that her menses have appeared for the first time, and the mother simply answers: "Hi kukula" " this means growth.<sup>40</sup> The girl will be taken an adoptive mother, possibly in a village particularly relatives. In every village there are some elderly women called Mai Murilele whose role is to initiate young girls into the rite of Komba.<sup>41</sup> Murilele was paid in form of chicken and grains or when the girls she initiated were married she will collect the gifts she was given (matengwa)

In preparation for the ceremony a girl identifies the Murilele of her choice. Then collects and presents to her a white piece of cloth and bundle of firewood. Then will begin a seclusion period of two month. It is called khomba, or yisamatin, to lead to the water. According to Mkachana, Murilele choose a hut for the initiates to stay where she prohibited men and uninitiated ladies to enter.<sup>42</sup> Murilele will be assisted by initiated ladies called Mdzabhi. These selected old women are the tutors and god mothers

During the day, khombana (initiates) live in the bush. According to Njakeni the camp site is called chidzumbwini.<sup>43</sup> In the bush they collect firewood. The area where khombana stays will be fenced with a red blanket. This red blanket is a sign of a no going area. Anybody who enters

the area will be fined. The fine is usually a goat. The Komba rite is conducted during the months of June to July in winter for two reasons. First in winter wounds inflicted during the pulling of clitoris heal easily with very little bleeding. Second, the initiates are taught to endure the hardships of life especially when they are made to wake up early in the morning, bathe in cold water, dance or perform rigorous exercises.

Three or four girls receive the initiation together. They are shut up in a hut and when they come outside, they must always wear over their face a veil consisting of a cloth very dirty and greasy.<sup>44</sup> Every morning they are led to the pool and their whole body is immersed in the water as far as the neck. Other initiated girls or women accompany them singing obscene songs, driving away with sticks any man who happens to be on the road, as no man is allowed to see a girl during this period.

The main duty of Mudzabhi is to educating khombana in the form of poems. Songs were also used as a method of teaching the initiates and denounce bad behaviour. Khombana are taught the basic roles of a woman in society, such as respect for husband and in-laws, taught socio-cultural norm that include dating, sexual conduct, self-reliance, brewing beer and ritual ceremonial duties and the use of African medicines.<sup>45</sup> Woman is taught the art and splendor of sex. The woman is expected to be sexually active. They taught how to move her waist. The woman wears attractive beads around her waist, neck and wrist. This is meant to entice the husband into romantic sexual conduct.

At the end of the month when khombana are supposed to go back to their parents they conduct Vujelajela. This is when they move during night door by door begging. The next part of the ceremony is devoted to giving the girl a new name her parents gave her at birth. Now she must select a name of her choice. The names which khombana were given include Makanani, Mhlaba, Njakeni, Tsatsawani, Khiyasi and many more.<sup>46</sup>

It was the time now Munyai sent to the parents to notify them about the day when khomba will be out. At the end of the month the adoptive mother brings the girl home to her true mother. She also presents her with a pot of beer. According to Kachere, soon after graduation, the girls are required to tie red bandanas around their heads to make them recognisable as the “new women”.<sup>47</sup> This red bandana they call it Hlahla.

Komba has been a subject of criticism by researchers. From my own observation Komba means that a girl is ripe for marriage even at primary level. This led to early marriage and the spread of HIV/AIDS. The girls soon after graduation as tikomba craved for sex as they were taught sexual matters. It needs to be noted that these days tikomba are also attended by Shona girls living in the Hlengweni area.

However it needs to be noted that with the introduction of western civilisation certain changes have been made in the girls 'initiation. Khomba is now being practiced during school holidays. This means that the time of Khomba is being shortened in order to suit school requirements. Khombana also return their birth names and just changed for a shorter period. This shows some flexibility to accommodate the school calendar.<sup>48</sup> Another change is the nature how it is being

practiced and qualifications. Girls who are no longer virgin are allowed to attend and they referred as Madhubhunya.<sup>49</sup> Even married women are allowed to attend the initiation. The practice is now being copied by the Shona people who see it as a good way of teaching their children

### **3.7.2 MURUNDU/ MALE CIRCUMCISSION**

Human interest changed with time, in the past years Hlengwe male circumcision was seen as ancient, barbaric and primitive by the non-Hlengwe people. Now those who were against the idea are the ones who campaign for it. It HIV/AIDS which makes Hlengwe culture of male circumcision being appreciated by many people and even the government called for free male circumcision by doctors. Here is a detailed analysis of Hlengwe male circumcision.

Hlengwe boy under gone an initiation seclusion which they refer as Murundu. This is male circumcision. Male circumcision can be defined as the surgical removal of the foreskin (prepuce) from the human penis.<sup>50</sup> The history of the migration and evolution of the practice of circumcision is followed mainly through the cultures and peoples in two separate regions. In the lands south and east of the Mediterranean, starting with Sudan and Ethiopia, the procedure was practiced by the ancient Egyptians and the Semites, and then by the Jews and Muslims, with whom the practice traveled to and was adopted by the Bantu Africans.<sup>51</sup>

Sibanda defines male circumcision among the Shangani/Hlengwe as part of a traditional initiation school that transforms boys into men.<sup>52</sup> The practice of MC has a long history. This age old tradition is highly treasured in traditional and modern circles of various communities. Mbiti

defines, MC as “the cutting off of the foreskin of the male’s reproductive organ” It is both a surgical and non-surgical removal of the foreskin in men.<sup>53</sup>

According to Junod, the circumcision school (Ngoma) is held every fourth or fifth year and all the boys from ten to sixteen years are sent to it by their parents.<sup>54</sup> However nowadays Ngoma is being held every year. According to Shoko boys were taken during night and no one was supposed to resist.<sup>55</sup> This means sometimes boys were forced into Ngoma by their parents. Some may escape, but if they happen to be at hand on the next occasion, they will be incorporated by consent or by force.

According to Johnston they were licenced by the chief, he receives payment in cattle, goats, fowl, beer, and cash and also collects small payments from the novices, which were known as vaka hoko.<sup>56</sup> He goes on to say when the chiefs and the visiting medicine man have agreed upon the time of the rite, instructions are sent out for uncircumcised boys, youth and young men to assemble.

They led to a forest in the mountains very far away from the village where people will not be there. They built the lodge outside the village, in a remote place, not too far however, because the women must bring each day food for all the inmates of the “yard of mysteries. The Sahisa is the great doctor of the school. He has poured his charms on the fence to protect the lodge against wizards.<sup>57</sup> Even adult members of the community who were uncircumcised were allowed to go. Boys circumcised four years ago must also attend the whole school as shepherds or as servants of the men and watchers over the candidates.

During the process, the foreskin of the penis is cut off by using a sharp but unsterilized traditional instrument or knife. The surgeons now use an ordinary European knife; formerly they had only native made knives. According to Foto cited in Shoko circumcision takes place on a rock called tlabá using razor or knife.<sup>58</sup> Some boys are reported to have died as victims of careless surgery under traditional knife. The circumcised must also be prepared to die if their wound does not heal properly and if the Sahisa's medicine is not successful.<sup>59</sup> Many of them have reported to have died. It is absolutely prohibited to mourn over them. The mother of the deceased is informed of his death by a notch cut in the edge of the plate in which she brings the food. She must not cry. The corpse is buried in a wet place, in a grave dug with sticks, as it would make people suspicious if the shepherds were to go to the village and take spades for that work.

All what was done during the seclusion period must be kept secret. According to Lusenga who was circumcised at Chehungwe in 2004 says that no one was allowed to circumcise lodge and if you reach the lodge by mistake you were going to be circumcised.<sup>60</sup> According to Lieutenant-Colonel J Stevenson Hamilton in his book *The Lowveld, Its Wild life and its people* quoted by Sparrow writes:

*'Everything is kept secret; no one not on duty thereat is allowed to approach the school, or to communicate with the boys during the whole period of initiation. The novices are taught, and compelled to speak a secret language, and they also wear a special dress made of palm leaves, that travelers may know them at a distance, and avoid them. After having been circumcised, each boy is put through various ordeals and trials, with the object of teaching him endurance; he is starved, beaten, exposed naked to the cold nights, and otherwise ill-treated... At the conclusion of*

*the school, they are told that they are now men, that they have passed the ordeals, and that in future they must behave no longer like little children; must not steal food from the fields ... tell lies, nor commit any of the other peccadilloes ...beneath the dignity of men'. After this they discard their old names and adopt new ones.*<sup>61</sup>

According to Peresuh, the Shangani/Hlengwe traditional education occurs both informally and formally from an early stage in life, stretching throughout one's lifetime, 'from womb to tomb'.<sup>62</sup> The period of the initiation rite is critical for adulthood lessons mirrored in traditional African education whose goals included: the development of the child's latent physical skills, character, respect for the elders and peers, intellectual skills, vocational training, communal spirit and promotion of the cultural heritage. According to Hetisani during Murundu were expected to catch wild animals such as rabbits, kudu, using traditional weapons such as bows, arrows, spears and knobkerries.<sup>63</sup>

According to Sachiti whether a boy or a fully grown up man, a customary name one gets after spending a month in the bush during the male circumcision ceremony is of grand significance<sup>64</sup>. "The names are given according to characteristics presented by someone during the one month long stay in the wilderness

New names after circumcision

1. Kazamula-----Victory
2. Muzamani-----Happiness
3. Hanyani-----One who lives longer



4. Hatlani-----One who gets prematurely initiated
5. Musengi-----One who judges
6. Chavani-----One who forced to be circumcised
7. Xithavangoma-----One who gets initiated first
8. Gezani-----
9. Hlayisi-----Keeper
10. Musisinyani
11. Risimati
12. Hlengani
13. Tinyiko-----Gift

The initiated boys return to their homes wearing white shorts, white T/shirt, barefooted and with a bare hair cut (zuda). The boys also had given thumba that is a wooden stick. Thumba is for masculine identity in Shangani culture. This Thumba is made up of a tree called munyadza which is easy to make long sticks. These sticks are highly respected and the entire uncircumcised are not allowed to touch it. The uncircumcised are supposed to sleep on the ground if the meet vaka hoko carrying Thumba.

During graduation, the elders led by the chiefs, headmen and the parents of the initiates attend the festival to celebrate the initiation of the boys into adulthood. The respective families and village welcome the new names by way of a social celebration and through a socio-religious ceremony known as kuyimba (joyous occasion) where bwala (traditional brewed beer) is drunk.<sup>66</sup>

It needs to be noted that for the past years, initiation ceremonies have been performed with a marked difference, chiefs have allowed doctors and nurses from the government's medical male circumcision programme to remove the foreskins of initiates' penises surgically. Previously, only traditional circumcisers without medical training were permitted to do so.

According to Chibasa, there have been several initiation-related injuries and deaths in the past, but this year more than 1 000 adolescents were circumcised safely in five circumcision camps.<sup>67</sup>

The initiates also received health information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV. The day-long graduation ceremony was attended by local government leaders, health department officials, Shangaan chiefs, traditional leaders from other communities and workers from the health organisation Population Services International (PSI), which is the Zimbabwean government's technical partner in the implementation of medical male circumcision.<sup>68</sup>

**Fig 1.2 Showing Circumcised Hlengwe Boys with thumba/wooden stick**



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## **CHAPTER 4: CHILDREN ABUSES AND MEASURES TO MITIGATE THEM**

Traditional cultural practices reflect values and beliefs held by members of a community for periods often spanning generations. Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group, such as children and women. This chapter is an analysis of harmful traditional practices and to discuss measures implement to mitigate these harmful traditional practices. These harmful traditional practices include child pledging, chiramu, appeasing the avenging spirits, husband/wife inheritance, property grabbing, endogamy and marriage by the Holy Spirit. Despite their harmful nature and their violation of international human rights laws, such practices persist because they are not questioned and take on an aura of morality in the eyes of those practicing them. The Zimbabwean government and Non-Governmental Organization have done their best in an attempt to mitigate child abuses.

According to Br Kamwana children have only one chance of a childhood<sup>1</sup>. They deserve to be protected from harm, to enjoy good emotional, mental and physical health, and to feel that they belong in their home, at school and in their local community. Kamwana believed that it is never too early or too late to offer a helping hand and to give the most disadvantaged youngsters the chance of a better childhood and a brighter future.<sup>2</sup> Within this discourse the child is always in the process of becoming, an adult-in-the-making with specific educational needs that adults should take seriously. It is the responsibility of adults to provide the appropriate education and control to enable children to develop into mature and responsible citizens.

#### **4.1 KUTSVALELA/ KUZVARIRA**

In the eastern part of Zimbabwe, families have also resorted to the old system of kutsvalela (forced marriage) for survival.<sup>3</sup> Families take young girls out of school and give them to richer men in return for food and other economic gains. In so doing the custodians of culture do not see anything wrong with the practice, as long as the bride price is paid. For the young girls who are caught up in this desperate situation, bread and butter issues raise high above their rights.

This means that while globalization has swept across Zimbabwe, there are some residues of traditional practices that have stood the test of time among the Hlengwe in the country. One of the most enduring traditional customary practices among this tribe is kutsvalela. According to Mawere, kuzvarira is a traditional customary practice of marrying off, without her consent, an underage girl (sometimes as young as eight or even before birth) to a rich man who already has another wife or wives in exchange for money, food and other material possessions that guarantee the girl's family not to suffer acute economic deprivation ever again.<sup>4</sup> Kutsvalela is a psychological 'death sentence' meted on defenseless minors and is a gross violation and abuse of women's human rights. In light of the HIV/Aids pandemic, the custom also exposes young girls to the contraction of the deadly disease.

#### **4.2 CHIRAMU/SIBALE**

Chiramu/sibale is a culturally sanctioned sexually suggestive play between brothers in-law and sisters in-law, it is where by a man abuses the young sister of his wife. A case in point is when a man fondle breast and private parts of his wife's young sister. It involves sharing bedroom jokes between the in-law and his wife's young sister.<sup>5</sup> On the day of paying lobola or upon

visiting to where he marries the in-law is given a room to play with his wife's young sisters. This has been accepted as lawful since time immemorial to the extent that it becomes difficult to remove it from human mind and traditions.<sup>6</sup> There are many ladies which were pregnant because of the Chiramu practice. This created a space of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS to young girls.

#### **4.3 KURIYA INGOZI/KURIPA NGOZI**

The Hlengwe people believed in the life after death. In their belief of life after death they have a great fear of the avenging spirits. By this fear they have a customary practice which they call Uriyaingozi. The customary practice offering a young girl or grown woman as compensatory payment in inter-family disputes as well as in the appeasement of avenging deceased spirits.<sup>7</sup> An avenging spirit is appeased by offering a young woman in marriage to the aggrieved spirit in an uncanny and an extraordinary spiritual marriage covenant and the spirit husband is the spiritual manifestation the inevitably follows.

Technically, ngozi is the spirit of a person who has been murdered and then comes back to seek revenge in the family of the murderer by causing unfathomable sorrow through illnesses, misfortunes, or a series of deaths until the perpetrator pays reparations to the offended family according to Mawere.<sup>8</sup> Ngozi is premised on the idea of 'teat for tat'. According to Macharangwanda, ngozi starts operations on quite a mild form, some slight unpleasantness occurs which is sufficient to cause the wrong-doer to consult a diviner as to the cause.<sup>9</sup> Ngozi kills such a person, the heir has a claim for reparation against the wrong-doer, as had he In the Hlengwe culture, when the guilty family has failed, deliberately or otherwise, to pay restitution,

ingozi strikes viciously and harshly by not only targeting the perpetrator of the crime, but his kinsmen as well.

As Bourdillon, remarks, “ingozi is fearsome and terrifying because it attacks suddenly and very harshly”.<sup>11</sup> According to Mawere, ingozi will only stop causing harm and death in the family of the murderer/perpetrator after it is appeased.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that, among the Hlengwe people, it is not always the case that the wrongdoer is the one who gets killed or cursed by ingozi, but any person who is a blood relative of the wrongdoer is subject to the anger of ingozi.

The victim of the murder needs to be replaced by compensation in the form of a herd of cattle and a virgin girl, if the murdered person was a man, and a herd of cattle and a small boy, if the murdered person was a woman. The guilty family, thus, is given the option to either pay reparation or suffers the consequences through wreaking havoc, for example, causing a series of misfortunes, deaths, and illnesses.<sup>13</sup>

Vimbai Chivaura, a Professor at the University of Zimbabwe, considers ingozi as a crime. Prime ingozi arise when innocent blood is shed. If you kill a person, you will have terminated all the plans for that person. Even if no one knows that you have done so, you have to acknowledge the crime and pay reparations.<sup>14</sup> When human beings die, their souls would be separated from their body. That soul will torment those who committed the crimes.

According to Libombo, the culprit family should sit down after the incident that is murder and decide as to which girl child should be used as a shield against avenging spirits. In an interview



with a traditional healer called Libombo the power of the dead still exist among all the Hlengwe and failure to pay will be a phone call to ending death. He explains one incident when it happened between two families which are Hlolokela and Hlaringo, the Hlolokela being grieved charged about fought herds of cattle followed by a virgin girl in 2008. The girl child without her consent is led by elders of her family to the grieved family and become part of that family. She will be given a husband without consultation.<sup>16</sup>

The argument being that life lost is replenished with life. That is why a young girl or boy is usually given to the offended family in marriage in order to continue the life of the deceased through her or his off-springs. This is what Br J Kamwana calls 'Bridging broken bridges' and he also believed that it is not an abuse but a restoration of relationship. Br Kamwana also says once the livings are appeased the 'living dead' are also appeased. In this way the cosmological balance disturbed by the outrageous act of murder is restored.<sup>17</sup> This is so because the Hlengwes are essentially spiritual people in a general outlook. Their conception of justice is very different from the Westerners'. To them, ingozi is an integral part of their justice system. For the Hlengwe human life, thus, is one of the most valuable assets in the Hlengwe society and ingozi is essentially an expression of disapproval when it comes to actions that result in taking away life. Hence, to the Hlengwe people, ngozi (manslaughter understood in terms of the dire circumstances that follow failure to atone) has a regulatory function which is that of deterrence, rather than retribution.

Due to these atrocities caused by ngozi, the threat posed by the latter is feared by everyone in the Hlengwe culture. It is this fear that, for a long time, has maintained harmony among the Hlengwe

and has made them peace-loving people. In view of this observation, I say that the Hlengwe abuse their children who had contributed next to nothing in the killing of the 'living dead'. The child becomes a servant of the new family and his/her carrier opportunities are being cancelled. The attention of the child is diverted to child bearing to replace the 'living dead'.

#### **4.4 NEGATIVE IMPACT OF KHOMBA**

According to Chikunda et al, Khomba is a customary practice which has existed in conjunction with formal schooling in the upbringing of girls in the area.<sup>18</sup> This means that Hlengwe girls are subjected to the Khomba curriculum as well as the formal education curriculum in schools as they grew. Khomba also compromises the retention of girls in school. The Khomba ceremony seems to enforce the idea that the initiates are 'ripe for marriage' – even though some of the girls are only in primary school. The girls' focus is diverted towards marriage and they develop an attitude that formal schooling is less important than the marriage institution. According Br Kamwana soon after graduation Khombana begin to crave for sex because they were induced with sexual feelings during their initiation.<sup>19</sup>

This contributes to the high female dropout rate from formal schooling in the area. Br Kamwana is also of the view that increased the number of prostitutes at Rutenga Business center.<sup>20</sup> Now many of them are pregnant without knowing the fathers of their pregnancy. This means that some girls get married whilst they are in school. In schools such as Rutenga High, Sagwari Secondary School and Hlengwe between 2008 and 2013 a high rate of school drop outs were girls. These girls they ended up being married by old man and Border Jumpers who don't care about their life. What the Border jumpers want is just sexual satisfactions as these girls are

assumed to the way of handling husbands. In support of this Kachere is of the view that, according to the Shangaan/Hlengwe tradition, the headman said, soon after graduation, the girls are required to tie red bandanas around their heads to make them recognizable as the “new women”.

*The red bandanas distinguish and show they are ready for womanhood and marriage but it is this “advertisement” that has become the girls’ curse for they become easy targets for early marriage.*

*“After graduation the girls are eager to find suitors and the red bandanas provide easy identification. And once on the market, there is stiff competition, resulting in the youngsters marrying off at those early ages.”<sup>21</sup>*

In this world of gender sensitive, the Khomba curriculum can be criticized for creating and perpetuating the perception of masculinity and femininity as hierarchical contrasts where the categories associated with masculinity are perceived as superior and dominant and the categories associated with femininity are viewed as inferior and subordinate. Khombana were taught to respect and obey their husband. They are not allowed to challenge the decision of their husbands. Due to lack of education they see nothing wrong with the continuation of patriarchal societies.

#### **4.5 WIFE INHERITANCE**

A backward and primitive practice of wife inheritance is being practiced by the Hlengwe in the modern world. Their belief lies on the fact that the family life of the dead person must be continued by his brothers. They force young boy to marry off wife of the deceased person. According to Pahlela *it is good for us to help our deceased family members by bearing children*

*for them. We have paid lobola so it means we can't let our wealth gone for nothing. The death of our relative doesn't mean his family ends there. In Shona they say Kufa Kwamujomi kamba haivharwi.*<sup>22</sup>

After proper burial rituals have been done the elders of the deceased person gather and arrange beer brewing in which they invite their in-laws. Upon the actual date of the ceremony the deceased man's young brothers gather in one room in which their dead brother's wife will bring a bucket of water to give the one she likes to marry.<sup>23</sup> The one whom she chooses automatically becomes her husband to work for her and his brother's children.

#### **4.6 HUSBAND INHERITANCE**

It is also practiced among the Hlengwe people. The life of the Hlengwe is bound up in his children. The birth of the children considered of first importance that those adults dying without leaving children are buried in a different manner to those who it is considered have done their duty to the family. The lack of children on the part of the wife gives a right to demand another girl from his father-in-laws. According to Howman childless wife give a younger daughter or other available in marriage to the son-in-law that she may bear children to maintain the bond of kinship created by the marriage of the first instance.<sup>24</sup> Such a substitute known as bondwe may be given to a person who is already HIV positive. In Limbigia there is the case when a woman failed to get pregnant for five. The husband demanded muramu because he had paid lobola of 10 herds of cattle.<sup>25</sup>

#### **4.7 PROPERTY GRABBING**

Property inheritance is every child's right if parents pass away. Denied property inheritance has compromised many children's life among the Hlengwe speaking people. At death of their father children and their mother are denied the deceased's property. Usually it is taken by the deceased's brother or other male relatives. Children are left empty handed. After death of a household owner with children and wife relatives gather to allocate his property. According to their tradition women and children cannot possess or own cattle and land. Elderly male relatives of the deceased men share property among themselves.<sup>26</sup> Children are not allowed to voice against the arrangements. Children are distributed among the relatives. It can be noted that the relatives distribute property like the deceased never bear any child on earth. This is child abuse and the modern way such as the issue of written wills must be religiously respected.

#### **4.8 ENDOGAMY**

Endogamy is being practiced by the Hlengwe people. Marrying outside the Hlengwe community is not tolerated. Children have no rights to choose life partners whom they want. They believe that the rightful partner comes from within their community. It is dictated to children whether they like it or not. The idea of marrying within their community is a way to guard jealously intrusions of their cultural practices by outsiders.<sup>27</sup> A Hlengwe boy is encouraged to propose love from among his people. This helps to observe and keep community secrets within the society.

#### **4.9 MARRIAGE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The spread of African Initiated Churches increased the rate of child abuses in Zimbabwe. The point at stake is the Johane Marange Apostolic Church in Zimbabwe. It is now nationwide including Hlengweni area. They indoctrinated their adherents particularly children. According to Chakawa some of the girl children are thoroughly indoctrinated such that they are not even aware of their rights. All this is premised on the realization that the church policy thwarts the full blossoming of children such that when they become adults, they cannot productively contribute to national development.<sup>28</sup>

In this apostolic church there is a strong belief in the Holy Spirit and the power won't be challenged. The Holy Spirit can be used to heal several diseases and also the same Holy Spirit is used to validate child marriages as the prophets would have been '*directed*' by the Holy Spirit to marry young girls.<sup>29</sup> It is also important to note that education is next to nothing to the believers and its adherents cannot have a critical mind. The only qualification needed for a girl child is menstruation and once she begins menstruation she will be married by the Holy Spirit.<sup>28</sup> The lack of education often disempowers the girls. They do not question certain harmful practices in the church such as the practice of not taking children to health institutions. The cross-generational nature of marriages in the church is also problematic because young girls cannot stand up for themselves in the marriage to demand sex safe or take part in decisions that affect their health such as child spacing.

#### **4.10 MEASURES ADOPTED TO MITIGATE CHILD ABUSE**

This last part of the chapter analysis the role played by the Zimbabwean government and other players such as Non-Governmental Organizations to mitigate child abuses among the Hlengwe. How effective are the measure implement will also be discussed and the challenges they face in an attempt to mitigate these abuses. Despite the modernization of the world and human civilization brought by the coming of the Bible in Africa change in the undesirable traditions has not yet been achieved. Even the Bible can be quoted to justify the abuse of children.

The Government of Zimbabwe as a signatory to various national, regional and international declarations on the rights and protection of children has implemented a number of protective policies, legislative instruments and programmes to ensure the fulfillment of all children and women's rights and specifically their right to protection from sexual violence and abuse.

Policy makers and the child rights sector need to defending the children's rights through effective protection and safety measures. The abuse and violence against children is a result of socio-economic and political factors. There is no doubt that the child rights sector has largely responded to the high rates of child abuse in Zimbabwe in 2010 and 2014 through conducting child rights advocacy and education training workshops in urban, peri-urban and rural communities.<sup>30</sup> Emerging factors out of these workshops is that most children are vulnerable due to unstable households and also a very low understanding of their rights. Hence, the shocking figures of abuse. Perpetrators, consciously or unconsciously, are capitalizing on the lack of information on rights at household level.

Zimbabwe's laws on children are meant to protect the safety and welfare of the child in every household. Apparently, at national level, Zimbabwe has progressive child-protection instruments, the main one being the Children's Protection and Adoption Act (Children's Act). Other subsidiary instruments, including the National Plan of Action and the Orphan Care Policy promote the overall protection of the rights of the child.<sup>31</sup>

The new constitution of Zimbabwe provides and guarantees an expanded bill of rights to children (0-18 years) and youths (15-18 years) (Chapters 2:19, 20, 25 and 27)) and recognizes the existence and role of child-centered NGOs and networks through memorandums of understanding with parent ministries of the Government of Zimbabwe.<sup>32</sup> This makes it better for the children who now have representatives.

Underlying concepts and definitions promoted by international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child need to be constantly reviewed and monitored by actors in the child rights sector<sup>33</sup>.

In addition to awareness rising, the United Nations supported the Ministry Of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development in lobbying for the historical enactment of Zimbabwe's Domestic Violence Act. In addition, in 2007 training was held to ensure Chiefs and Headmen were reached with information on how they can apply and interpret the Act, offer support to victims in their communities and stop abuse.<sup>34</sup>



Another activity is The Stand Up and Speak Out Information Campaign within the work being done by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, the United National and partners.<sup>35</sup>

The establishment of the Victim Friendly System (VFS) in 1997 through the amendment of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act that aimed at supporting survivors of sexual violence and abuse to pursue their right to access specialized health, justice, welfare and other services. A Protocol on the Multi-Sectoral Management of Child Sexual Abuse was also developed to provide guidance on sector agencies' roles and responsibilities. The Zimbabwe Republic Police implemented the Child Friendly Police Stations.<sup>36</sup> The National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Phase II provide a framework for coordinated action to ensure that orphans, vulnerable children and their families, in Zimbabwe, have incomes and access to basic services.<sup>37</sup> Orphans and other vulnerable children are being assisted by finance and clothes.

Therefore one can conclude this chapter by saying Bantu traditions manipulates the unchallenging and unnoticed group which is the children. Give children the respect they deserve doesn't cost a single cent to the community. Nostalgia behavior led to the undermining of children's rights account to the not useful group of people. The residues of barbaric and primitive which made colonialist to label Africans half child and half devil are still in practice. Things such as child pledging, appeasing the avenging spirits, endogamy, marriage via the Holy Spirit are outdated they must come to an end. The government and other sectors of child rights preach the gospel of children's rights but people do not want to listen to them.

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## CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The major achievement of this dissertation has been in its success in unearthing the social history of the Hlengwe. They were largely neglected by scholars yet they are people with their own history. After an in-depth analysis of the Hlengwe it is crystal clear that the Hlengwe originated in Mozambique in areas around Delagoa Bay, Libombo Mountains and Mavhuwe. The false ethnical identification about the Hlengwe was a result of the Mfecane. This was the beginning of Shangaan identification. In Zimbabwe the Hlengwe settled along the rivers such as Nuanetsi/Mwenezi, Bubi, Lundi and Save. They were displaced from their ancestral areas by the colonialists. It was during the colonial land alienation when the Hlengwe people found it difficult to stay in their home areas.

As a minority group in Zimbabwe they received little scholarly attraction. Only few scholars had tried to give a history of the Hlengwe but they failed to recognise children in their writings. As an amateur historian i tried to give a detailed study of social history of childhood in a Hlengwe society under Chief Chitanga. It is interesting that the Hlengwe culture resisted colonialism and continued up to date. There are only few things that had changed due to modern influences.

Due to social interaction with other groups there was cultural diffusion and cultural erosion among the Hlengwe. The social life of the Hlengwe has some uniqueness and the upbringing of children. Some practices have been abandoned altogether others are still regarded as essential, though modern conditions make them very difficult to carry out in a modern conditions their consequences are sometime very different from those they had in a traditional environment.

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