

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL

SOME GENDERED AFRICAN RITUAL PRACTICES:  
THE CASE OF *IMPEPHO*.

(AN INDIGENOUS AFRICAN PLANT)

MPUMELELO C. NTSHANGASE.

2012

SOME GENDERED AFRICAN RITUAL PRACTICES:  
THE CASE OF *IMPEPHO*.

(AN INDIGENOUS AFRICAN PLANT)

BY

MPUMELELO C. NTSHANGASE.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
MASTERS DEGREE IN THE SCHOOL OF ARTS, UKZN.

SUPERVISOR: DR N. B ZONDI

DATE: FEBRUARY 2012.

## DECLARATION

I, MPUMELELO CAROL NTSHANGASE, student number: 201502811, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Some gendered African ritual practices: The case of *impepho* (An indigenous African plant)” is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any university.

.....

**Date:** .....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the people who have assisted me while working on this research especially the following:

- I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Nompumelelo Zondi, for her guidance, patience, understanding and support at all times. *Ngiyabonga ntombi yakoNondaba ngokuselusa nangokusibekezelela kwakho. Unwele olude Mancinza, Gagashe.*
- I would like to extend my greatest gratitude to my mother, MaZulu *omuhle ngiyabonga ngakho konke. INkosi ikugcine njalo.*
- All my family members who have contributed towards this research by encouraging me and supporting me throughout this project.
- All my friends especially Wendy Nzama, Mooi Nxumalo and Thembelihle Zuma for all their valuable contribution. *Ngiyabonga boFruza. INkosi inibusise.*
- My fiancé Nkululeko Bhengu, *ngiyabonga Ngcolosi ngokungibekezelela.*
- Mr. S. Gumede for his advice and assistance in this study.
- Mr Govender, my school principal for his patience.
- Dr G. Mazibuko, for her assistance in the final stages of the research.
- To Megan White for editing and proofreading my work.
- The women who participated in this study, *ngiyabonga bomama bami ukube beningekho lolu cwaningo belungeke luphumelele.*
- Last but not least God almighty for giving me courage, strength and hope to pursue and complete this research.

## DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my mother, Thembisile Ivy Ntshangase, a single mother who has successfully raised four wonderful children on her own. A woman of true beauty from within, kind, caring and nurturing. She is the reason I decided to investigate this particular topic. You are dearly loved. *Ngiyabonga MaZulu omuhle, uNkulunkulu akubusise uphile isikhathi eside.*

## Abstract

This research work is about rituals practice, with specific reference to burning of *impepho* (an indigenous African Plant) and how this practice excludes women in general. *Impepho* is an indigenous African plant that, once dried, is burnt in order to communicate with one's ancestors. *Impepho* is well-known to the majority of Sub Saharan Africans as it is used to communicate with their ancestors and it is also used by traditional healers to communicate with the deceased. It is used in various ceremonies, as well as in traditional feasts, when chickens, goats or cows are offered to the ancestors. The aim of this study was to find out why women are not allowed to burn *impepho*. Times have changed to the point that there are now many Zulu households that are headed by women, and these women do in fact burn *impepho* in order to communicate with their ancestors. This then is the pertinent question: do these women's requests or prayers go unheard by the ancestors?

The study aims to find out from the female participants if they burn *impepho* in their home or if they still adhere to this male constructed mentality that women should not burn *impepho*.

| <b>Table of contents</b>                   | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Chapter 1: Introductory Perspective</b> |             |
| 1.1 Introduction                           | 1           |
| 1.2 Background to the Study                | 1-2         |
| 1.3 Aims and Objectives                    | 2           |
| 1.4 Rationale of the Study                 | 3           |
| 1.5 Key Research Questions                 | 3-4         |
| 1.6 Delimitation and scope of the study    | 4           |
| 1.7 Structure of the Thesis                | 4-5         |
| 1.8 Conclusion                             | 5           |
| <b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>        |             |
| 2.1 Introduction                           | 6           |
| 2.2 What is literature review?             | 6           |
| 2.3 Research Paradigms                     | 6           |
| 2.3.1 What is a research paradigm?         | 6-7         |
| 2.3.2 Positivist paradigm                  | 7           |
| 2.3.3. Critical paradigm                   | 8           |
| 2.3.4. Interpretivist paradigm             | 8-9         |
| 2.4 Feminism                               | 10          |

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| 2.4.1 What is feminism?                       | 10-11 |
| 2.4.2. Types of feminism                      | 11    |
| 2.4.2.1 African Feminism                      | 11-12 |
| 2.4.2.2 Marxist Feminism                      | 12    |
| 2.4.2.3 Radical feminism                      | 12-13 |
| 2.4.2.4 Liberal feminism                      | 13    |
| 2.4.2.5 The exclusion of women                | 14-16 |
| 2.5 Changing women's roles                    | 16-17 |
| 2.6 Social Construction Theory                | 17-18 |
| 2.7 <i>Impepho</i> and incense                | 18    |
| 2.7.1 What is <i>impepho</i> ?                | 18-19 |
| 2.7.2 <i>Impepho</i> and its use in the home  | 19-20 |
| 2.7.3 Religious groups and the use of incense | 20-22 |
| 2.8 Conclusion                                | 22    |

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

|                                      |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 3.1 Introduction                     | 23    |
| 3.2 Research Methodology and Methods | 23    |
| 3.3 Ethnographic Study               | 23-24 |
| 3.4 Data Collection Methods          | 24    |



|   |       |
|---|-------|
| 3.5 Research Methods  | 24-25 |
| 3.5.1. Tools and techniques   | 25    |
| 3.5.2. Data collection and analysis                                   | 25    |
| 3.5.3 Research ethics   | 25    |
| 3.6 Interviews  | 26    |
| 3.6.1 Conducting interviews   | 26-27 |
| 3.6.2 Interviewing women  | 27-28 |
| 3.7 Conclusion  | 28    |
| <br><b>Chapter 4: Data Analysis</b>                                   |       |
| 4.1 Introduction  | 29    |
| 4.2 What is Data Analysis?  | 29-30 |
| 4.3 Data Analysis Methods   | 30    |
| 4.3.1 Grounded theory   | 30-31 |
| 4.3.2 Discourse analysis  | 31    |
| 4.3.3. Content analysis   | 31-32 |
| 4.3.4. Narrative analysis   | 32-33 |
| 4.3.5 Thematic analysis   | 33-36 |
| 4.4 The report-Themes   | 36    |
| 4.4.1 Many women do burn <i>impepho</i> to communicate with ancestors | 36-37 |

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| 4.4.2 Women are allowed to burn <i>impepho</i>   | 37    |
| 4.4.3 There are conditions for burning <i>impepho</i> as women   | 37-39 |
| 4.4.4 It is not safe to call a relative (third person) to burn <i>impepho</i><br>on your behalf  | 39-40 |
| 4.4.5 Ancestors cannot be separated, they are seen as one  | 40    |
| 4.4.6 Diviners (izangoma) have ancestors who possess them therefore<br>they are allowed to burn <i>impepho</i> so as to be able to assist their clients/patients | 41    |
| 4.4.7 Diviners suggest that you get an older male who shares your surname if you<br>do not have relatives  | 41-42 |
| 4.5 The results and discussion   | 42-46 |
| 4.6 Conclusion   | 46    |
| <br><b>Chapter 5: Conclusion</b>   |       |
| 5.1 Introduction   | 47    |
| 5.2 The study in Essence   | 47-48 |
| 5.3 General finding of the study   | 48-49 |
| 5.4 Limitations of the study   | 49-50 |
| 5.5 Recommendations  | 50-51 |
| 5.6 Conclusion   | 51    |
| <b>6. References</b>   | 52-55 |

## **Annexures**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Annexure A Ethical Clearance                          | 56 |
| Annexure B Supervisors Letter                         | 57 |
| Annexure C Letter from EmaQadini Induna               | 58 |
| Annexure D Letter from KwaNdengezi Councillor         | 59 |
| Annexure E Participants Consent Letter                | 60 |
| Annexure F Informed Consent for Participants          | 61 |
| Annexure G Questions for Focus Groups and Individuals | 63 |
| Annexure H Questions for Diviners                     | 64 |

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an introduction to this research and outlines what will be discussed and investigated. It also includes informative sections such as background of the study, rationale for the study, aims, objectives as well as scope of the study. It also gives an overview of what will be presented in each chapter.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

*Impepho* is a type of an indigenous African plant that, once dried, is burnt in order to communicate with one's ancestors. It is well-known to the majority of Sub Saharan Africans as it is used to communicate with ancestors and also used by traditional healers to communicate with the deceased. It is used in various ceremonies, as well as in traditional feasts, when chickens, goats or cows are offered to the ancestors. These ceremonies and traditional feasts include *umemulo* (the ceremony to celebrate girls' puberty rights), *ukubuyisa* (the bringing back home of a dead relative's spirit), funerals, and occasions of thanksgiving. Nyawose (2000: 41) gives a useful explanation of the use of *impepho* during each of these ceremonies. He also elaborates on the importance of *umsamo* (a sacred corner in the home set aside for the performance of ritual ceremonies, which includes the burning of *impepho*) and explains why strangers may not enter that space.

Zulu people associate themselves with their ancestors when they are happy, sad, or when any ritual is being performed. Some people burn *impepho* as a way of asking their ancestors to be with them and guide them. The word 'some' is deliberately used here to acknowledge that whilst certain women in certain areas and communities do in fact burn *impepho*, in other areas women are not permitted to do so at all. In places where women may use *impepho*, this 'permission', as it were, is confined to traditional healers, who use it when communicating with the deceased for healing purposes. The problem is that within the Zulu culture the powers for the use of *impepho* are generally vested with the *umnumzane* (the head of the family) and close male relatives. Ntuli (2010: 19) writes:

*"Impepho umuthi wase-Africa, umuthi okwazi ukuxhumana ngawo nabantu abangasekho kulomhlaba okhokho bethu. Lo muthi uwufaka odengezini*

*olunamalahle avuthayo uwushise kuwo, bese uyakhuluma lokho ofuna ukukutshela okhokho bakho.”*

“Impepho is an African plant that is used to communicate with one’s ancestors. It is placed in a piece of calabash and burnt whilst one communicates with one’s ancestors.”

### 1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to find out why women are not allowed to burn *impepho*. Times have changed to the point that there are now many Zulu households that are headed by women, and these women do in fact burn *impepho* in order to communicate with their ancestors. This then is the pertinent question: do these women’s requests or prayers go unheard by the ancestors?

The present study also aimed to find ways that will accommodate women participating in *impepho*-burning rituals; it did this by looking at female traditional healers who burn *impepho* and asking what privilege they possess in order to be allowed to communicate with the ancestors when other women are not permitted to do so. The study sought out the views of Zulu individuals, especially females, concerning the exclusion of women from this practice. I also specifically talked with some older women and widows who burn *impepho*. All this data helped in ascertaining how these women communicate with the ancestors and whether or not they feel that their requests and prayers are being heard.

The study also looked at other religious groups that burn incense – namely Hindus, Muslims and Catholics – and considered their use of incense. I explored the history of the use of *impepho*, asked if there was ever a time when women were allowed to burn it, and then considered the reasons behind the reality that is revealed.

Most people are of the view that *impepho* should only be burnt at night. This study investigated this idea as well, considering its origins and relevance. The study also aimed to discover ways that will accommodate women in terms of being allowed to burn *impepho* whilst still honouring their heritage and history. It is hoped that the study will help resolve pertinent issues concerning the burning of *impepho* and that it will thereby help those women who wish to communicate with their ancestors.

## 1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study forms part of indigenous knowledge systems; it attempts to redress certain discriminatory practices within the Zulu culture with specific reference to the burning of *impepho*. I am of the opinion that this is an interesting and useful area of research as it will help to clarify the rules surrounding the use of *impepho*, specifically with regard to women. Nearly all Zulu people burn *impepho* in order to communicate with their ancestors. But wherever you go Zulu men and several Zulu women are not of the opinion that ordinary women should not be allowed to use *impepho* nor should they be allowed to go to *umsamo* (the sacred shrine) to speak to the ancestors. Due to changes in society, women such as me have started to question the notion of women not being allowed to burn *impepho*. Since women constitute a significant proportion of those who take part in this practice, it is hoped that their concerns will be addressed through this research. These concerns are to do with why women are restricted in terms of burning *impepho* and how their needs in this regard can be accommodated. The research questions asked in the interviews address these issues.

The other reason for my choice of this topic is that I myself come from a female-headed home and when it comes to burning *impepho* my mother has to invite my uncle or my grandmother to come and burn it for us. We call upon our grandmother who is the oldest in our family since our grandfather has passed on. This is at times a difficult situation, especially when we would prefer to burn *impepho* privately and without their knowledge. Another concern for my family is this: if we were to move far away from our relatives, would we then not be able to communicate with our ancestors? There are those who are of the view that you can invite any male who bears the same surname as you to burn *impepho* for you. I feel that it would be better to have a woman who is part of one's own family enter into the sacred space rather than have a total stranger come in to perform the rite on your behalf.

## 1.5 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main questions that this study aimed to address were as follows:

- What is the symbolic meaning of the practice of burning *impepho*?
- Do prayers go unheard by the ancestors if an ordinary woman burns *impepho*?
- What is it that actually makes a woman's sacrificial prayers unacceptable?

- Why do men put their foot down about women burning *impepho*?
- How can this tradition be amended so as to accommodate women in general and those in female-headed families in particular?

## 1.6 DELIMITATION AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

My research project is about finding out the real reason(s) behind women being restricted with regard to the practice of burning *impepho*.

This study was also ethnographic in nature. Johnson (2000: 111) defines *ethnography* as “a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually do”. This study examined the Zulu people and their culture and considered how this culture discriminates against and marginalises women. It investigated Zulu people’s culture, their practices, and their beliefs, and it also compared these aspects of Zulu society with those of other groups living either in South Africa or beyond its borders.

In particular, the data for this study was collected from two places, namely KwaNyuswa, which is a rural area in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and KwaNdengezi, a semi-urban area in the same province. The participants were Zulu women over the age of fifty who are the heads of their families.

## 1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

**Chapter 1** is an introduction. It provides a background to the study as well as discusses aims and objectives of the study. The rationale and key research questions asked in the study are explained whilst the delimitation and scope of the study is also offered.

**Chapter 2** deals with the principal theories and paradigms that are used in the study and it also elaborates on the chosen theories. Furthermore the chapter includes a literature review, wherein information collected from books and articles about other nations, races and countries that use *impepho* and/or incense are discussed.

**Chapter 3** presents the research methodology and methods used in this study. The chapter therefore discusses focus groups and interviews, which were the methods employed for data collection. The chapter also includes an analysis of the focus groups and interviews.

**Chapter 4** presents an analysis of the collected data. I name and describe different analysis techniques, and then state why thematic analysis was chosen to be part of this research.

**Chapter 5** is the concluding chapter. It presents the study's findings, its recommendations, and finally its conclusion.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This first chapter was an introductory chapter that described the study topic, gave some background information, explained why I chose this topic, and detailed the aims and objectives of the study. It also listed the main questions that this study investigated. I also briefly outlined the structure of the thesis. The next chapter deals with the theories used in this research, speaks about the paradigms employed, and discusses the books I read that relate to this topic.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the study's paradigms and its theoretical framework. It also presents the literature review. Most researchers separate the theoretical framework from the literature review, but I decided to combine them because all the sources that were consulted – whether about paradigms or theoretical frameworks– form part of the literature review. The other reason for my decision is that feminist approach allows a student to come up with something original that works for them (Zondi, 2008:104).

### **2.2 WHAT IS LITERATURE REVIEW?**

Mouton (2001: 87) defines the literature review as the reading undertaken by the researcher that relates to his/her topic and that represents the existing scholarship or the available body of knowledge on the topic. This knowledge or information can be retrieved from books, journals, newspapers, theses and/or dissertations.

This chapter first discusses the different paradigms that were selected to be used in the research. The next section focuses on feminism, which was the chosen theoretical framework for this study. Literature about *impepho* or incense then forms the last section of this chapter.

### **2.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS**

Taylor *et al* (2006: 3) states that there are many different approaches to conducting research projects and that each methodological approach is situated within a certain theoretical perspective. This means that whenever one conducts research, one must choose a paradigm which best suits the nature of one's study.

#### **2.3.1 WHAT IS A RESEARCH PARADIGM?**

The paradigm is viewed by Guba and Lincoln (1994: 107) as a set of basic beliefs that deal with principles. A paradigm represents a person's worldview, which in turn defines for that person the nature of the world, his/her place and part in it, and the range of possible relationships that he/she can have with the said world. Guba and Lincoln also state that one's beliefs are basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith, as there is no way to establish their ultimate faithfulness. Bassey (1990: 8) has a similar notion of the paradigm; he defines it as a network of

coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the functions of researchers which, when adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions their thinking and informs their research actions.

Henning *et al* (2004: 5) defines the paradigm as a theory or hypothesis that serves as the framework against which one builds theories. Henning (et all, 2004:5) goes on to say that this framework fundamentally influences how one sees the world, determining one's perspective and shaping one's understanding of how things are connected. He also says that when conducting research one needs to see things from a certain angle, and this is done by using one or more paradigms.

I now present and define three possible paradigms and then explain my reasons for adopting the interpretivist paradigm for this research.

### **2.3.2 POSITIVIST PARADIGM**

A positivist paradigm is a paradigm that is used for conducting scientific research. It aims to find an explanation for certain investigated activities and it also aims to find ways to control those activities. The positivist view of knowledge is that knowledge is objective and universal. Taylor *et al* (2006: 15) says positivism advocates that the properties of the world can be measured through empirical, scientific observation and that a hypothesis can be tested by using an experimental group and a control group. The positivist paradigm is used mainly for experiments and empirical enquiries.

Positivism involves searching for the truth and then proving it through empirical means. It is a philosophical position that holds that the goal of knowledge is simply to describe and in some cases explain and also predict the phenomena that we experience as humans (whether quantitatively or qualitatively). The positivist framework is based on science and rests neither on feelings nor thoughts. Positivism is therefore scientific in nature as it aims to understand the world well enough so that phenomena can be controlled by a process of prediction. Positivism also assumes that knowledge can be understood in a systematic way and that it is accurate and certain. In a positivist paradigm, results can be observed and measured and the researcher or investigator is an expert who can control the investigated. The positivist paradigm would not work in my study as the study relies on the participants' reactions, comments and views. The researcher cannot control how people feel about the use or burning of *impepho*. Furthermore, *impepho* forms part of the Zulu culture and as such is dynamic; it cannot therefore be studied in a positivist manner.

### **2.3.3 CRITICAL PARADIGM**

The critical paradigm has been referred to by Henning *et al* (2004: 16) as the undoing of the positivist, objective paradigm. It advocates that the researcher attempt to deconstruct the world. In other words, the critical paradigm involves ‘unpacking’ power dynamics and emancipating the oppressed. It is a paradigm that is mostly used in assessments of politics and the economy.

Henning *et al* (2004: 18) also states that the critical paradigm is more concerned with people and their power construction as well as how this power affects them both positively and negatively. Power is not equally shared amongst people so the critical paradigm criticises this and tries to ensure that power is shared equally.

Reconstruction of the world means that people can use power and knowledge to design their own world. They can engineer their futures through action and critical reflection. The critical paradigm also focuses on people’s lived experiences as well as their social reflections. It is also influenced by people’s social and economic contexts and is about breaking down institutional structures and arrangements that produce oppressive ideologies and social inequalities.

The critical paradigm could have been used in this research since feminist theory usually uses this paradigm, however, this study is also based on culture and society, both of which change with time. People form a great part of this study, but the critical paradigm mostly deals with the economy and politics as well as emancipating the oppressed. While this study also wants to emancipate women, it is focused on culture and traditional practices and in that way is more suited to the paradigm discussed directly below.

### **2.3.4 INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM**

Interpretivism is a paradigm that seeks to understand society and as such it tries to uncover people’s views, feelings and ideas about something. It is concerned with understanding the social system as a whole. In interpretivism, knowledge is subjective and knowledge is dependent upon the assumption that every person will have a different view of the world. Interpretivism is interested in how people feel about, think about and see the world. (Henning, *et al*, 2004:19) In this paradigm the researcher is an independent participant as he/she can control what happens in the research through the types of question that are asked.

Henning *et al* (2004: 19) argues that in interpretivism, knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons. Members of society are key players in the research as they are the ones that are being interviewed about their lives. This is why interpretivist research is called a communal process, because it is informed by participating practitioners and it is scrutinised and/or endorsed by others (Henning, 2004: 19). This means that the researcher forms part of this study as another participant.

Garrick (2000: 149) states that a fundamental assumption with regard to the interpretivist paradigm is that individuals are not passive vehicles in social, political and historical affairs, but rather they have certain inner capabilities that can allow for individual judgement, individual perceptions, and decision-making autonomy. Garrick also argues that the aim of any inquiry is to develop an understanding of individual cases rather than universal laws or predictive generalisations. This research aimed to do just that in that it used one-on-one interviews as well as focus groups to find out the views of different individuals with regard to the issue of women's use of *impepho* and I tried to ensure that all the participants were given a chance to express their personal opinions on the matter.

Having explained the different research paradigms, it is now clear why this research used interpretivism as its paradigm: the study is about the cultural practices of a certain group of people and how women feel about being excluded from the practice of burning *impepho*, and this type of investigation was best served by the interpretivist approach. The study is about people's views and their constructed meanings of the world. As indicated by Garrick (2000: 149) and Henning *et al* (2004), interpretivism involves finding out about people's views, thoughts and feelings about the world. This study is also about the views held by people, and especially women, with regard to the use of *impepho*.

The study is qualitative in nature, therefore an interpretivist paradigm was deemed appropriate, with interviews and observations used by the researcher to obtain the necessary data. This study is about a society and their cultural practices, so the interpretivist paradigm was a perfect fit as a basis for the study. The study depended mostly on human participation as a source of data as it is people who use *impepho* to communicate with their ancestors.

My study looks at women and their views about *impepho*; I thus aimed to find a solution to this problem and my study accordingly used feminism as its theory to emancipate women.

## **2.4 FEMINISM**

I opted to use feminism as the theoretical framework of this study since I wish to find a way to accommodate women into the cultural practices that have historically been reserved for men. Feminism aims to find a balance between men and women so that the latter can enjoy equal rights and have access to the same activities as men in both the public and private spheres.

### **2.4.1 WHAT IS FEMINISM?**

Hannam (2007: 3) defines feminism as a set of ideas that recognises, in an explicit way, that women are currently in a subordinate position to men and its adherents therefore seek to address this imbalance of power between the two sexes. Central to feminism is the view that the position of women is socially constructed and is therefore open to change. According to Magezis (1996: 13), feminism refers to the fact that women are not treated equally in society and feminist scholars therefore want to know in what ways women are oppressed so that they can fight for the latter's liberation. This study aims to achieve just such a feminist goal by questioning the role of women when it comes to the practice of burning *impepho* and communicating with the ancestors. I argue that women should have the same rights as men when it comes to communicating with one's ancestors, especially since burning *impepho* does not require any physical strength. This study drew on the theory of feminism, which is a theory that promotes women by denouncing their oppression by men, other women, culture, society, religion and/or any other public institutions, as is discussed by Epstein (1999: 106). Since this study explored why the cultural practice of utilising *impepho* is exclusive to men, feminism served as an ideal theoretical platform for addressing this issue.

Feminism is the struggle for the emancipation of women. Feminists argue that women are entitled to the same rights and roles as men and women ought thus not to be oppressed or marginalised. This paper goes into great detail with regard to the ways in which the Zulu patriarchal system has oppressed women, as well as how feminism tries to emancipate all women. The paper also examines the issue of how gendered roles can be reversed so as to allow women to enjoy the same rights as men.

Feminism has various branches, such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and African feminism. While all of these branches deal with empowering women, they differ in their approaches to the issue. This study focused predominantly on liberal feminism, which

advocates that women be given equal rights to men in the home, in the workplace, and in politics. According to liberal theorists such as Weedon (1987), the rights that women deserve include the right to have equal access to cultural practices, of which the use of *impepho* is an example in my current study.

## **2.4.2 TYPES OF FEMINISM**

Feminism can be described as a huge tree with many different branches. Feminists have different views and ideas about how to actually go about eliminating the oppression and subordination of women, but they are all still concerned with the rights of women. Some of their views are very radical whereas some are very peaceable. There are many different kinds of feminisms but this paper describes just three, namely Marxist, radical and liberal feminisms.

### **2.4.2.1 AFRICAN FEMINISM**

This research work is based in Africa as it interviews Zulu women in KwaZulu Natal therefore African feminism form part of this study. I will first describe what African Feminism promotes and how is different from other feminist thoughts.

African Feminism is different from western feminism, Muthuki (2004:9), states that African feminism is different from western feminism which is based on fighting for women's rights; it fights for food, shelter, against poverty and violence against women. Western feminism concentrates on women's sexuality rights and individuals rights such as rights to ones body whereas African feminism believes and promotes motherhood as well as sisterhood. It also respects culture and language. Motherhood is cherished in African feminism as it makes women special since they are the only ones who can bear children.

Nnaemeka, (1998:36) states that African Feminism is different from Western feminism as it promotes social well being of all African people especially women and children and it fights for basic rights such as food, water and education. Culture is also respected and obeyed since Africa is rich in diverse culture and languages.

African feminism is relevant in this study as i interviewed South African women and the study is based on an African ritual practice but African feminism will limit women's participating in the burning of *impepho* as it is respects ones place in society and believes men and women have

separate roles in society. This study aims to liberate women but also to respect culture and tradition.

#### **2.4.2.2 MARXIST FEMINISM**

Marxist feminism came from Karl Marx, who argued that wealth should be distributed equally amongst the people, especially the workers. Marxist feminism – or socialist feminism as it is sometimes known – emphasises the idea that true equality between the sexes will not be achieved until there is economic equality. Marxist feminists are concerned with race, class and sex, which they argue are factors that lead to the oppression of women. Magezis (1996:14) points out that Marxist feminists see oppression by way of gender, class and race as being three strong vines that have intertwined so that they can no longer be separated.

Magezis also goes on to argue that these vines hold down and oppress women. She further says that the oppression of women is not only perpetrated by men and through male domination, but that it also arises due to economic inequalities. I agree with this statement because women currently do not share the same status as their male counterparts in the workplace in terms of salaries, working positions, and conditions. Some women need to be afforded the same rights as men in the workplace so that they can enjoy a better status within their families. Such changes would also help to balance the power between men and women. In some workplaces, managerial positions are still occupied by men whereas there are women who are as qualified as these men.

#### **2.4.2.3 RADICAL FEMINISM**

This group of feminists is more militant in its approach. Radical feminists see male domination as a social construction and they reject it, actively seeking to change society in this regard.

Radical feminists emphasise the need for a drastic social change in order to achieve equality between men and women. These feminists believe that society is extremely patriarchal and that until patriarchy is transformed woman will always be marginalised and treated as though they are inferior. Magezis (1996: 14) states that radical feminists believe that society is controlled by men, that men use women (by benefitting from their productive capacity), and that individual men have power over women and children through the home setup. In the African culture the male is the head of the family and he is more highly respected and honoured than his wife.

Radical feminists are of the belief that if women want to be free and take control of their lives they should not associate themselves with men, but rather they should have separate institutions. Such feminists therefore seek to establish female-centred centres and organisations. My study did not in any way purpose to do this.

#### **2.4.2.4 LIBERAL FEMINISM**

Liberal feminists believe in individual and equal rights for women. Liberal feminism is more peaceful than other feminisms in its approach to the struggle for equal rights for women. Magezis (1996: 17) says that Marxist and radical feminists wish to overturn the present social system in one way or another. Liberal feminists, on the other hand, try to work within the existing system so as to reform it by bringing about equal rights laws, especially in areas such as politics, employment and education.

Liberal feminists want certain laws to be changed so that they allow women to have equal rights in society. They also want women to have equal rights in both the public and private spheres, the latter of which is the home. Liberal feminists believe that discrimination against women can be ended within the present system without having to make major structural changes. They believe in individual freedom for women and that women themselves have the power to achieve equality and freedom for themselves. This freedom can refer to equality in the home, in the workplace, or in politics. Liberal feminists hold that freedom is a fundamental value, and that the just state ensures freedom for all citizens. They also insist on changes that will ensure freedom for women. Liberal feminists such as Friedan (1971: 12) believe that women need to be self-empowered, because even if a law changes to accommodate them, if they are not self-empowered then they will not be able to enjoy that new freedom and equality with men.

While there is relevance in the two former branches of feminism, this research made use of the views of liberal feminists as its foundation, as liberal feminists emphasise women's individual freedoms as well as the idea that women themselves must stand up for equality. The use of *impepho* is a traditional or cultural practice, and I argue that women can and should engage themselves in the struggle to be able to use *impepho* in their homes, and that they can achieve this without trying to change the norms of our Zulu culture and tradition.



#### 2.4.2.5 THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN

As has been shown by Buikema and Smelik (1995: 15), women of all races and cultures have historically been denied certain rights, have been excluded from certain occupations and roles, and have been marginalised. Feminists of the 1960s and 1970s opposed the unequal division of roles between men and women. They opposed the idea that the destiny of all women is to just be mothers and housekeepers whilst the husbands are the breadwinners. Their challenge to the status quo was that women should be allowed to have any job they want and maintain themselves or earn a living.

Such feminist trends also took place in South Africa's history. In the twentieth century African men went to work in the mines whilst the women stayed at home to take care of the children. Mkhize (2009: 23) says that the man is the head of the home: "*Indlu ime ngokwesekwa yile nsika okuthi-ke uma sekudlule umnumzane ekhaya bese sithi kuwe insikayomuzi.*" This statement says that a man is the metaphoric centre pole of the home, and as such is responsible for holding up the house and keeping it together. In other words, Mkhize is saying that if a man were to die, his wife would not be able to manage the household and she would thus have to ask another male family member or one of her older sons to burn *impepho* for her.

Since the role of the woman is socially constructed by the society or tribe in which she lives, that society or tribe has to change so as to accommodate the changing times. Einstein (1983: XIV) states, "I think that culture and tradition can change to accommodate women and I believe that women, like men, are socially produced beings and can change". Woman's role in society – in other words, what she can and cannot do– is simply what men or the male leaders of her society say is the case. There is a need for women to be able to burn and use *impepho* and they should be given the opportunity to do so. This is what liberal feminism tries to achieve: equal opportunities for both men and women. As we can see there is a need to change the rules with regard to this cultural practice as there are now many more female-headed homes in Zulu society as a result of a high rate of male deaths.

In the introduction of her book, Einstein (1983: 4) defines feminism and its intentions as follows:

"In my understanding of the term 'feminist' then I see an element of visionary; futurist thought. This encompasses a concept of social transformation that, as part of the movement to liberate women, will change all human relationships for the better."

What I gathered from this reading is that feminism is fundamentally about social change and men and women need to realise that we are equal so that we can participate equally in all traditional and cultural activities. If women can cook and clean and take care of their homes, men can do that as well. If men can communicate with the ancestors and burn *impepho*, women can do that too, so long as they are in their own homes where the ancestors know them.

Men have condoned the idea of male superiority, and thus feel entitled to physically, emotionally and financially dominate over women. Women are given few or insignificant roles. These gender roles are all socially constructed by the community, and therefore they can also be changed to accommodate women and the changing times. Einstein (1983: 3) states that patriarchy was designed to exclude women not only from full participation in the world outside of the home but also full participation within the home, as the woman is only seen as mother, nurturer, caregiver and home caretaker, whilst the man is seen as the breadwinner and head of the home. This is what patriarchy is all about: men being in power and dominating over women. Einstein (1983: 5) defines patriarchy as:

“...the power of the fathers; it is a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men by force direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labour determine what part women shall or shall not play and in which the female is subsumed under the male.”

Zulu culture is no different, with men dominating over women, and that is why men are the ones to forbid women from burning or using *impepho*. According to Mkhize (2009), all the simple and yet important roles in Zulu society are given to men whilst women are made to do a great deal of physical labour. The power to burn *impepho* is given to the male or the father of a home, and if he is not around or is dead, that right is passed not to his wife but rather to his older sons. Mkhize (2009: 20) writes:

“*Uma ngabe engasekho uyise kodwa sekusele unina kuphela, nguyena futhi naye ongasetshenziswa ukuthi ayokhuluma emsamo, ngakho khona lokho ukuthi useyithonga elisondelene nezalukazi zakulo muzi*”

“If the father is no longer alive but his mother is, she can be used to enter *umsamo*. Therefore she is the next or closest to the female ancestors.”

Ntuli (2010: 19) says in uncompromising terms that women have no right at all to use or burn *impepho* and communicate with their ancestors. He goes on to say that even the eldest woman of the house is not allowed to use *impepho*. It is important to note that it is men who have made such

rules and it is men who write about women not being allowed to participate in cultural practices such as the burning of *impepho*. As Saul (2003: 170) states, it has always been men who come up with the strong words that are used to marginalise women, and as such feminism demands that languages be reformed so that such words can no longer be used to discriminate against women.

## **2.5 CHANGING WOMEN'S ROLES**

Traditional Zulu women enjoy few rights and they have subordinate roles to men. Lupri (1983: 81) says that “men can enjoy superior status only if women have an inferior status, so the existing role patterns allow men to maintain political, social, psychological and economic privileges.”

If women want to have equal roles and rights as men, they should not allow men to have dominance over them. Sadly, most men will try to ensure that they maintain their position of dominance, and that is why we find writers who state clearly that women are not allowed to burn or use *impepho*. If there is no male in the family, the women have to find a male relative to assist them. Culture also plays a major role in the subordination of women.

If women want to see change in certain cultural practices and traditions, they need to speak out about it so that they will eventually be able to have equal rights with their male counterparts. Men are also divided as some will speak out for women but others will not speak out for women as they do not want to lose their superior status: sexual inequalities have become institutionalised, our present cultural norms reflect the interest of the dominant group, and gender roles continue to reinforce the patterns of male dominance.

George (2005: 20) interprets patriarchy to mean that “there are various discourses and practices that allow men to set the terms and limits for women in different areas of society.” He also goes on to say those women will, when they grow older or reach menopause, finally obtain the rights that have previously been denied to them. Hay and Stichter (1984: 78) concur with George when they say that “post menopause women exercise considerable influence and are sometimes able to assume ritual or political roles that were formally denied to them”.

This is not, however, what other African ethnic groups such as the Xhosas and Yoruba say, namely that when a woman reaches menopause she is allowed into *umsamo* and to burn incense for ancestral worship. Some Zulu people also follow this trend of letting older women burn *impepho* but others are against this practice.

Many writers are of the opinion that culture does oppress women. According to Zigira (2003: 13), others have looked at cultural factors in explaining the emergence of sex role stereotyping, but this approach has been associated with biological characteristics or attributes based on these characteristics, and each culture elaborates an entire configuration of values, attitudes and expectations. This has led some authors to claim that how a woman and her roles are defined is just a cultural differentiation rather than something arising from biological facts. Motherhood is a consequence of being female, but the maternal role may be interpreted in different ways.

For the African woman, her sex role identity is no different from her gender role identity. Personality factors are associated with masculine and feminine roles and they too vary according to cultural definition. This is why the role of women in Zulu culture is seen as being insignificant and men play the important role, especially when it comes to ceremonies like *impepho* burning and the slaughtering of animals. For example, according to World Bank Policy on Gender and Equality (2001: 34), “Women and men are biologically different: women can give birth and breastfeed children whilst men cannot”. Gender refers to socially constructed roles and socially learned behaviours and expectations associated with females and males. In most parts of the world adult men are physically larger than adult women and therefore are being stronger.

All cultures interpret and elaborate biological differences between men and women into social expectations about what behaviours and activities are appropriate for males and females and what rights, resources and power each should possess.

## **2.6 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY**

Social construction theory states that society constructs the different gender roles and makes them seem natural, whereas they can in reality be changed according to race and place. In the past, women and men have been subjected to certain norms and standards, but lately many people have become aware that these norms and standards were made by society to try and accommodate men and suppress women. Many scholars have turned to anthropology to clearly define social construction theory. One such scholar is Vance (1989: 30), who states that it is commonplace for anthropologists to say that human behaviour is socially or culturally constructed, by which she means that human behaviour is learned (versus being intrinsic or essentially predetermined).

The above statement by Vance clearly supports the argument that any cultural rules or practices that exist within a given society were constructed by that society and can therefore be changed so

as to accommodate females and give them equal rights in society (like being able to burn *impepho*). Individual females may one day also be allowed to communicate with their ancestors, but it will take time to change people's mind-sets. Change cannot happen overnight and pervasive living conditions, such as there being many female-headed homes, may play a part in influencing this change.

This section has looked at paradigms as well as feminism which form a basis for this study. I have also described social construction theory as I think it is linked to how people make and define a person's role in their society and women fall victims to being placed into categories and what they are capable of. Since these roles are social constructed, they can be changed to accommodate women as in the case of burning *impepho*.

## **2.7 IMPEPHO AND INCENSE**

This part of the research paper focuses on the literature on *impepho* and also incense, which is used by other African people, other religious groups, and other races around the world. This review also helps to give an idea of some of the other groups who burn incense in order to communicate with their gods, ancestors and spirits.

### **2.7.1 WHAT IS IMPEPHO?**

As it has been stated earlier, *impepho* is an indigenous African plant that, once dried, is burnt in order to communicate with one's ancestors. Nyawose (2000: 41) elaborates on the importance of *umsamo* (a sacred corner in the home set aside for the performance of ritual ceremonies, which includes the burning of *impepho*). He further explains why strangers may not enter a sacred space as this is a sacred place for the immediate family and outsiders may cause harm.

The problem is that, within the Zulu culture, powers for the use of *impepho* are generally vested with the *umnumzane* (head of the family) and then with close male relatives. In many homes women are deprived of this authority. This restriction constitutes one of the major forms of discrimination against women, as women are also part of the family and should be treated as equal members. Ntuli (2010: 19) writes in uncompromising terms that:

*“Abantu besifazane abakaze babe nelungelo lokushisa impepho. Ngisho nasemandulo ngokwesiko lwesiZulu noma ngabe ilapho agcagcela khona noma ngabe uyisalukwazi sakhona. Kodwa akanalo ilungelo lokushisa impepho.”*

“Woman has never had a right to burn *impepho*, even if she is married into that family, or even if she is an old woman within that family. But she still has no right to burn *impepho*.”

Mkhize (2009: 19) is of the opinion that a man and his wife are both allowed to go into the sacred shrine (*umsamo*) and speak to the ancestors by burning *impepho*. He also states that both the father and the mother are needed to communicate with the ancestors and that the female is known to the ancestors, whether she is a wife or a daughter. Mkhize (2009: 19) writes:

*“Le ndawo ubaba nomama wasekhaya beyakhona befike khona bakhulume nabadala abangasekho...Ngakhoke ukuthetha emsamo kudinga usokhaya ubaba, kudinga umama ikakhulu kuyiwa nokudla kuyiwe notshwala kubekwe.”*

“The father and mother go to this sacred place and they speak to the elders who have passed on. Therefore to communicate with one’s ancestors you need both the father and the mother, as she is mostly needed to supply the food and Zulu beer.”

The woman is therefore needed and is allowed into the shrine in order to communicate with her ancestors. Mkhize (2009: 45) also makes mention that the wife will be known to the ancestors as the wife, as well as the one who makes *umqombothi* for them. She is also known as the caretaker and the mother who can communicate with them, because when a woman marries, *impepho* is lit for her, she is introduced to the ancestors, and she then forms part of the family. Mkhize argues, and I agree, that it would therefore be better to allow those females who are known to the ancestors as family members to burn *impepho* rather than insist that some other male – who may well be a stranger to them and their ancestors – do it on their behalf simply because he has the same surname and there is no other male in the family to do it for them.

## **2. 7.2 IMPEPHO AND ITS USE IN THE HOME**

*Impepho* is burned before and during many occasions, such as traditional ceremonies, when there is a thunderstorm, or when one has had a bad dream. It is used to communicate with one’s ancestors and is burnt at the *umsamo*. The person who burns *impepho* can then speak to the ancestors, letting them know what it is that they request. The person that speaks to the ancestors must be the head of the family; no strangers may go to *umsamo*

*Impepho* is a way of communicating with the ancestors and it must be burned before most ceremonies can be performed. Nkabinde (in Nyawose, 2004: 41) discusses *impepho* and how it is used during the ceremony of *ukubuyiswa* as follows:

“The upper part of the floor is marked of an inch-high ridge, which forms a semi-circle known as *umsamo*. No stranger may go beyond a certain point into the *umsamo* area; it is here that the offering to the ancestors is made by burning *impepho*. The sorghum beer that is set aside for the ancestors is kept here and the sacrificial meat hangs here overnight. The beer is believed to be sipped and the meat licked or eaten by ancestors in this area.”

When a child is born, *impepho* is burnt and the child is introduced to the ancestors. When someone dies, *impepho* is again burnt and the ancestors are informed about the family tragedy.

*Impepho* is very important as it is the only way to communicate with the ancestors. Therefore without *impepho*, traditional rituals cannot be performed. The *umsamo* is also very important; it is a sacred and respected place, being the place where one communicates with the ancestors. Every house therefore needs an *umsamo* since *impepho* cannot be burnt in any other place. Mkhize (2009: 18) articulates the view that both *impepho* and *umsamo* are indispensable to the performing of rituals as follows:

“*Emsamo ilapho sishisa khona impepho uma sishweleza, kokunye sinxusa kokunye sibika. Umsamo ila kubekwa khona ukudla kwabangasekho, kushiswe impepho, kuxhumaneke nabangasekho. Umsamo indlela yokuxhumana.*”

“*Umsamo* is a sacred place where *impepho* is burnt and where we praise or beg ancestors for things. *Umsamo* is where food for the ancestors is kept and *impepho* is burnt in order to communicate with the dead. *Umsamo* is the communication place.”

### **2.7.3 RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND THE USE OF INCENSE**

While *impepho* and incense are not exactly one and the same thing, they are part of the same context. Nearly all religious groups use incense. Some use it to communicate with God whilst others use it to help them feel at harmony so that they can enter into a trance. The religious use of incense has its origins in antiquity. Burned incense is sometimes intended as a sacrificial offering to one's deity or deities. Sometimes incense is used as an aid in prayer. There are also some who

use incense in the same way as Zulus use *impepho*, in other words for the sake of ancestral worship.

The burning of incense is a common Chinese religious ritual. It is used in Chinese ancestor worship, as well as in Taoism and Buddhism. The Chinese also believe that the burning of incense purifies the area in which it is burned of all bad spirits and demons. Hindus also use incense when worshipping their gods. Hinduism was probably the first religion to ritualise the use of incense; it was used in sacrifices in order to show one's loyalty to God. (Namkoong, 2004: 19).

The use of incense is a traditional and ubiquitous practice. It is used in the prayers of some religions, as well as in other forms of worship. Hefner (1985: 44) states that, as part of the daily ritual of Hindus, worship is prevalent in India and incense is burnt whenever worshippers pray to their different gods, such as Krishna and Rama. Muslims also burn incense but they do not do it as part of their worship of Allah but rather as a reminder to the worshippers of the greater life to come in Paradise.

Certain Christians such as the Roman Catholics and Lutherans use incense as part of their worship and in their daily services. Throughout the Bible, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, there is reference to incense being used in prayer, in worship, as well as during sacrificial offerings, for example:

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son (Hebrews 11:17).”

Nürnberg (2007: 54) says that in Matthew 2:11:

“The Wise Men offered Jesus at His birth three things: Gold, Frankincense—a type of incense common in the Middle East at that time (befitting a god), and Myrrh—a type of ointment which may be a reference to the Crucifixion or to healing.”

Christians believe that the incense's smoke symbolises the presence of God. The smoke of burning incense is interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church as a symbol of the prayers of the faithful rising to heaven.

European colonialists brought Christianity with them to Africa and in time influenced Africans' way of thinking much that many Africans moved away from their traditions and began to look down on those who praised or worshipped their ancestors. Nürnberg (2007: 55) states that



ancestors form a major part of African people's lives and that that is why they are never forgotten and can also be referred to as the 'living spirits'.

Nürnberg (2007: 57) also says that one of the reasons why women are not allowed to communicate with their ancestors is that there exists a patriarchal hierarchy within the culture that extends beyond life into death. This is why women are not allowed to burn *impepho*, because they are meant to respect their fathers and husbands not only whilst the latter are alive but also when they have passed into the afterlife. Only men become ancestors. This is done so as to exclude women from becoming ancestors, as this would mean that men would have to pray and call upon female ancestors, which would be unacceptable from a patriarchal viewpoint. Nürnberg (2007: 57) writes that "the entire system is based on structures of authority". A person is allocated precisely defined status and role in the communal system based on his/her age, gender and seniority. This system has led to men being active and women being silent and obedient. If women are to follow liberal feminist thinking, then they need to work together to achieve gender equality.

Reviewed literature (Mkhize, 2009 & Ntuli 2010) stipulate that women are not allowed to be part of some ritual practices such as the burning of *impepho*. However feminist and social constructivist argue that gender roles with regards to burning of *impepho* have changed due to distorted family structures, for example due to HIV/AIDS there are many female or child headed households making it unfeasible for *impepho* to be exclusively burnt by men.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter firstly defined paradigms and then named and discussed a few of them so as to explain why the interpretivist paradigm was chosen for this research paper. The chapter then looked at feminism, listed the different branches of feminism, and finally explained why liberal feminism was used in this study. There was a short discussion about the need to change the role of women in society. Social constructivist theory was also discussed. The chapter finally explained what *impepho* is and described its use in Zulu culture and tradition. It also discussed other religious and racial groups that use incense.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is going to attend to the methodology and methods. It will elaborate on how the research was conducted while providing details of data collection.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

Methodology refers to the general principles by which we investigate the social world and also how we demonstrate that knowledge is valid (Henning *et al*, 2004: 4). Brunskell (1998: 37) adds that in the social sciences there is a distinction between method and methodology. In the field of social sciences, the following aspects, when combined, constitute one's methodology: the choice of which aspects of the social world to research, the choice of which method to use for collecting the data, and the chosen way to then interpret that data. All these aspects are informed by the broad theoretical framework within which one's research is carried out. A research method, on the other hand, refers to the more practical issue of choosing an appropriate research design.

My study employed the qualitative research method. Silverman (2000:1) argues that the qualitative method of research is well suited to the collecting of data when it comes to finding out about the lives, views, values, culture and traditions of people. The present research was about finding out the real reason(s) behind women being restricted from the practice of burning *impepho*. Silverman (1997; 8) points out that data can be collected by way of interviews, focus groups and/or participant observation. For this study, focus groups and interviews were utilised to acquire the desired insights as well as to find out the reasons why within the Zulu culture women in general are not allowed to use *impepho*.

### **3.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

This study was also ethnographic in nature. Johnson (2000: 111) defines *ethnography* as “a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually do.” This study examined the Zulu people and their culture and considered how this culture discriminates against and marginalises women. It investigated Zulu

people's culture, practices and beliefs, and it also compared these aspects of Zulu society with those of other groups living either in South Africa or beyond its borders.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

The data for this study was collected from two places, namely KwaNyuswa, which is a rural area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and KwaNdengezi, a semi-urban area in the same province. In KwaNyuswa I approached the chief (induna) to have permission to interview women from his area (see Annexure C) and in KwaNdengezi, I got permission from the councillor (see Annexure D). After asking for permission to conduct interviews, the participants were also given an informed consent form which explained what the research was about and their rights as participants in the study (see Annexure F). I interviewed participants from these two areas so as to compare and contrast different peoples' views on the issue of *impepho*. The women signed consent forms to participate in this study (see Annexure E). The participants were married Zulu women over the age of fifty. This is an age when women could be considered mature enough to understand issues on the use of *impepho*. I interviewed individual women as well as female diviners therefore there were two sets of questions, one was for the women (see Annexure G) and the second one was for the diviners. (see Annexure H) Five focus groups of women were interviewed in each area. The number of participants in each group was between six and ten women. I also conducted ten one-on-one interviews in each location.

During the focus group discussions and the interviews, I had a tape recorder on hand to record the conversations. The recorded discussions were then transcribed at a later stage for analysis purposes. I also made handwritten notes in order to facilitate the writing up of the dissertation. All communication was in isiZulu, my mother tongue as well as the first language of the respondents.

### **3.5 RESEARCH METHODS**

This section elaborates on how data was collected and the type of tools that were utilised to collect that data. It then explains the link to the next chapter, which deals with data analysis. This study made use of qualitative research methods. I obtained information on gender, feminism and *impepho* from different books and journals, hence the literature review and theory.

The quantitative method was used only to quantify the results from the interviews. However it was the qualitative method that was a basis for this study. The study also made use of focus group

discussions since I believe that people speak more freely when in a group rather than when sitting in one-on-one interviews.

Ethnography is a written description of a particular culture, and the customs, beliefs and behaviour of its people. The findings in ethnographic investigations are based on information collected through fieldwork. My aim was to concentrate on finding out why women are excluded from the practice of burning *impepho* and to find a way to accommodate women in this practice.

### **3.5.1 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

The primary sources that were used in this study were interviews, participant observation and group discussions. The secondary sources that were used in the study were books, journals, dissertations, theses, newspapers and other local and international publications, which were used so that I could compare Zulu people and their culture to the other cultures, races and countries that use incense in a cultural or religious context.

The interviews that were conducted were done primarily with married women and female *sangomas* (diviners). I aimed to use these interviews to find out about the participants' views and perspectives concerning *impepho* and why women are not allowed to use it.

### **3.5.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

The study's data was collected mostly through interviews, which were recorded by way of a tape recorder. The recorded interviews were then transcribed. The participants were interviewed in isiZulu. Their responses were translated into English at a later stage for the purposes of analysis and writing up of this dissertation.

### **3.5.3 RESEARCH ETHICS**

The University of KwaZulu Natal expects each and every student to go through ethical clearance before conducting any type of research, therefore I applied and got ethical clearance from the research office (see annexure A). My supervisor also assisted me by writing a letter to Induna and councillor to have access to their areas and explaining what my research paper entailed (see Annexure B). All the participants were informed of the nature of the study. They were asked to sign a written consent form. (Annexure E) They were assured that their names would not be disclosed if they desired to remain anonymous.

## 3.6 INTERVIEWS

### 3.6.1 CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Rubin and Rubin (2004: 89) argue that there are three phases to the interviewer's work, namely:

1. *Sampling*. The interviewer must be able to follow instructions for probability or use good judgement in selection under quota controls.
2. *Obtaining accurate information*. The interviewer must be able to get respondents to answer fully and truthfully so that the opinions they express are not influenced by the interviewer. Social skills and accuracy in asking questions are skills that are required in this phase of the work.
3. *Recording*. The interviewer must be thorough and accurate in recording the respondents' answers.

The researcher needs to be prepared and have certain social skills so that he/she will be able to obtain accurate results. One also needs to be able to interview people in an unbiased manner, which means one needs to take a neutral stand on the matter under investigation. Rubin *et al* (2004: 1) says that "biases arising in the process of recording respondents' answers have received less attention and the operation of perceptual and cognitive factors such as expectations has been almost completely ignored."

In the introduction to his book *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires: Theory and Practice in Social Research*, Foddy (1993: 1) mentions that interviews are the best and easiest way to elicit information from people about their lives and expectations. He argues that:

There is no doubt that the use of the verbal data has come to dominate the social sciences. Asking questions is widely accepted as a cost-efficient (and sometimes the only) way of gathering information about past behaviours and experiences, private actions and motives and beliefs, values and attitudes.

Verbal data worked well for this study as what the study wanted is to find out about people's opinions and views about a practice that they have practiced for years.

Foddy (*ibid*) goes on to say that the questions that one asks should already be formulated before the interview takes place. This means that the questions must be structured questions and follow on from each other in an orderly fashion. The researcher leads but also gives the interviewees the

chance to answer as well as debate the issue amongst themselves. The important point here is that the researcher has the responsibility of controlling the question-answer process. This is expressed by Foddy (1993: 15) as follows: “Not only does the researcher try to formulate questions that have standardised meaning for all respondents but the researcher tries to prescribe the ways in which the questions can be answered.”

It is therefore important for the researcher to have undergone training as to how to question people and to know how to politely interview them.

### **3.6.2 INTERVIEWING WOMEN**

All the people that were interviewed in this research were women. This is because I wanted to find out if they use *impepho* in their own homes or have to rely on their male relatives. I also wanted to discover how they feel about not being allowed to communicate with their ancestors themselves. Amongst the other questions that were asked was whether or not they would like the gender rules concerning the burning of *impepho* to be changed.

Interviews are the best method for eliciting information from people. Oakley (1981: 31) states that an interview is a way of finding out about people. Oakley also goes on to say that interviewing is one of the best means for conducting a survey as it is essentially a conversation and is also a significant instrument for data collection. The interview is an information-gathering tool that has been designed to elicit as much information as possible from participants. This means that the interviewer is more concerned about obtaining information than he/she is with sparing the feelings of the participants. I think that when one conducts interviews, one must take into account the feelings of the participants, which involves paying attention to their body language. If one considers the feeling of the interviewee, one should be able to gain accurate information on a sensitive and personal topic such as the burning of *impepho*.

Oakley (1981: 47) says that female interviewees tend to have many questions for the researcher and that the researcher needs to openly and honestly answer them all. This was true in my study. When interviewing women, one also needs to move away from a purely exploitative attitude. The researcher must always remember that the people being interviewed are human beings with feelings and opinions and not just objects that one uses in order to obtain data. This research aimed to find out about women’s personal lives and their culture, so I needed to be careful and sensitive when conducting the interviews.

Oakley (1981: 48) says you can also gain a great deal of information by analysing the question(s) that the participant asks you, the researcher. The next chapter looks at the interviews and analyses them using the method of thematic analysis.

This chapter addressed the issue of data collection, and in so doing looked at the type of method and the instruments that were used in this research. Data was collected in two areas – a rural area and a semi-urban area –so as to be able to make comparisons between the two sets of data. The participants in this research were mainly female heads of the home and diviners who make use of *impepho* for their healing purposes.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter looked at research methods and how data was collected from the participants. It also included a section on conducting interviews and interviewing women in particular; this gave me insight in to how best to approach female participants and how also to be sensitive to them when dealing with their comments and the information they provide. The next chapter looks at the data that was collected and analyses it to come to conclusions about this research.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the concept and nature of data analysis as well as the different methods that can be used to analyse information. It then describes my chosen method for this study, which is thematic analysis. The chapter then provides my data analysis, which was undertaken according to the techniques of thematic analysis. The themes are first listed followed by a discussion section where the literature and the study's findings are compared.

### **4.2 WHAT IS DATA ANALYSIS?**

Data analysis is the most important part of a person's research as it is where the information collected from the participants through interviews and notes are studied so that conclusions can be drawn about people's views and concerns regarding the topic at hand. It is these research findings that lead to the study's conclusions. Levine (2002: 1) describes data analysis as a body of methods that helps to describe facts, detect patterns, develop explanations, and test hypotheses. Mouton (2001: 108) further explains that the aim of analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data through an inspection of the relationships between concepts, constructs and variables to see if there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, and/or to establish themes concerning the data.

The data for this study was collected by way of interviews. All the interviews were recorded and the data was then transcribed into notes so that it could be easily analysed. As the interviewer, I also listened attentively when conducting the interviews so that I could not only hear the interviewees' responses first hand but could also take note of how they responded in terms of the tone of their voices and their gestures and body language. Data should always be carefully analysed so that the gathered information can be used in the best way possible and so that no stone is left unturned in one's investigation. This is why one needs to find the best suitable method for one's own particular study.

In the next section I list a few of the different methods of data analysis. Thematic analysis is then discussed as this was the method that I used to analyse the study's data. I also discuss what



thematic analysis entails and why it was the most suitable method for my dissertation. The results are then revealed and are discussed in terms of their correlation with the relevant literature.

### **4.3 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS**

There are many different kinds of methods that one can use to analyse data, but due to limited space, I discuss only five of these data analysis methods and then state which one best suits this research. The methods of analysis that are examined at in this section are: grounded theory, discourse analysis, content analysis, narrative analysis, and thematic analysis. Each method is defined and I explain how each is used in analysing research data.

#### **4.3.1 GROUNDED THEORY**

Grounded theory is a type of analysis method that develops a theory based on the collected data. It is also based on a comparison of the collected written data. The data used in grounded theory can be interviews and/or observations, and it should be written down so that the researcher can use the information to come up with a theory. Ary et al (2002:30) defines grounded theory as follows:

“The grounded theory is a type of study that is designed to develop a theory of social phenomena based on the field data collected in the study. Experience with the data generates insights, hypotheses, and questions which researchers pursue with further data collection.”

Ary *et al* (2002: 448) continue to say that the aim of grounded theory is to build a theory in an area. This method presents an inductive approach as it builds up an idea from separate data. It also aims to compare collected data before developing a theory. The data is about people’s experiences with regard to a certain topic and the researcher then compares these people’s responses by looking at the similarities and differences. Written data that can be analysed in this way includes books, magazines, and poetry, and the researcher looks both at what was said and how it was said. One can obtain a great deal of information by analysing data in this way.

It is advisable that the researcher, after having collected and compared the data, form categories of similar data and put these into themes, as is done in thematic analysis. The difference with grounded theory, however, is that in this approach a theory is developed from the collected data and that is why it is called grounded theory.

Although my research aimed to find out about people's experiences and feelings concerning the burning of *impepho*, I did not develop any theory from it, but rather sought to find a way to accommodate women into this ritual practice. For the above reasons Grounded Theory was not my approach of choice.

#### **4.3.2 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Discourse analysis is a qualitative method and it is about analysing conversations and texts. It is about communications between people and society. The data can be spoken or written down. Discourse analysis looks at a language and how it can be used for communication purposes. Wood and Kroger (2000: 3) define discourse analysis as:

“...a perspective on social life that contains both methodological and conceptual elements. Discourse analysis involves ways of thinking about discourse and ways of treating discourse as data.”

This method is based on looking at what people say, how it is said, and what their reactions to it are. Potter (1996: 46) states that although discourse analysis focuses on language – such as grammatical and lexicon components –the analysis of discourse becomes more about what people *do*. Phillips and Jorgensen (2002: 6) point out that discourse analysis is one among several social constructivist approaches that deal with culture and society.

Discourse analysis deals with how language is used to communicate and how culture and society are linked together. My research was about the cultural practice of a community, but discourse analysis would not have fitted into this study as I was not overly concerned with language but rather was interested in women's responses to the ritual practice of burning *impepho* and their feelings when they are excluded from it.

#### **4.3.3 CONTENT ANALYSIS**

Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research technique and it is, moreover, a flexible one (Hsieh and Shannon. 2005: 1277). Content analysis has three approaches, namely the conventional, the directive and the summative approaches. These approaches are used to interpret the content of text data. This method is used mainly in health research.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1277) suggest that content analysis is one of the numerous research methods that are used to analyse text data and that it focuses on the characteristics of language as

communication, paying attention to the content and contextual meaning of the text. Content analysis is somewhat similar to thematic analysis as both analyse data and codify it into themes or patterns.

However, conventional content analysis is generally used with a study design whose aim is to describe a phenomenon; in the case of healthcare research for example it would be used to analyse patients' emotional reactions. In content analysis, if the data is being collected by way of interviews, open-ended questions are used. The researcher then analyses the data that has been collected and places it in a tree diagram, with the most important information being placed at the top and the least important information being placed at the bottom. The researcher then determines topics or themes from the diagram and places these topics or themes into categories.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1281) state that directed content analysis is guided by a more structured process than is the conventional approach. In the directed approach, if data is collected through interviews, then open-ended questions are used and these are followed by targeted questions.

Even though this analysis method is closely linked and similar to thematic analysis, it does not mention placing work into themes or have steps that guide a researcher on how to put data into themes.

#### **4.3.4 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS**

Narrative analysis looks at the stories that are told by the interviewees as a way of collecting data. This method focuses on the way people tell their stories; in other words, it analyses the ways that people interpret or view their lives. The stories that are elicited can be about people's personal lives or stories that they have heard about a certain topic.

Riessman (2002: 218) defines narrative analysis as an investigation into the way people respond to their experiences and as a description of what happened in the past. Narrative analysis also gives an account of how specific individuals tell stories versus how the world at large tells those same stories. It is about the way people recount their histories, but one needs to be aware that one person's story will be different from that of the next person, as each person will make a unique choice of what to emphasise and what to omit. In this type of analysis the researcher's job is to listen attentively, take notes, and then ask questions at the end of the storytelling.

Narrative analysis can also be broken down into personal and historical narratives. Personal narratives are one's own story about one's own life and about what occurred in the past in relation to oneself. Historical narratives, on the other hand, are more general stories about what happened in the past, for example, how the war at Isandlwana was fought.

When engaging in narrative analysis, the researcher needs to make use of open-ended questions when interviewing participants. These interviews ought also to be recorded and then transcribed, as having this information in a written form is very important when it comes time to analyse the data. The researcher needs to decide which parts or sections of the narrative are truly valuable to the study. It is advisable (Riessman 2002: 253) for the interviewer to listen carefully to the whole narrative and only then decide which portions are linked to the research questions and the theoretical positions that he/she values. When using this method, the researcher needs to be aware that people sometimes lie and at other times may fail to remember the past accurately. Furthermore, accounts of the past often vary from person to person.

In my research a few narratives were collected from those women that spoke about their past and their use of *impepho*, but my research was not about obtaining historical background on the practice of *impepho* and therefore this method of analysis did not suit my research.

#### **4.3.5 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

Braun and Clarke (2007: 79) define thematic analysis as a method that identifies analyses and reports patterns (or themes) within data. This means that the researcher looks at the interviews that he/she conducted, tries to find the common idea from all the participants' responses, and then divides that idea into more specific themes. Thematic analysis is a search for themes contained within the collected data. These themes are also deduced from the researcher's own notes, which are jotted down during the interviews. This identification of themes involves careful reading and re-reading of the data (Rice and Ezzy, 1999, in Fereday, 2006: 3). Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative data method that is often used in conjunction with other methods.

Thematic analysis is the method that I chose for analysing the study's collected data. After a thorough reading of the literature on thematic analysis, I felt that it would work well in this type of research. Braun and Clarke (2007: 79) point out that unfortunately thematic analysis is a poorly represented or undervalued method, in that it does not appear to exist as a 'named' analysis in the same way that other methods (e.g. narrative and grounded theory) are since it seems to appear

within content analysis and certain other methods. Braun and Clarke wish to acknowledge thematic analysis as a method in its own right.

Thematic analysis is a flexible method, as any data can be used. There are, however, guidelines that one needs to follow when using this method. Braun and Clarke (2007: 78) state that although thematic analysis can be flexible, one must not be misled into thinking that anything goes. One needs to be careful as to the themes that one adds and that may arise from the transcribed data. The researcher should not be biased when it comes to selecting the common information to be used as themes. Furthermore, the researcher should focus on details that are relevant to the research's aims and objectives.

Thematic analysis requires a great deal of attentiveness because as you read through the transcripts, you need to discern themes and patterns. Doing data analysis is the most important and exciting part of the research as this is when you find answers to your problem and can see yourself coming closer to attaining your goal. Rubin and Rubin (2004: 225) mention that "analysis is exciting because you discover themes and concepts embedded throughout your interviews". But this stage of research requires a great deal of hard work as the interviews have to be transcribed and translated before being searched for themes.

When comparing thematic analysis to other analysis methods, one finds that thematic analysis is not based on a theory and also that most analysis methods make use of themes (for example, themes are mentioned in both content and narrative analysis). Braun and Clarke (2007: 81) explain that thematic analysis does not require a detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches. Thematic analysis seeks to find themes and patterns from all the data, whereas other analysis methods form themes using only datasets, such as one interview.

Braun and Clarke (2007: 82) also caution as to what can count as a theme; they state that a theme should capture something important about the data in relation to the research question. They also state that the researcher's judgement as to what is more important and valuable in the findings is needed. Something could be mentioned by all the participants but yet not be relevant to the research, and so it should not count as a theme. Something else may, however, only be mentioned by less than half of the participants, but it could be relevant and so should be included as a theme. The researcher must use his or her discretion when it comes to the naming of themes or selecting relevant information to be revealed as a finding. The topic that I was investigating has not been

sufficiently researched from the female point of view. There is currently no literature about women and why they do not burn *impepho*.

Braun and Clarke (2007: 76) argue that there are certain steps that one needs to follow to be able to analyse data according to thematic analysis. These steps are given in order to help the researcher to find patterns and meanings as well as interesting details within the data that can be used to develop themes. The first step that Braun and Clarke mention is that you need to familiarise yourself with the data. This means that you need to make up the interview questions and conduct the interviews yourself so that you will know first-hand what the respondents had to say and how exactly they expressed it (e.g. facial and bodily expressions). I collected the data for my study in accordance with this first step; while interviewing the women I took down notes of how they sat and responded to the questions, and I also took note of their entire body language which could play an important role when one analyses the data. It is also important that data be transcribed into a written text so that you can more easily find patterns or themes. This is a way of getting to know your data.

The first step is that one needs to familiarise themselves with the data. This means that the researcher has listened, transcribed and read the data so as to make notes and get ready to do the second step. I transcribed my own work therefore I feel I achieved this step.

The second step is to “generate initial codes” (Braun and Clarke, 2007: 88). The researcher looks at the transcripts and begins to note down comments next to the dialogue that will be helpful later on when he/she is developing codes.

The third step is searching for themes from the coded transcripts. Braun and Clarke (2007: 89) have this to say on thematic analysis: “Essentially, you are starting to analyse your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme”. In my research I therefore grouped similar codes together to make up themes. It is also advisable that the researcher use mind maps or tables to help sort codes into themes. The third step is also where you start to establish themes and sub-themes from the codes.

The fourth step involves the researcher reviewing his/her themes. In other words, you look at many themes that emerged from the codes and you refine them or group them into similar themes so that you can establish one overarching theme and then any sub-themes are placed below it.

The fifth step involves defining and naming your themes. This phase is only done when the researcher is satisfied with the themes that emerged from the data. This is the stage where one makes it clear what each theme is about. In terms of the present study, the results of this step can be seen below, where each theme is named and is then described. Quotations are provided under each theme to show what the participants said to make the researcher believe that theme was both relevant and valid.

The sixth step and last is the writing of a report. This is the report that I have broken down into results and discussions. Braun and Clarke (2007: 93) argue that “your write-up must provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data – i.e. enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme.”

I read and followed the six steps given by Braun and Clarke and these helped me to analyse the collected data. The themes that were discerned from the data are revealed below as results, and a discussion of these results then follows. Many of the themes were detected after I had followed the six steps.

#### **4.4 THE REPORT– THEMES**

The themes that emerged from the data are listed below as results in this section. Quotations are given so as to show why I felt that these were important details to share as results. The quotes are given in IsiZulu first, as the interviews were conducted in this language and the quotes are therefore providing the participants’ exact words. Each quote is then translated into English for convenience. I now list the themes that emerged from the data.

##### **4.4.1 MANY WOMEN DO BURN *IMPEPHO* TO COMMUNICATE WITH ANCESTORS**

Nearly all the women that were interviewed stated that they burn *impepho* in their homes because they are older and want to do things for themselves. What follows are verbatim extracts from some of the participants that justify this theme.

- *Kwami ngiyazishisela impepho angibizi muntu, hawu, ngingaze ngibize umuntu nginazo izandla.*
- In my house, I burn *impepho*. I don’t call anyone. I mean, do I need to call someone else when I have my own hands.

- *Ngiyayishisa uma sisodwa ekhaya kodwa uma kunemcimbi ishiswa umfowabo womenyi wami.*
- I burn it if we are alone [i.e. she is alone with her children], but when there is a ceremony my brother-in-law burns it.
- *Abantu besifazane sebeyazishisela impepho manje, phela izikhathi sezashintsha.*
- Women do burn *impepho* on their own now that times have changed.

#### 4.4.2 WOMEN ARE ALLOWED TO BURN IMPEPHO

Times have changed and due to circumstances (such as relatives living far away and male family members having died) women are now allowed to burn *impepho* so as to call upon their ancestors in order to ask for help or to praise them. The participants stated that they do in fact burn *impepho* in their homes, and that whatever they ask for does come true, even though they are females. Some quotes that justify this theme are as follows.

- *Mina la kwami ngiyazishisela impepho futhi engikucelayo kuyenzeka.*
- Here in my house I do burn *impepho*, and whatever I request does come true.
- *Unamezala wami wathi angizishisele impepho ngoba yena nobabezala bahlala kude kunami kodwa uma kunomsebenzi omkhulu bayayishisa bona.*
- My mother-in-law told me that I could burn it because she and my father-in-law stay far away from us. But if there is an important ritual ceremony they burn it.
- *Kwashona umyeni wami ngazishisela mina impepho, izihlobo zikhona eduze angithembi umuntu. Indodana yami isencane.*
- When my husband passed away I started burning *impepho* on my own. My relatives are close but I don't trust anyone and my son is still very young.
- *Ngiyayishisa impepho ngicele emadlozeni engikufisayo noma uma kuhlatshiwe.*
- I burn *impepho* and ask the ancestors to grant my wishes or when we slaughter animals as offerings.

#### 4.4.3 THERE ARE CONDITIONS FOR BURNING IMPEPHO AS WOMEN

Although women are allowed to burn *impepho*, there are certain conditions that forbid them from burning *impepho*. These conditions are as follows.

- A. If there is a male figure in the family such as a father or a brother.



These are the quotes that led to this statement:

- *Ngeke umuntu wesifazane ayishise impepho uma esekhona ubaba wekhaya noma indodana endala, kodwa uma sebengasekho kumele azishisele.*
- A woman cannot burn *impepho* if the husband is still alive or if there is an old son, but if they have passed on she must burn it.
- *Uma indoda yomuzi isekhona kumele kube ziyona eshisa impepho ikhulume emadlozini, umama aguqe ngemuva kwakhe alalele.*
- If the man as the head of the house is still around, it is his duty to burn *impepho* and speak to the ancestors. The woman kneels behind him and listens.
- Umuntu wesifazane angayishisa impepho kodwa uma umuntu wesilisa esaphila kuba nguyena oyishisayo noma acele isihlobo simshisele.”
- A person can burn *impepho* but if there is an older male in the family, he can burn it. She can also ask a male relative to assist her.

**B.** If the woman has had intercourse. One needs to be pure to burn *impepho*.

These are the quotes that led to this statement:

- *Uma kade uselawini awukwazi ukushisa impepho noma ungowesilisa noma owesifazane.*
- If a person, be it male or female, has indulged in sexual act just prior to the activity that requires burning of *impepho*, he or she may not burn *impepho*.
- *Uma kade wenza ucansi awukwazi ukushisa impepho, phela umsamo kunabantu abadala esibahloniphayo, indawo engcwele esiyihloniphayo.*
- If you had sex, you cannot burn *impepho*; in umsamo are our ancestors and we need to respect them. It [i.e. umsamo] is a sacred and respected place.
- *Umama angayishisa impepho kodwa hhayi uma kade eselawini noma esendaweni yakhe. Lokhu kufana nokusebenzisa imithi. Ngeke imithi isebenze uma uzoyixuba nocansi.*
- A mother can burn *impepho* but not when she has been having sexual intercourse or when she is menstruating. This is similar to using traditional medicine. It will not work if you use it simultaneously with sex.

C. If she is menstruating.

These are the quotes that led to this statement:

- *Umuntu wesifazane angayishisa noma yinini impepho kodwa hhayi uma esezinsukwini zakhe, phela umsamo ufana nendawo engcwele.*
- A female can burn *impepho* anytime but not when she is having her period. *Umsamo* is like a sacred/holy place.
- *Angayishisa kodwa hhayi uma esezinsukwini zakhe, akangeni nasemsamo uma kunjalo.*
- She can burn *impepho* but not when she is having her period. She cannot enter *umsamo* like that.
- *Umuntu wesifazane angayishisa impepho kodwa hhayi uma elapha.*
- A woman can burn *impepho* but not when she is there [said while touching her private part].
- *Ngiyayishisa impepho ekhaya kodwa angiyishisi uma ngisezinsukwini zami.*
- I do burn *impepho* at my home but not when it is my days [i.e. when I am menstruating].

#### 4.4.4 IT IS NOT SAFE TO CALL A RELATIVE (THIRD PERSON) TO BURN *IMPEPHO* ON YOUR BEHALF

The interviewed women said that they feel it is better for them to burn *impepho* on their own rather than call a relative to help them, as there is a great deal of witchcraft that goes on, albeit from jealousy or some other ulterior motive. These women were of the opinion that it is best to connect to your ancestors personally rather than have a stranger do it for you.

To this effect here are some of the verbatim responses:

- *Khona abantu besifazane kuthiwa bangayishisi kodwa ngathi kungcono ukuzishisela wena kunokucela omunye umuntu ozo fika akuphambanisele izinto. Bakuthakathe bakuqede.*
- They say women must not burn *impepho* but it is better that way than having a stranger who could in the process bewitch you.

- *Kungcono nje umuntu azishisele impepho phela sekukuningi ukuthakathana nomona ezihlobeni. Umuntu uthi akazokusiza kanti yena usekuvalile emsamo wakhe.*
- It is best to burn *impepho* yourself since people are jealous and they will bewitch you.
- *We ukubiza umuntu wangaphandle kwekhaya azokushisela impepho akulungile ngoba abantu bayaphambaniselana futhi izinto zakho zingalungi. Kungcono nje ukuzenzela.*
- It is not good to ask an outsider [i.e. a non-family member] to burn *impepho* for you as they can mess things up for you and your plans will fail. It's better to do it for yourself.

#### **4.4.5 ANCESTORS CANNOT BE SEPARATED, THEY ARE SEEN AS ONE**

Ancestors cannot be separated. In other words, the ancestors are seen as being one person. Women cannot therefore call upon only female ancestors, thereby leaving out male ancestors. A person can only call upon all the ancestors of a family.

The quotes that led to this theme are as follows:

- *Idlozi lilodwa ngeke ukwazi ukulihlukanisa.*
- The ancestors are one. You cannot separate them.
- *Ngeke ukwazi ukulihlukanisa idlozi, ubabiza bonke kanye kanye.*
- You cannot separate ancestors; you have to call all of them together.
- *Uma usushisa impepho ubabiza bonke abakini abangasekho abayidlozi elihle, abangalungile awubabizi.*
- When burning *impepho*, you call upon all your ancestors but you do not call upon evil/bad ancestors.

This last participant raised the issue of calling upon only the good ancestors within one's family. The point here is that one needs to be aware that there are both good and bad ancestors. Another participant also made mention of a bad/evil ancestor (*idlozi elibi*). This issue will be further discussed in the discussion section below.

#### **4.4.6 DIVINERS (IZANGOMA) HAVE ANCESTORS WHO POSSESS THEM THEREFORE THEY ARE ALLOWED TO BURN *IMPEPHO* SO AS TO BE ABLE TO ASSIST THEIR PATIENTS**

The quotes that led to this theme are as follows:

- *Uma uzoba yisangoma ungenwa yidlozi, ilona elikusizayo uma usulapha ngakho- ke impepho uvumelekile ukuyishisa noma ungakanani uma nje usuphothulile.*
- When you are going to become a diviner, an ancestor enters you, it is the one that helps you when you are healing, therefore you are allowed to burn *impepho*. It doesn't matter how old you are when you have completed your training, you may burn it.
- *Phela isangoma sihlukile kwabanye abantu besifazane ngoba singenwa abantu abadala. Uma sisebenza silekelelwa abantu abadala.*
- Diviners are different from other women because we have elders within us. When we are healing, they help us.
- *Mina ngangenwa abantu abadala ngisemncane, ngakho-ke ngasheshe ngazishisela impepho. Uma nje usuqede ukuthwasa usungashisa impepho ubize amadlozi akho ukuthi akukhanyisele uma usulapha."*
- I got my calling when I was very young, so I burnt *impepho* at an early age. Once you finish your training, you call upon your ancestors to help you in your healing.

#### **4.4.7 DIVINERS SUGGEST THAT YOU GET AN OLDER MALE WHO SHARES YOUR SURNAME IF YOU DO NOT HAVE RELATIVES**

Diviners always advise women or young people who need to be introduced to the ancestors (or need to undergo a name-changing process) to bring along at least one male relative or a man with a similar surname to them when they want to burn *impepho*.

The quotes that led to this theme are as follows:

- *Uma ushintsha isibongo sakho, sithi abantu abafike nomuntu omdala wesilisa ozomshisela impepho ambike emadlozini. Kudingeka umuntu onesibongo esifana nesakhe ukuthi ambike emadlozini.*
- When a person changes his/her surname, we tell them to come back with an old male who will introduce them to the ancestors. We need a person with the same surname as theirs to introduce his/her to the ancestors.
- *Kungcono ukuthi umuntu eze nomuntu wesilisa omdala ozomsiza uma ezongeniswa esibongweni sakubo.*
- It is better if a person comes here with an older male person who will introduce him/her to his/her surname.
- *Ngeke umuntu wesifazane azishisele impepho, udinga owesilisa ikakhulukazi uma engeniswa esibongweni sakhe.*
- A female cannot burn *impepho* for herself, she needs a man, especially if she needs to be introduced to her surname.
- *Umuntu wesifazane angazishisela impepho kwakhe kodwa uma esemncane noma edinga ukushintsha isibongo sakhe kudingeka umuntu wesilisa ozomsiza.*
- A female can burn *impepho* at her home but if she is young or needs to change surnames, she will need a male to help her.

There were many other comments that were similar to these and nearly all the participants were of the same view about women being able to burn *impepho*, but it was not possible to quote every participant's view due to space limitations. The results and a comparison of these results are provided below.

## 4.5 THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section I look at what the literature has to say about *impepho* and women's use of it. I will compare what is said in the literature with what the study's participants had to say on the topic. There seems to be a huge gap between the literature and what is happening since women are now using *impepho* themselves instead of calling on men or male relatives to help them. My research shows that what is stated in the books is very different to what is actually happening in both townships and rural areas.

Ntuli (2010: 19) clearly states that women are not allowed to burn *impepho* and that they have never had a right to do this, but it is evident from the interviews that I conducted that many women disagree with Ntuli's claims. I cannot explain this situation by arguing that times have changed, since Ntuli's book was published only two years ago. The reason for this contrast in opinions must therefore be because Ntuli writes from a male perspective. Ntuli fails to give reasons for the exclusion of women from this ritual practice. The study's participants said that they do not know of any valid reasons for women to be excluded from burning of *impepho* other than that it has always been this way and it is said that it is not respectful for women to burn *impepho*. Nearly all the participants do in fact burn *impepho* in their homes. Only one woman stated that she does not burn *impepho* herself, but this woman said that her mother-in-law burns it for them, so there is still a female burning *impepho* for that family and her testimony thus supports the claim that women do indeed burn *impepho*.

Mkhize (2009: 20) says that women do not burn *impepho* but that they look after *umsamo* to keep it clean and make food and Zulu beer for the ancestors. This means that the female or the wife is known to the ancestor, so she is no stranger. It would be better to have her call upon her ancestors herself as when she marries into the family she is formally introduced to the ancestors. This raises the issue of women feeling that it would be better if they burnt *impepho* themselves rather than have a relative or a stranger burn it for them, as there have been instances where the male proxy did not say exactly what was wanted of him. Furthermore, a male proxy may make a mistake, or, even worse, try to bewitch you while burning *impepho* for you. Your *impepho* ceremony will not succeed if the stand-in male has other motives, and so it is best to let women burn *impepho* for themselves so that they will be kept safe from such individuals.

Feminism aims to emancipate women from male domination and social constructivism. In Chapter 2 I made mention of how men make up laws that suppress women; the gender-specific rules concerning the burning of *impepho* can be seen in one of these laws, since no one knows why women have been excluded from this practice. Culture and tradition can be seen as playing a large role in the oppression of women since women are given the hard and difficult roles of keeping the house and childrearing whilst men alone are allowed to burn *impepho*. I believe that women can and are changing their socially constructed roles, and that part of this change involves their participating in rituals such as the burning of *impepho*. Einstein (1983: XIV) says: "I think that culture and tradition can change to accommodate women and I believe that women, like men, are socially produced beings and can change." This is what is evident in this research, namely that

African women are emancipating themselves, showing that they will no longer wait for men but are communicating with the ancestors themselves. Women are entering into spaces such as *umsamo*, which were traditionally designated for men alone.

The participants in this study mentioned that ancestors cannot be separated from one another, and so woman cannot call upon female ancestors alone. There is, however, the belief that one can call upon only the good ancestors, thereby excluding any bad or evil ancestors. A good ancestor is described as a person who was good while he/she was on earth, versus a person who murdered or bewitched others. It seems reasonable that you can call upon only the good ancestors to assist you when you are in need. Nearly all women made mention of good ancestors. This quotation below was mentioned by an old widow, aged 69 in KwaNyuswa:

- *Uma usubabiza abakini abangasekho, ubiza bonke abahle abalungile ngeke ubize idlozi elalingumthakathi noma elalinenhliziyo embi.”*
- When calling your ancestors, you will call all the good ones and you will not call an ancestor who was a witch or was evil.

The problem happens when you are unaware that a certain ancestor was a bad or evil person when alive. What if, for example, you learn your ancestors' names from a granny who fails to inform you that this or that person was evil? One needs to know about their family history so as to know who was a good ancestor. One important point to note is that you do not refer to ancestors by their individual names but instead you use their surname and clan names. This is done out of respect for the ancestors, therefore women can call upon their ancestors as they will be respecting them as well.

Although women are now burning *impepho*, there are many limitations to this practice. The first limitation has to do with age. It has been stated above that if there are males in the family then women cannot take part in this ritual, but the age of the male who is allowed to burn *impepho* is not stated. Another participant informed me that instead of burning *impepho* for herself, a woman who has no husband should ask a little boy (e.g. her son) to burn it and she can stand behind him and tell him exactly what to say. Writers such as Ntuli (2010) and Mkhize (2009) state that women are not allowed to burn *impepho* but, according to the participants, women do in fact burn *impepho*; it is just the age of the women who are allowed to burn *impepho* that is unclear, as the township-dwelling women and the rural-dwelling women expressed conflicting views on this matter. The women from KwaNdengezi were not specific about the desirable age of women in this

regard, but the women from KwaNyuswa were very specific: they feel that a woman must be married or over the age of forty to be allowed to communicate with the ancestors. The older participants were of the view that only an old woman – in other words, one of those who have reached menopause – may burn *impepho*.

The second limitation concerning the burning of *impepho* is that a person must not have had sex before doing so. According to the participants, the timeframe in this regard is unclear. One of the women stated that “a person must not have had sex the same day as they wish to burn *impepho*”. Another lady stated that a person must have been clean (i.e. not have had sex) for at least a day before burning *impepho* since *impepho* is for communicating with ancestors and therefore requires purity on the part of the person using it. Women must be clean if they are to enter the sacred place, *umsamo*.

This leads us to the third limitation, which is that a woman must not be going through her menstrual cycle when burning *impepho*. Menstruation is clearly seen as something dirty, as there are many cultural taboos associated with it. For instance, Zulu people and other African ethnic groups believe that if a menstruating woman goes into the family garden or plantation, the plants will die. Menstruating women are therefore not allowed into these places. Many African cultures adhere to such notions; in Nigeria, for example, a woman may not participate in ancestral worship if she is in the middle of her cycle. (Moji, 1990:45)

Another important point that came up from the questions that were asked is that ancestors cannot be separated into male or female; when one calls on the ancestors one essentially calls on all of them. The ancestors are seen as one person, so females cannot call upon only female ancestors. The participants did, however, point out that one needs to call upon good ancestors only. This statement surely contradicts the above assertion that when calls on the ancestors, *all* the ancestors are being addressed. The existing literature does not make mention of good versus bad ancestors, and yet diviners have explained that there are indeed both good and bad ancestors and that people need to be made aware of this.

*Izangoma* are male and female diviners and they are an important part of the Zulu social system. Women in this category are privileged to burn *impepho* since they are possessed by the ancestors that led to them to becoming *sangomas*. Diviners also call upon their ancestors when healing or consulting with patients. A diviner is the English equivalent word for *isangoma* (Smith, 2008:5). Diviners are of the opinion that a woman needs to be introduced to her ancestors so that the



ancestors will be aware of the fact that she will be the one burning *impepho* from now on, seeing that the husband has left or has passed away. There are however instances where a male figure will be required, namely when a woman wants to be introduced to the ancestors or wishes to change her surname.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, women are now burning *impepho* and communicating with their ancestors. A great deal of new as well as already recorded information emerged from the interviews. For example, a new theme that emerged concerns the idea that women cannot burn *impepho* if they are on their menstrual cycle or have recently had sexual intercourse. Also, it became clear that the ancestors are seen as one. Another matter that was brought to light is that women from urban and rural areas have differing opinions with regard to this last-mentioned matter; this state of affairs could be as a result of their different levels of education and their different economic statuses. Although there are wealthy and educated women in rural areas but most of the women that were interviewed in KwaNyuswa were mainly old and uneducated women. Further conclusions are drawn in the final chapter, where the study's limitations and recommendations are also discussed.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this final chapter, I sum up the information gathered from the different sources used in conducting this study, namely the books, journals read as well as the participants interviewed and who formed a major part of this research. I also look at the key research question(s) and consider whether or not they were answered in this study. Firstly, I look back at the material the research covered. I then discuss the general findings. Finally, I speak about the limitations of the study and make recommendations for further possible research into this subject.

### **5.2 THE STUDY IN ESSENCE**

Chapter 1 gave a brief introduction to the study. It discussed the aims and objectives of the study and put forward the main questions that I intended to answer. This chapter also gave a brief explanation of what *impepho* is and explained when it is used in the Zulu cultural system. The reasons for the study were also provided. The aim of this chapter was to put the study in motion and to put it into perspective.

Chapter 2 was the literature review. Paradigms, theories and the literature on *impepho* were discussed. I discussed liberal feminism and explained its relevance to my study as I aimed to find a way to accommodate women into the ritual practice of burning *impepho*. Many books and theses that were consulted, and these provided valuable information for this study. It became apparent that there was a great need for the study of this nature to be pursued.

Chapter 3 was about research methods, and as such outlined how I gathered information from the literature as well as the study's participants. It stated that this study used qualitative research methods, which are concerned about the quality of information obtained from participants. The role of qualitative research in this study was to provide insight into and explanations for certain cultural practices and rituals. Whilst I took quantitative approach it is not a method that I could present at length as it is only mentioned in passing.

Chapter 4 provided data analysis. The chapter explained data analysis and discussed the different kinds of analytic method. It then described thematic analysis further, as this was the method used

in the study. The themes that emerged from the collected data were presented and discussed, with appropriate quotations being given. This all led to the final and current chapter, which is the concluding chapter. The chapter illustrated that there was a great relationship amongst the different analytical methods offered. It demonstrated the thin line that separated some of them while explaining why I settled for thematic approach.

### 5.3 GENERAL FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of my research was to question women's role in the ritual practice of burning *impepho*. The main research questions investigated during the interviews was why women are not allowed to burn it and if they are in fact burning it in their own homes. The topic of this study was: "Some gendered African ritual practices: The case of *impepho* (an indigenous African plant)". Throughout the research I tried to uncover reasons, for why women are forbidden from burning *impepho*, but it seems that there are no real reasons why women are not allowed to burn it.

The first finding from the study was that women are in fact burning *impepho* in their homes. The participants said that they were unaware of the real or main reason(s) as to why women are not allowed to burn *impepho* in order to communicate with their ancestors. Therefore it seems as if this stricture is a socially constructed one that aims to deny women the right to communicate with their ancestors. This is a rule constructed by the male members of our society and they are the ones that enjoy the right to burn *impepho*. Women are the ones who have to keep *umsamo* clean and also prepare food and *umqombothi* (Zulu beer) for the ancestors. Neither the study's participants nor the literature on the topic could give any valid reasons as to why women are not allowed to burn *impepho*. Ntuli (2010; 19) states that a woman, even an older women, has never had the right to burn *impepho*, but he does not give a reason for this statement. What is evident from the interviews is that women are in fact engaging in the burning of *impepho*, regardless of any ruling against it. Nearly 95% of the women interviewed said they burn *impepho* in their homes.

Although women do burn *impepho*, there are certain prohibitions to be considered: if there is a male head of the home, the woman must let him burn *impepho*; if the woman is on her menstrual cycle, she must not burn *impepho*; and a woman must not engage in any sexual activity a day before burning *impepho*. Men may also not burn *impepho* or use any traditional medicine (*umuthi*) if they have had sex a day before. Women are therefore more restricted than men with regard to

burning *impepho* simply because they experience menstrual cycles. That is why it was suggested that only older, post-menopausal women burn *impepho*.

There is not much literature on the topic of *impepho* and women's use of it, but the little available literature that there warns against women burning *impepho* themselves. What is evident from the interviews is that women are indeed burning *impepho* in their homes and are thus not letting this socially constructed laws prevent them from doing so. Times have changed and so have culture and tradition, therefore women have questioned this restriction and found no valid reason as to why they are forbidden from burning *impepho*. One of the research questions aimed to ascertain if women's prayers come true if they burn *impepho* for themselves; the participants said they feel that their wishes do come true and that it is better for them to burn *impepho* themselves rather than ask a relative to do it for them, knowing that relatives could possibly have harmful ulterior motives. This line of investigation also led me to the theme (4.2.5.1.4) of people not trusting one another; people worry that others (even their own relatives) might, out of jealousy, say harmful prayers when burning *impepho* and/or conduct witchcraft against them.

Another important finding to note was that due to changing times, people no longer live in clans or in huts. Most people now live in brick homes, meaning there are no longer special rooms or huts for *umsamo* for burning *impepho*, as was the case in the past and when Mkhize (2009) conducted his research. *Impepho* is now used in a sacred corner of the house, which is either in the kitchen or in a special room or hut set aside for ancestors. The location of a home's *umsamo* also depend upon the location of that home; most homes in KwaNyuswa did have an outside room or hut set aside for ancestors, and this room or hut had been especially built for this purpose. The KwaNdengezi households, however, are limited in terms of space, so *impepho* is burned in a sacred corner mainly in the kitchen or bedroom.

## **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Conducting this research, which was on a topic close to my heart, was a great experience for me. As I stated in the introduction, I chose to write about this topic because the restriction against women burning *impepho* has affected my family, and particularly my mother, who is the head of her home. I gave this research my full time and dedication, but there were nonetheless some things that I could not accomplish.

The greatest limitation in conducting my research was trying to find a common venue where the women engaged in the focus groups could meet, since the participants were located in different parts of KwaNdengezi or KwaNyuswa. During the one-on-one interviews I went to the participants' homes so that I would not have to pay for their transport costs. Finding a common venue was more difficult in KwaNdengezi. In KwaNyuswa I met with the women on pension day at the old courthouse. In KwaNdengezi, the community hall, which is a central and common venue, was always occupied on weekends and we could not meet there during the week as I and some of the participants work on weekdays. I then met with the participants on weekend at the local hall in both areas. The participants in the focus groups were not willing to divulge any personal information about their use of *impepho*. The participants taking part in the individual interviews, however, felt free to share their thoughts with me as I reassured them that their names would not be disclosed.

Some of the participants, especially those from KwaNyuswa, could neither read nor write so I had to spend a great deal of time reading and explaining the research as well as the consent form to them. Some of the women did not want to be recorded so I had to reassure them that their names would not be used; I thus refer to them in this paper as Mama, *Gogo* or Auntie (i.e. mother, grandmother or aunt). The diviners somewhat intimidated me at first, and they also wanted me to pay for their time, but after explaining to them about my research they agreed to be part of it and in so doing contributed some valuable information.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study could not cover certain aspects due to time and space constraints, therefore I wish to recommend the following as topics that could be investigated further. I firstly recommend that someone conduct a similar study adding the male point of view with regard to *impepho* to find out if men's views about women burning *impepho* have changed at all. I was unable to get in touch with the two authors (i.e. Mkhize and Ntuli) whose books on culture and tradition I consulted in my research; I think that their input would have been valuable for further research since they are enlightened about indigenous knowledge systems.

My study focused on females between the ages of forty and sixty years old, but what was discovered from the interviews is that there are many female-headed homes with women younger than forty who are using *impepho*. This is another area that could also be investigated further since the norm states that a woman who burns *impepho* should have gone through menopause. The

question that I suggest could be investigated further concerns what happens in a situation, for example, where a wife of thirty-six loses her husband but lives far away from her in-laws and any male relatives? Should there be a prescribed age for both males and females for burning *impepho*?

Another recommendation is that a study could be conducted that includes more rural places in its investigation, since KwaNyuswa is in Durban and those participants' responses could therefore have been influenced by factors such as urbanisation and education. I think that people in deeply rural areas would have different views and opinions about women using *impepho* as they are more influenced by culture and tradition and live in a different setting to the women that I interviewed.

Another topic that could be further investigated is *umsamo* and what happens if it is located in a room inside the home instead of in a designated hut as was the case in the past and still is in rural areas.

Lastly, there was also the issue of good and bad ancestors, and this had me interested, but I could not pursue it further due to time and space limitations.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

This study revealed new information, specifically that women are using *impepho* in their homes even though there are some limitations to this. The results of this study cannot be generalised because my samples were drawn from a township (N=15) and a rural area (N=15) and these two places are both located near the city of Durban. Women, especially widows and unmarried women, living in the areas of KwaNyuswa and KwaNdengezi are using *impepho*; they are not waiting for male relatives or older mother-in-laws to assist them. It is my hope that this research will help convince men to allow women to use *impepho* since women are using it anyway and their prayers or wishes are indeed coming true when they are made with a clean heart to good ancestors.

## 6. REFERENCES

- Arnold, S. & Niteki, A. (1990). *Culture and Development in Africa. African Women and Sex Roles Studies: A Methodological Criticise*. Trenton: African World Press.
- Ary, D. , Jacobs L.C. , Razavieh, A & Sorensen, C. (2002) (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.) Introduction to research in Education. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengane Learning.
- Bassey, M. (1990). On the Nature of Research in Education. *British Educational Journal*, 18(1), 3-16.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Brunskell, H. (1998). Feminist Methodology. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching Society and Culture*. London: SAGE.
- Buikema, R. & Smelik, A. (1995). *Women's Studies and Culture: A Feminist Introduction*. London: Zed Books.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S (2003). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Epstein, R. (1999). *Liberty, Patriarchy, and Feminism*. University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989, 106-111. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Einstein, H. (1983). *Contemporary Feminist Thought*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co.
- Fereday, J. & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 1-11.
- Foddy, W. (1993). *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires: Theory and Practice in Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedan, B. (1971). *The Feminine Mystique*. London: Gollancz.

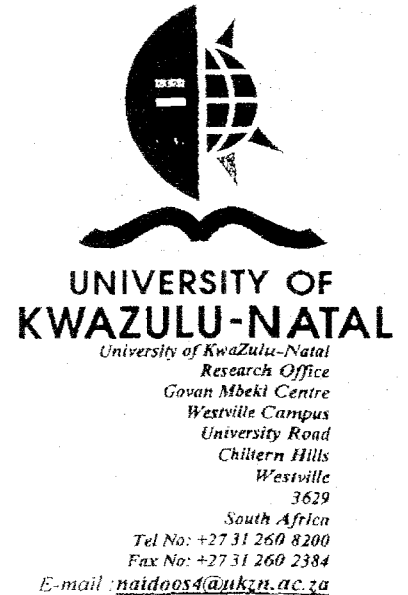
- Garrick, J. (2000). *Research and knowledge at work. Perspectives, case study and innovative strategies*. London: Routledge
- George, S.M. (2005). *When Women Come First: Contractions of Gender*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE.
- Hannam, J. (2007). *Feminism*. London: Pearson Longman.
- Hawkin, J.M. (1989). *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Hay, M. & Stichter, S. (1984). *African Women: South of the Sahara*. London: Longman Publishing.
- Hefner, R.W. (1985). *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam*. Princeton: Princetown University Press.
- Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your Way in Qualitative Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Hsieh, H. F. & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Journal of Qualitative Health Research*. 15 (9). 1277-1288.
- Johnson, A.G. (2000). *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Levine, J.H. (2002). *Introduction to Data Analysis: The Rules of Evidence*. Retrieved 18 May, 2011, from <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~mss/dataanalysisVolume.pdf>
- Lupri, E. (1983). *The Changing Position of Women in Family and Society: Across-Cultural Comparison*. London: Zed Books.
- Magezis, J. (1996). *Teach Yourself Women's Studies*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Mkhize, V.V.O. (2009). *Umsamo: Iziko lamaThongo*. Johannesburg: Umsamo African Institute.



- Moji, I. (1990). *African Women and Sex Roles Studies: A Methodological Critic*. In S. Arnold & Niteki, A. (Eds), *Culture and Development in Africa*. Trenton: African World Press.
- Mouton, J. (2001). *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral studies. A South African Guide and Resource Book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Muthuki, F.W. (2004). Exploring changing gender roles. A case study of Married Zulu speaking academic staff of the University of KwaZulu Natal. Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal.
- Namkoong, J. & Uno, M.A. (2004). *Family Tradition in Hawaii: Birthdays, Marriage, Funerals and Cultural Customs in Hawaii*. Korea: Namkoong Publishers.
- Nnaemeka, O. (1998). *Sisterhood, Feminism and Power: from Africa to diaspora*. New Jersey: African World Press
- Ntuli, N. M. (2010). *Isisekelo Samasiko*. Pietermaritzburg: Interak Publishers.
- Nürnberg, K. (2007). *The Living Dead and the Living God: Christ and the Ancestors in Changing Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications and CB Powell Bible Centre.
- Nyawose, T. (2000). Living in two worlds: Codes and the modes of expression at Zulu funerals in KwaZulu Natal at the turn of the millennium. Unpublished Master dissertation. Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal.
- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing Women: A Contraction in Term. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. .
- Phillips, L. J. & Jorgensen, M. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as a Theory and Method*. London : Routledge.
- Potter, W.T. (1996). *An Analysis of Thinking and Research about Qualitative Methods*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Riessman, C. (2002). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge.
- Rubin, H.J. & Rubin, I.S. (2004). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

- Saul, J.M. (2003). *Feminism: Issues and arguments*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Silverman, D. (1997). *Qualitative Methodology and Sociology*. Aldershot, England: Gower Publishing Company LTD.
- Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. London: SAGE.
- Smith, P. (2008). National Reference Centre for African Traditional Medicines: A South African Model. Durban: South African Medical Research Council
- Taylor, C., Wilkie, M. & Baser, J. (2006). *Doing Action Research: A Guide for School Support Staff*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- World Bank Policy (2001). Gender Equality and Economic Development. Retrieved on the 7 August 2011 from [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).
- Vance, C.S. (1989). Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality. In *An Introduction of Women's Studies*. (2<sup>nd</sup>Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist Practice and Post Structuralist Theory*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Wood, L.A. & Kroger, R.O. (2000). *Doing Discourse Analysis. Methods for Studying Action in Talk and Text*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE
- St James Episcopal Church*. Retrieved 27 March, 2011, from [www.stjamescolumbus.org/useofincense.htm](http://www.stjamescolumbus.org/useofincense.htm)
- Zigira, C.A.B. (2003). *Religion, Culture and Gender: A Study of Women's Search for Gender Equality in Swaziland*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Zondi, N. B (2008). *Bahlabelelani- why do they sing? Gender and power in contemporary women's songs*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal

## Annexure A Ethical Clearance



08 February 2011

Ms M C Ntshangase  
School of IsiZulu  
HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS

Dear Ms Ntshangase

**PROTOCOL: Some Gendered Ritual African Practices. The case of Impepho (an Indigenous African plant)**

**ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0064/2011 M: Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences**

In response to your application dated 04 February 2011, Student Number: **201502811** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

**PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.**

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

  
**Professor Steve Collings (Chair)**  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE**

SC/sn

cc: Dr. N B Zondi (Supervisor)  
cc: Ms. S van der Westhuizen

Postal Address:

Telephone:

Facsimile:

Email:


Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

Founding Campuses:

 Edgewood

Howard College

Medical School

 Pietermaritzburg

 Westville

## Annexure B Supervisors Letter



Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences,

School of IsiZulu Studies

Howard College Campus.

11 November 2010

### To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Miss Mpumelelo Ntshangase is a Masters student in the School of isiZulu Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard Campus, Durban. As part of her Masters Degree, she has to conduct a short research study on the area that is of interest to her. She has selected KwaNdengezi, Ward 12 as one of the areas that will offer her insight into the issues of the use of *impepho* as far as women are concerned. To this end she will need to talk with some women in this area whose help in this regard will be of great significance. As her supervisor, I request that you grant her access into your area where she will still sought permission from the women themselves. The student also acknowledges that she will explain the participants' rights in the research and those who take part will do so with a full knowledge that they are not compelled to be part of the study and that they may pull out of it anytime they might so wish. (Please see such an informed consent letter attached).

Should you have any queries about her study, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dr. N.B. Zondi

031 260 1301 zondin@ukzn.ac.za

## Annexure C Letter from EmaQadini Induna

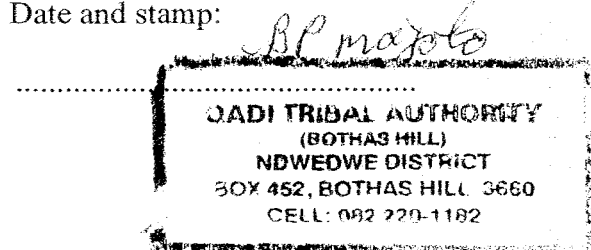
I (full names) Bangizwe Petros Majola.....headman of the area of eQadi Traditional Authority have been consulted by Miss Mpumelelo Ntshangase with a request to conduct a research study which deals with *impepho* and women. After listening to what the research is about, I hereby grant her permission to access my area and my people to get any information that will help her in the study.

Full name Bangizwe Majola.....

Signature

BP Majola.....

Date and stamp:



Incwadi yemvume evela enduneni egunyaza ilungelo lokungena eQadi ngenjongo yokuthola ulwazi.

Mina (igama eliphelele) Bangizwe Petros Majola..... induna yesigodi esibizwa ngokuthi iseMaQadini ngivakashelwe nguNksz Mpumelelo Ntshangase ezocela ukuba ngimvumele endaweni yaseMaQadini ukuthi azokwenza ucwangingo futhi azothola ulwazi mayelana nesihloko sakhe esikhuluma ngempepho kanye nabantu besifazane. Emva kokuxoxisana naye ngalolu cwangingo nami ngiyavuma ukuba awenze lo msebenzi kule ndawo nokuba athole lolo lwazi alundingayo ngokukhulumisana nabantu bami.

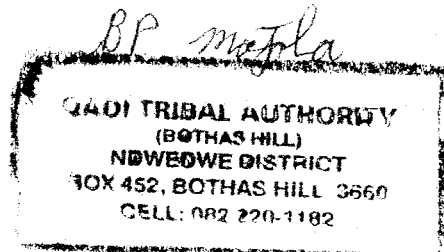
Igama nesibongo Bangizwe Majola.....

Signature

BP Majola.....

Usuku nesigxivizo

13-10-2010



**Annexure D Letter from KwaNdengezi Councillor**

**Letter of consent from Ward 12 Councillor of KwaNdengezi Township to access the area for research purposes**

I (full names) M.DUDUZI CHRISTIAN NGCOBO.....Ward 12 Councillor in KwaNdengezi Township have been consulted by Miss Mpumelelo Ntshangase with a request to conduct a research study which deals with *impepho* and women. After listening to what the research is about, I hereby grant her permission to access my area and my people to get any information that will help her in the study.

Full name M.DUDUZI CHRISTIAN NGCOBO.....

**COUNCILLOR: M.C. NGCOBO**

WARD 12  
33/35 SITHOLE ROAD  
KWANDENGEZI

TEL: (031) 704 7106 CELL: 073 192 779

Signature

Date and stamp:

M.C. Ngcobo

11-11-2010

**Incwadi yemvume evela kwiKhansela laku Ward 12 KwaNdengezi egunyaza ilungelo lokungena endaweni ngenjongo yokuthola ulwazi**

Mina (igama eliphelele)..... induna yesigodi esibizwa ngokuthi iseMaQadini ngivakashelwe nguNksz Mpumelelo Ntshangase ezocela ukuba ngimvumele endaweni yaseMaQadini ukuthi azokwenza ucwaningo futhi azothola ulwazi mayelana nesihloko sakhe esikhuluma ngemphepho kanye nabantu besifazane. Emva kokuxoxisana naye ngalolu cwaningo nami ngiyavuma ukuba awenze lo msebenzi kule ndawo nokuba athole lolo lwazi alundingayo ngokukhulumisana nabantu bami.

Igama nesibongo .....

Signature

Usuku nesigxivizo

.....

.....

**Annexure E Participants Consent Letter**

Letter of consent for the women and diviners (izangoma) who will be interviewed

I ..... ( full name of Participant)  
a member of the community of KwaNdengezi/ KwaNyuswa, give my consent to be part of  
the research study conducted by M.C. Ntshangase. I hereby confirm that I understand the  
nature of the research project and I give consent to be interviewed in the research.

I understand that I and any other person participating in this study have a right to withdraw  
from project at any time should we desire to do so.

I have also been informed that should I have any queries about the study I can contact her  
supervisor, Dr.N. Zondi on 031 2601301

Full Names.....

Signature of Participant

Date:

.....

.....

Witnesss

Date

## **Annexure F Informed Consent for Participants**

I, **Mpumelelo Ntshangase** a Masters Student at the University of KwaZulu Natal in the School of IsiZulu. In order for me to complete the masters programme I need to conduct a research that I think will help a community understand our culture and tradition.

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

This study aims to investigate and understand better the use of *impepho* and why women are restricted from burning *impepho*. I am aware that in some places women are allowed to burn *impepho* there for I would like to find out if they use it are their prayers or requests unheard.

### **How will this research be conducted?**

This study will be conducted by means of questions being used and asked to old women and diviners who will be asked to share more information about *impepho*. I will ask questions and while the participants answer I will take notes and use a tape recorder as well.

### **Why was I asked to participate in this research?**

You form part of a group of people who can be useful in the research because:

- You are a woman who is 50 years old and above.
- You are a female head of the family who could be using *impepho*/ a diviner who knows more about *impepho* and its uses.

### **How long will the interviews of the research take?**

It will take about 30mins to an hour but that will depend more on how much information you have about this topic.

### **Are there any risks or dangers about this research?**

No there are not risks or dangers connected to this research.

### **How will participating in this research help me?**

This research is about our culture and tradition as Zulu people therefore I think that your views and information will help people understand better the use of *impepho* and its restrictions. It will also help the next generation to come.

### **What will happen to this research?**

If you agree to be part of this research, this conversation will be used as part of the research result and analysis, and then it will be published and stored in a library where people can have access to it and use to as mentioned above.

### **Is there any payment for participating in the research?**

No, there is no monetary payment as I will be coming to your place to conduct the interviews but tea will be served.



**Will our conversation be kept private?**

Yes it will be kept private and names will not be used in the research, people will be referred to as A and B etc.

**Do I have any right in this research?**

You enter this research at your own will. No one has the right to force you to participate and you may withdraw from the research whenever you feel.

If you have any questions about this research as the research progresses as a participant or if you have any complains , you may contact my supervisor Dr. N.B Zondi on the following contact details: 031 260 1301, email: [zondin@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:zondin@ukzn.ac.za)

**Or Contact**

Research department at the University of KwaZulu Natal at the following contact details:

Ms Phumelele Ximba: 031 260 3587; i-email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

## Annexure G Questions for Focus Groups and Individuals

**N.B** The following questions will be adapted to suit the relevant interviewees after having been used in focus group discussions.

1. In your opinion what is the significance of *impepho*?
2. Why is it important to Zulu people?
3. Who may use it and for what purpose?
4. Why is it that some/ most women are not allowed to use it?
5. In some regions older women may use *impepho*. In your opinion is this a right thing to do?
6. In your own household, do you as women use *impepho* to communicate with ancestors?
7. In the presence of a male as a head of the family, are women allowed to approach the *umsamo* (sacred place set aside for ancestral rituals)?
8. What is your role as a woman in the use of *impepho* or communication with ancestors?
9. Female *izangoma* (diviners) use *impepho* to communicate with the patients' ancestors. Do you know why this is the case? Elaborate clearly.
10. There are instances where you have to burn *impepho* such as when a rough storm or lightening threatens the welfare of the family. Would you take a chance and use *impepho* despite the fact that you are not allowed to do so? Explain clearly.
11. Women also pass away and become ancestors, maybe women should communicate with female ancestors. What is your opinion on this?
12. Times have changed do you think that this practice should be changed to accommodate women since there are many female headed families? If yes, what can be done to accommodate women and if not give reasons for your opinion.

## Annexure H Questions for Diviners

1. What is *impepho*?
2. Why is it important to us Zulus?
3. Who is allowed to burn it?
4. Why are most women not allowed to use it?
5. Why is *impepho* important to you as izangoma?
6. How do you feel about women not being allowed to use *impepho*?
7. If you were not a Sangoma would you burn *impepho*?
8. What makes you special to be able to burn *impepho*?
9. Can we do the same thing to other women so that they are allowed to use *impepho*?
10. There some instances where there are no males in the family what do you say about burning *impepho* in such instances?
11. How can ordinary women be accommodated into using *impepho*?