

Zimbabwe Documentation of Nhangas as Feminist and Intergenerational Space for Advocacy, Mentorship, Skills Building and Leadership



Nhanga



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The chapter introduced the study and gave the background to the problem. The background highlighted the concept of Nhang from both Afro-centric and Euro-centric scholars. The chapter looked at historical development in the pre-colonial era and its setting up in contemporary society. The Chapter also presented the research methodology that was used in data generation. Justification, research objectives, and definitions of Nhang are also presented in the chapter. The chapter also stated the problem which helped in clarifying the existence of the problem and the need to carry out an intervention to the problem which is this study. The scope of the study was laid out under the delimitations of the study. The subsequent chapter reviews the literature for the study and deals with the theoretical frameworks that provided the lenses for this study. The human development approach framework is discussed for it focuses

on enlarging people's choices and enhancing human capabilities and freedoms, enabling them to live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge and a decent standard of living, and participate in the life of their community and decisions affecting their lives. The human rights approach to development was also adopted in a complementary role for it focuses on the elimination of extreme poverty, in our case poverty casts down girls and women to the vulnerability level. In conjunction to the two preceding frameworks the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists was also included as Nhangwa documentation centres much on creation of female intergeneration space. 18

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Mentors in the traditional Nhangwa were mainly the elder women in the community or the women in the homestead. The mother of the girl was the first mentor to the girl and would teach her almost all the basics. The mother would also be assisted by two other relatives who were close to the girl, especially the grandmother of the child, usually from the father's side. This was considered the main mentor of the girl child. She would be responsible for teaching her almost everything she needed to know. If the grandmother passed away the responsibility of mentoring the girl was taken by the aunt. The aunt was responsible for teaching the girl child everything and when it came to marriage time the aunt was responsible for taking the girl child to her new home. Mentorship was family rooted and it involved the women within that particular family. These three mentors; mother, aunt and grandmother taught the girl child. 45

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CHAPTER 1: Background and Methodology

1.0 Introduction

Safe spaces have become an increasingly key methodology globally to advance the rights of girls and young women, especially on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, education and ending child marriages. Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT)'s premise is that in today's society, girls and women are facing critical challenges, related to growing up, knowledge systems, relationships and communication within families. Some are in school and others are out of school. The disjuncture of formal and informal spaces for mentoring and nurturing is seen in the key indicators on barriers to completion in education/drop outs, teenage pregnancies and child marriages. (RMT), through its work, is advancing the welfare and wellbeing of girls and young women with a special focus on education, leadership, SRHR and child marriages, the trust amplify the safe space concept by adopting the Nhangas since the year 2017. In a research undertaken for Rozaria Memorial Trust by Marumisa (2020) in Shamva and

Murewa Districts, a number of factors were alluded to as the cause of problems highlighted above. It has been noted, however, that Nhangas, as an important Feminist African Heritage has not been adequately documented as a methodology and as a safe space for girls and women. It is to this end that Nhangas has to be properly documented for use in contemporary societies and for many years to come. Nhangas is a Shona name that describes a girls' room at a homestead. It is traditionally designed as a space for conversation by girls with the aunts, mothers and other older women about sexual health information, counselling and general advice on issues that relate to their growth and wellbeing. Nhangas is the Common name that is used in most areas. Various ethnic groups in Zimbabwe use different names referring to Nhangas. In IsiNdebele it is referred to as Ixhiba lamantombazana, In Tonga, it is known as Ng'anda yabasimbi. Nyumba yaasikana in Chewa, In Kalanga it is known as Ngumba yabasikana, Nambya it is referred to as Ingumba yabasichana and in Sotho, it is known as Kamero yabasijana. In Venda it is Tshitangani tshabasidzana. However, for the purposes of this Research, we use Nhangas overall, implying all of the above.

RMT has been innovating with the Nhangas as a positive cultural practice for conversations, mentorship, learning and advocacy for girls and young women with policy leaders and policy makers in education, leadership and SRHR including ending child marriages. It has been growing as a space that is inter-generational and inclusive yet owned and facilitated by the girls and young women. The unique and key aspect of the Nhangas Concept is that all the participants will sit on the floor with their shoes removed and men will be allowed to enter by special invitation. This creates a sense of equality amongst all the people and removes power dynamics in the room which ensure constructive dialogues and girls and young woman's openness to share their own stories and views in a non-judgmental way.

Since the year 2017, RMT has been introducing and amplifying the Nhangas Concept in its subnational, national, regional and international work as part of creating girls' agency and social movement building on education, ASRHR and leadership. In addition, the Nhangas has been enabling and creating space for young women and girls to influence policies and laws for them to defend and enjoy their rights at sub-national, national and regional level.

As part of innovating and pre-testing the Nhangas Concept, RMT successfully used the Nhangas Concept promoting girls' education, leadership and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Murewa and Shamva District. The 20 Rozaria Girls Clubs and 5 Rozaria Young Women Clubs in community areas that include Chitete, Magaya and Umpfurudzi have adopted the Nhangas as one of the main methodologies for activities delivery. In addition, RMT has been hosting Nhangas Sessions for girls and young women's mentorship and for policy influencing in the national and regional platforms such as the Girls Symposium in Harare in 2019, UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York in the year 2018 & 2019 and the SADC Peoples Summit in 2019. To further entrench the concept, RMT constructed the physical Nhangas Space at RMT Education and Counselling Centre in Murewa District in 2018 and it has been in use since the beginning of the year 2019.

It is evident that the cultural rootedness and experience of Nhangas is not confined to Zimbabwe, but is an expression of the culture of the sub-region for SADC region as well as some countries in East Africa. This is known by different words in context such as Egumeni in Siswati and Binti space in

Kiswahili. It resonates at various levels, thus offering the potential for acceptability and adaptability within this diverse context

The Nhanga Concept has also been growing popular and being replicated by partners as an effective approach for influencing policy at national, regional and international level. Plan International, with the guidance of RMT, hosted a Nhanga at the Women Deliver Conference in Canada in 2019. Care International has requested for partnership with RMT to host Nhanga Dialogues at the UN CSW 64 in New York. The Nhanga has been replicated by other partners that include Plan International at Women Deliver in Canada in 2019.

1.2 Background

Quite a sizeable number of scholars advanced their views on the concept of Nhanga in Zimbabwe. The scholars are both of Euro-centric and African origin. Their views on this critical African concept and methodology are interrogated in order to advance the objectives of this documentation. The scholars' work is used in the establishment of the definition of Nhanga, identification of activities done by the girls and women in the centres, the noting of the mentors of the institutions and props or media they used to inculcate the life lessons. The literature also aided the documentation, noting of threats encountered in the survival of Nhanga and the way forward of Nhanga in Contemporary society.

1.2.1 The Concept of Nhanga

Shoko (2016) in her study of the Karanga people of Zimbabwe, established that, Nhanga was a shelter built and allocated to girls by the head of the family. This description by Shoko portrays the physical structure which a Karanga man provides to the girl child as the identity of Nhanga. This description by Shoko tallies with The Herald (2020) definition which regards Nhanga as the residence of female offspring. The two definitions bring in the notion of separation or isolation of an apartment on the basis of gender. The Marin Theatre Company (2020) highlights that the huts were circular, with wood-framed walls plastered with cow dung and mud, conical thatched roofs, packed cow dung floors, and west facing doorways.

Manyonganise and Museka (2010) aver that, from pre-colonial Zimbabwe, in the traditional set up, the way huts were built was in such a way that the hut in which girls sleep was built some distance away from the boys' and parents' huts. This girls' hut was jealously guarded, it was a no-go area for the males and, in turn, daughters were prohibited from entering their parents and brothers' huts. In addition to describing the physical structure of Nhanga, the scholars also provide the position of this structure in relationship to other structures at a given home. The structure was situated well away from the other two structures. This description clearly implies an additional role of Nhanga to the girl child, which required privacy from parents, boys and any other unsanctioned visitors that came into the home. From this description Nhanga was more than a physical structure, but an approach to respond to the needs of a girl child into maturation and sustainable contribution to the African society. This subsequent analysis resonates with Johnston (1982)'s crystallization of Nhanga, when he did his study among the Shangani people, as a guarded women's hut of the highly secretive initiation rites. Johnston further describes Nhanga as the scene of considerable symbolic indoctrination. From the submission of Johnstone, Nhanga is also viewed as a methodology meant to develop the African society through the girl child as opposed to mere indoctrination. Any society that ignores the

development of the girl child sentences its future to a deeper disaster and it may not realize peace and meaningful sustainable development. A strong, knowledgeable woman supports her family and helps unite kinships in neighbourhood communities. It is agreeable in this section that Nhanga was more than a girls' residence, but also a methodology aimed at African civilization or emancipation for the greater survival of the African race. This document, in particular, seeks to compare the evidence provided by these scholars and the epistemological gap within the contemporary society in order to positively merge the critical knowledge deemed a panacea to the current challenges prevailing in our global village. The next section looks at the rationale for Nhanga and the activities that sustained that philosophy.

1.2.2 The Philosophy of Nhanga

A person's character, to some extent, lies in the tradition in which he was brought up and the experiences the person has undergone. The patterns of thinking and acting that have been instilled into us as children are fundamental to our instinctive patterns of behaviour in adulthood (Bourdillon, 1987; Dzavo, 2020). This observation contributed much to the response of the African race in Zimbabwe and across the continent through the Nhanga intervention strategy to ensure the future mother of the nation is empowered at an early age through the activities of the Nhanga development program. It would not be sound to attend to a failing or less empowered adult as is the norm in most parts of our society today.

Shoko (2016) observed that among the Varembea people, the practice of Nhanga served as an initiation of girls to adulthood. Shoko (Ibid), buttresses that the education of women (girls) involves preparation for life activities. The girls are taught skills for sex in order to please their husbands. They are exposed to various forms of sexual styles. As part of training a girl lies on the ground and raises her body supported by her hands and feet: Needles are placed below her body upright on the ground. One woman sits on top of the girl and imitates sex. In some cases, a stone is substituted for the elder woman. The girl must play the sexual act to avoid being pricked by the needles. This ensures excellent skills in sex. The women also stretch the girl's labia. In Zimbabwean and some African experiences the long labia act as sexual stimulants. The initiates receive training on social matters of marital conduct. The girls are also taught the virtues of life which apply to the husband and family, such as kindness, industriousness and moral uprightness and taught against vices such as gossip and greed. They are also exposed to household activities and skills such as pottery, weaving, knitting and sewing. Games such as nhodo, and pada are a part of the rituals. The girls also share stories, proverbs and riddles. Virginity is greatly emphasized; the mentor inserts her figure in the vagina to feel if the membrane is broken or not. In line with this girls, are highly discouraged from engaging in premarital sex. Girls were physically checked for menstruation. In brief, traditional gender roles are highlighted in areas of the kitchen, gardening, fetching of firewood, spirituality, brewing of beer and others. Though one or two of the highlighted activities may clash with contemporary dictates, this documentation needs to look at the spirit behind the activities and find the best way to re-live the philosophy for a reconstruction of Nhanga methodology by in-depth interactions with various stakeholders in our contemporary society.

An ethnographic study done by a scholar with Euro-centric background among the Shangani people of Zimbabwe helped unearth the purpose and activities of Nhanga in Zimbabwe. The findings are not

much different from the findings by Shoko (2016) done among the Karanga people. This is quite reflective of a possible common practice of the Bantu tribes in Zimbabwe as shall be noted below. Johnston (1982) did his study over a period of one and half years and revealed that the young girls are assembled and taught a series of mimes and dances which symbolise the role of women in society particularly in marriage. This includes being the provider of sexual pleasure for the husband, bearer of many children, tiller of the soil, keeper of the home. According to Johnston (Ibid) Nhangas served as a conservative institution taking the critical role which is significant in various communities. The Nhangas initiation also served as a fertility rite ensuring the health of women who intended to marry guaranteeing eventual motherhood. The secret musical rites of passage in the Nhangas programme render girls eligible for 'roora/lobolo' (bride price negotiation). There were also milder forms of female genital mutilation. Just like the practice among the Karanga people already presented, there were guided, sexual rehearsals in order to be able to please the husband. Zimbabwean African culture allowed men to have more than one wife, hence girls were trained in the duties of a junior wife. In addition, they were taught how to carry water containers over long distances, clear village fire places of ashes, gather firewood, tend the fields, pound maize in the mortar and show humility to senior co-wives. In a nutshell Nhangas' rites are to instil positive thoughts towards life. As alluded to already, this documentation ensures a new approach is highlighted in the modern era that negates any forms of mutilation and actions that violate the girl's rights, but instead empowers her to cope with the modern trends, that will not only help the girl child but the global village at large.

Manyonganise and Museka (2010) are of the opinion that Nhangas served a great purpose amongst the African communities in Zimbabwe. In their presentation the Nhangas programme helped prevent a number of problems society is facing today. For them, the position and the activities of Nhangas, in the homestead worked as a catalyst towards acceptable humanity among the family members and the community in general. Taboos like incest, which are now a common feature, were minimised due to the demands and set up of the Nhangas programme.

Fathers and brothers would address their daughters and sisters as mother in law (Ambuya) clearly defining the distance that existed between them. In light of the same programme if a girl was found not to be virgin at marriage, it was mandatory that she reveals the man or boy and virginity tests should be understood in this context. Lack of this observation, as demanded by the Nhangas Programme leads to instability in the communities. In this regard the Nhangas spirit is still relevant, hence this documentation should help its reconstruction by providing friendly and effective methodology that should encourage peace and global social cohesion through the development of the girl child.

The social cohesion among the Shona people of Zimbabwe was highly praised by researchers like Gelfand (1973). Gelfand ascribed this achievement to the systems of values he observed among the communities, of which Nhangas was one such programme noted to contribute virtues of truthfulness, humility, love, compassion, self-control, forgiveness, mercifulness, sufficiency, trustworthiness, strength, courage and industriousness among others. In support of this view by Gelfand, Chimuka (2001) highlights that children were socialized along the lines of hunhu (ethics) so that the values would be carried forward. In this regard, the goal of morality was to improve 'munhu' (a real person) informed by 'hunhu' (virtue). It was believed that this would contribute towards the grand goal of self-realization. Practically 'munhu ane hunhu' (a well cultured person) was conceived as endowed with a

disposition to act virtuously. She should exhibit 'tsika dzakanaka' (virtuous behaviour). This is the core activity of the Nhangwa programme that scholars observed as essential for sustainable social cohesion.

A study done by Bourdillon (1987) further cements the significance of Nhangwa in preparation of women in Society. In the study, African women were portrayed as playing a critical role in family stability and sustenance. Some of the findings of Bourdillon (Ibid) are in tandem with the findings of Shoko (2016) and Johnston (1982) already alluded to in earlier parts of this section. A well prepared wife was expected to prepare food for her husband and children. Inability to cook on the part of the wife was a serious shortcoming which could have led to the breakup of the marriage (besides sexual rights and rights over children). A wife was also expected to manage the gardens and fields to produce food. Women were, in addition, expected to practice skills such as pottery or basket work and any other artwork. It is to this effect that Nhangwa is seen as serving a critical purpose among the African communities in Zimbabwe.

1.2.3 Mentors and Props in Nhangwa

Nhangwa, as a life learning centre, has mentors who sustain the value systems of the African society. The mentors use various props and symbols to reinforce inculcation of the essential values. The mentors, as much as they appear as teachers, also keep learning as they face new social challenges. Shoko (2016) brings in the aspect of age as a quality required of a Nhangwa mentor. From her findings elderly women were part of the mentors found in these initiation institutions. Age is usually associated with experience and wisdom and in this regard one concludes that young ladies attending Nhangwa courses were entrusted in the best hands to usher them into the blooming promising future. Johnston (1982) concurs that maturity supported by the chiefs was critical in coming up with Nhangwa mentors. This serious consideration in selection of mentors shows how the African people value their future and sustenance of their culture. Indeed, a person without an observable culture are like a bat, which is difficult to classify whether it is a bird or an animal. It is the achievements of this wise selection of mentors that made Gelfand (1973) admire the Africans as people worth living with. It is this kind of nurturing that would promote a stranger to feel at home when persuaded to sleep over on a long journey. In line with this analysis Bourdillon (1987) observed that African people, when they met a stranger, would endeavour to find at least a line of lineage in order to make a stranger feel at home and build a true relationship that would help build a platform to avoid harm between the two clans in the new situation. The gist of this documentation therefore, seeks to ensure that this kind of nurturing does not face extinction, but is promoted through interactions with respondents from a myriad of experiences, all for the benefit of humanity in this time and space.

Needles, cloth, paint or dye, drums, poles, water, mortar and pestle, are some of the props needed in Nhangwa. Water is a prominent symbol in the Nhangwa and the initiations represent 'crossing the river' (getting to the other side of life). This signifies purification, separation, transition and finally motherhood. Tall poles are used in the procession as they celebrate their initiations. Singing and dancing helps cement the lessons taught and drums are therefore necessary as accompanying instruments. Cloth is for the headgear and paint and dye for markings on their faces and cloth. Mortar and pestle were used in pounding grain as well as symbolizing sexuality (Shoko, 2016; Johnston, 1982).

1.2.4 Threats to Nhang

One of the major threats to Nhang, was colonialism. As observed by Gelfand (1973) the social cohesion amongst the African communities was not conducive for the purpose of colonialism. Descartes a French Philosopher argued that if one wanted to rebuild a city on the place where an old city existed, one had to destroy the old city and not build the new one on top of the old. Similarly, in order to establish colonial empires in Africa, Europe had to destroy existing African social structures to make way for a new civilization (Chimuka, 2001). The conclusion of this eventuality is that the progress of Nhang concept was hampered. In certain communities the programme was halted despite its importance. Shoko (2016) and Bourdillon (1987) however, note urbanization as contributing to the negative effects on the development of Nhang. The girls go to modern schools where they are completely separated from the village Nhang programmes. The communal life that brings kinships together is also affected by the new trends of modern employment and life sustenance. New civilizations brought in alternative programmes that occupy the girl child in a way which is not as far reaching as the Nhang methodology. The conclusion of this new development meant that family ties where Aunts (VanaTete), who are the chief architects as the elderly mentors in Nhang in certain villages, appear to have very little influence. It is in light of this background that this documentation of Nhang seeks to establish the construction of Nhang in the phasing epoch and reconstruct and sustain the Nhang methodology in the contemporary era.

1.3 Problem Statement

There is a lack of documentation of Nhang as a feminist and intergenerational space for advocacy, mentorship, skills building and leadership in contemporary society. The need for a deliberate and relevant framework would ensure sustainability and the survival of the methodology in contemporary society. It is against this background that this study sought to engage in documentation of Nhang as methodology in capacitating the girl child in a safe space.

1.4 Objectives

- 1** To conceptualise and ground the historical and cultural foundation of the Nhang as safe space for girls and young women.
- 2** To develop the standard guidelines for the application of the Nhang Concept as a safe space for learning and advocacy on girls and young women's rights especially SRHR, education and leadership.
- 3** Copyright and legal protection for the use of the Nhang Methodology.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Introduction

The foregoing chapter looked at relevant literature guiding the epistemological nature of the Nhang methodology. This chapter presents the methodological scope applied to generate data towards the finalization of documentation of the Nhang Programme.

1.5.2 Research Paradigm

Documentation of the Nhangang study is located in the interpretive paradigm. The paradigm rests on interactionist, socially constructed ontology and on an epistemology that recognizes multiple realities, behaviours, and the importance of understanding a situation through the eyes of the participants (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2011). This interpretation leads to the adjustment of meanings and actions. In short, the paradigm focuses on how researchers interpret the actions of others and attach meanings to them; or this may lead to adjustments of our meanings and actions. Crucial to the interpretive philosophy is that the researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance. The challenge in this regard is to enter the social world of our research participants and understand their world from their point of view. The researcher's view regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge (epistemology) is based on subjective meanings and social phenomena. This is critical in this study that through the lenses of the respondents we develop a comprehensive understanding of Nhangang, for its utility value and application in contemporary society.

In the same vein, Saunders et al. (2012) and Zukauskas, Vveinhardt, and Andriukaitiene (2018) take the interpretivism paradigm as the way human beings attempt to make sense of the world. The concern is to understand the fundamental meanings attached to social phenomena by interpreting participants' views and understanding their environments. Focus is put upon the details of a situation, a reality behind these details. The paradigm makes use of small samples, with in-depth investigations. Haralambos, Holborn, Chapman, and Moore (2013) opine that the whole basis of research in the interpretive paradigm is the interpretation of social action. Social action can only be understood by interpreting the meanings and motives on which it is based. This paradigm therefore was chosen because of its flexibility in terms of defining meanings of the Nhangang concept. Basing on this paradigm; we approached the study with an open mind and only develop the answers to the research questions basing on the outcome and the analysis of the findings. The next section presents the research approach.

1.5.3 Research Approach

This study applied a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is often described as a naturalistic, interpretative approach, concerned with exploring phenomena from the interior (Flick, 2009 in Ritchie et al., 2014). The researchers selected the qualitative approach for it allows for the generation of data which is seen as richer, more vital, as having greater depth and more likely to present a true picture of a way of life of people's experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. Data from the qualitative approach allows for the in-depth understanding of individual action within the context of social life (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013; Giddens & Sutton, 2013) This approach, therefore, helped the researchers generate in-depth data on the consolidation of Nhangang as it allowed us to interact with the participants in their natural settings. Haralambos et al, (2013) further argue that there is little chance of discovering these meanings and motives from quantitative data. In contrast, qualitative data offer greater richness and depth to interpret meanings that lie behind social action. It is from this view, that it should be construed. In this regard documentation of Nhangang requires this understanding from scholars rather than a methodology that implies a flypast through quantitative approaches. There was a great trust that interactions between the researchers and the respondents would employ this in-depth

interaction and pay much attention to the sentiments of the respondents to get the spirit and philosophy behind the concept of Nhangas and indeed it paid dividends. Even though generalizing the results after using this approach would not be possible, the results generated remained trustworthy and critical in understanding the phenomena under study as researchers were guided by professional ethical conduct. The subsequent section presents the research design.

1.5.4 Research Design

According to Creswell and Clark (2007), research designs are procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies. The design in this study is Non-experimental, making use of the survey (Marczyk, DeMatteo Festinger, 2005). Surveys enable researchers to describe what people say they think and do. Marczyk et al (2005) Mitchell & Jolley (2010) and Leavy (2017) further allude that, a survey allows respondents to be reached through mail, telephone, face to face interviews, or using questionnaires. Surveys allow researchers to assess a wider variety of behaviours and other phenomena than can be studied in a typical naturalistic observation study. In this study face to face, interviews were used to reach out to respondents across the country. Among the people, we targeted for the face to face were the chiefs. We managed to visit the four of them in Mashonaland East and Central, Matabeleland South, and North. For the in-process we wanted to see both their homestead and community-based Nhangas. As a result, we were privileged to get to a cultural village in Matabeleland South built close to the homestead of the chief. We managed to observe a community Nhangas in session in Mashonaland East. This observation made our work fascinating. We also used telephone, Zoom, and Skype to reach out to other key informants whose views made a great impact on the documentation of this study. The next section presents the population, sample, and sampling technique that were used in coming up with respondents that participated in this study.

1.5.5 Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

This section discusses population, sample, and sampling technique employed in this study on documentation of Nhangas methodology.

The population is defined as the total quantity of cases that can be either humans or organisations of one's study (Bluman, 2007; William & Buckler, 2008). In the same vein, Creswell (2017) defines a population as a group from which the researcher is interested in gaining and drawing conclusions. The focus of this study is on individuals and groups across Zimbabwe with special characteristics that we deem necessary for the documentation of Nhangas methodology.

A sample is defined as a subgroup or small part of the population being researched (Bluman, 2007; Denscombe, 2010). According to Cohen, Manion, Morrison (2011), non-probability samples are mostly used in qualitative research. In much qualitative research, the emphasis is placed on the uniqueness, the idiographic, and exclusive distinctiveness of the phenomenon, group, or individuals in question that is they only represent themselves and nothing or nobody else. Qualitative research in this regard explores a particular group under study we highly view as having certain characteristics deemed essential in contributing towards the consolidation of Nhangas in Zimbabwe. There are no specific rules on the size of a sample in qualitative research. Size is informed by the fitness of the purpose. An

example is where a case study might only involve one child where a grounded theory might continue to add samples until theoretical saturation is reached (when new data no longer adds to the theory construction or themes, or their elements). In most cases, the purpose of sampling is not to make generalizations, nor to make comparisons but to present unique cases that have their intrinsic value (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Though this study covers the whole of Zimbabwe, respondents are selected based on their potential value to volunteer valued data regardless of their geographical location or nature of physical appearance.

Seventy-one (71) respondents made up the sample of this study. Quota sampling was applied in the selection of chiefs. A Quota sample seeks to give proportional weighting to selected factors (strata) which reflects their weighting in which they can be found in their wider population.

The proportions can appear in the form of nationalities, races, tribes, and regions, and so on (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Denscombe, 2010). In our study, we considered four (4) chiefs from the four provinces as already alluded to. We had wished to see two women chiefs but failed to do so due to factors beyond our control. However, this did not compromise the data generated. The female chief we saw was a powerhouse who brought a great deal of flavour to this documentation. The tribes we mainly targeted are Shona, Ndebele, Tonga, and Sotho for the reason that cultural practices are related to other tribes we did not mention. The chiefs in turn each referred to us one (1) woman within their chieftom with knowledge of Nhangas, hence reputational sampling was applied in that regard. This type is where samples are selected by key informants, on the recommendation of others, or because the researchers are aware of their characteristics (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

Through intensity sampling, five (10) elderly women, eight (22) girls who practice, or are involved in Nhangas programs were selected. This applied to four (4) women in urban and semi-urban setups. The urban areas considered are Bulawayo, Harare, Banket, and Shamva Mine Settlement. Intensity sampling is composed of a particular group, highly knowledgeable in whom the sample provides clear examples of the issue in question, in our case a high degree of Nhangas concept through participation (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Through reputational sampling five (5) men whose wives passed through Nhangas were also selected.

Through reputational sampling, one (1) historian, one (1) women's rights expert, one (1) Victim Friendly Unit male police officer was selected. We had expected to interview women living with a disability but failed. Historians are valued for their deep knowledge of African culture and practices. Their contributions provided a balanced view of the Nhangas methodology in the past, present, and its projection in the contemporary society. The women's rights expert is selected guided by legal aspects contained in the Nhangas methodology as viewed from the past and as it should be practiced in contemporary society. The Victim Friendly Unit police officer was selected because their work deals with issues whose objectives Nhangas methodology seeks to protect. The officer showed how certain aspects associated with Nhangas are interpreted in law. The interaction with the officer helped shape the expected Nhangas Methodology that caters to a wave of changes in contemporary society. Women living with disabilities were to provide a gap in the inclusion of girls living with disabilities in the past, present, and in the future but this did not stop the researchers from recommending the inclusion of all women in Nhangas without considering appearance or disability.

Last but not least, extreme or deviant case sampling was used in selecting two (2) women who highly advocate for the Nhangas methodology and two (2) individuals who are against the Nhangas methodology. This sampling technique involves the most extreme cases at either end of a continuum.

These may be studied to provide the most outstanding examples of a particular issue; to expose issues that might not otherwise present themselves (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). This is quite necessary for this study that we realize deep insights into the spirit behind Nhanga and formative evaluation points that can help us design an outstanding user-friendly methodology applicable in any society. The next section presents data generation instruments and procedures.

1.5.6 Data Generation Instruments and Procedures

This section presents data generation instruments and procedures that were used in generating data in this study.

Data was generated through semi-structured face-to-face interviews focus group discussions, Construction of Nhanga structure at an institution of higher learning in Mashonaland Central province, and observation of operating Nhanga centres in Zimbabwe. Data was generated from chiefs across Zimbabwe, elderly women with Nhanga experience, girls participating in Nhanga centres in Zimbabwe, national historians, Victim Friendly Unit police officers, women rights expert, women advocating for Nhanga methodology and women who highly disagree with Nhanga methodology, women living with disability and men whose wives went through the Nhanga process. The instruments chosen provide for triangulation of data generation. Bartlett and Burton (2007) posit that the triangulation enables the research to approach the object of the research from as many different angles and perspectives as possible to gain a greater understanding.

1.5.6 Face-to-face interviews

An interview is defined as the quickest and best way to get relevant information and is initiated by the researcher (Santrock, 2010; Cresswell, 2009). Opie (2004) posits that interviews encourage interviewees to develop their ideas, feelings, insights, expectations, or attitudes and in so doing, allowing respondents to say what they think and to do so with greater richness and spontaneity. Opie (2004) indicates that there is a structured, semi-structured, and unstructured style of interviews. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011), semi-structured interviews can be for individuals and groups. They can be used to gather data on more intangible aspects of the institution's culture for example; values, assumptions, beliefs, wishes, and problems. In this study face-to-face interviews were done with elderly women, chiefs, historians, Victim Friendly Unit officers, women's rights experts, women advocating for Nhanga methodology, and women against the Nhanga concept. We adopted Zoom, Skype, and telephone contact for respondents we could not get to physically. We remained open-minded during our interviews even in situations where initially the reception was poor due to fear of the COVID-19 pandemic. We applied the WHO COVID-19 protocols and that made the environment conducive. When dealing with chiefs we started by hearing the narration of their chieftom genealogy and that worked in our favour. We clarified where respondents did not understand. Where respondents did not give the responses to the researchers, we probed. The researchers took note of body language of respondents during interviews and that allowed the researchers to probe further for explanations. This helped the researchers generate reliable data. Besides jotting down some notes during interviews the researchers also recorded audio copies of the interviews and this helped substantially in filling in gaps.

1.5.7 Focus Group Discussions

A focus group discussion is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. Groups are typically made up of six to eight people who participate in the discussion. The group interview uses interaction among the participants to gather data whereby the researcher takes on the role of the moderator who chairs the discussion (Patton, 2002 in Flick, 2010; Willing, 2007). Group discussions are rich in data and they also stimulate respondents and support them in remembering events, and that they can lead beyond the answers of the single interviewee (Flick, 2010). Cohen et al. (2011) indicate that as participants interact their views emerge. It is from this process that data was generated as well for the study. Focus groups are contrived settings, bringing together a specifically chosen population previously not used to coming together to discuss certain issues. Their contrived nature is both their strength and weakness. Focus group discussions are also economical in terms of time, producing a large volume of data in a short period.

In this study, the researcher took extreme care by applying a homogeneous purposive sampling technique to come up with three groups of girls, elderly women, and men, so that every participant was the bearer of the particular characteristic required. As a result, each group had homogeneity of background in the required area to ensure the discussions are made possible and focused on relevant Nhang'a issues. In the next section ways in which data was analysed are discussed.

1.5.8 Data Analysis

This section discusses how data is analysed in this study.

Qualitative data analysis following Denscombe (2007) in (Magwa & Magwa (2015) is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation of the mass of collected data. Data analysis means a search for patterns in data, that is, recurrent behaviour (Newman, 1997). This pattern enables the researcher to deduce the meanings attached to the responses. Hoberg (2001) on the other hand concludes that data analysis is the process when qualitative researchers integrate the operations of organizing, analysing, and interpreting data. In qualitative research, data analysis and data generation occur simultaneously. Alongside field notes, the researcher generates analytic memos. This includes notes about probing on the ambiguous and ambivalent statements and also notes on the pursuit of recurring issues. Data analysis is primarily an inductive process. This means that categories and patterns emerge from data rather than being imposed on the data before data generation (Hoberg, 2001). In this study coding of data and clustering into themes was done for easy analysis and interpretation of data collected on Nhang'a Methodology. The study presented narrative data. Narrative data present people's explanations about why and how things come about. People share information by telling stories if the interviewer is a sensitive listener and does not interrupt (Bailey & Jackson, 2003). The researchers applied narrative reasoning, which is a way of noticing elements of a situation that makes it unique for Nhang'a documentation. Narrative reasoning answers questions about how particular situations came about. This was done by pulling together the happenings and events that we gathered from the interactions with the respondents on Nhang'a to be able to construct a coherent methodology that provides a new Nhang'a Methodology in Contemporary Society. To avoid the challenges of preconceived notions, we applied the virtues of objectivity, neutrality, and impartiality (Bailey & Jackson, 2003). Trustworthiness and credibility issues are discussed in the next section.

1.5.9 Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness consists of four components, namely; credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. It is through establishing the four components that trustworthiness is established in qualitative research (Devault, 2018; Statistics Solutions, 2018). These four components are extensions or adaptations of categories of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Opie, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Flick, 2010). Maree (2007) views trustworthiness as the validity and credibility of qualitative research. **Credibility** in this study was achieved through prolonged engagement; persistent observations; triangulation; peer briefing and member checks (Devault, 2018). **Transferability** was realized by providing a thick description of the Nhangas phenomenon as submitted by respondents. We provided an account of our process during data generation in Zimbabwe. We also provided explicit connections to the cultural and social contexts that surround data generation if any (Guba, 1985) in Statistics Solutions, 2018). We hope that this allowed other researchers and readers to make transferability judgments themselves. **Dependability** was achieved in this research by allowing an outsider researcher to conduct an inquiry audit on the research study. This was done to confirm the accuracy of the findings and to ensure the findings on Nhangas documentation are supported by the data collected (Statistics Solutions, 2018). **Conformability** in this study was ensured by making sure that study findings are based on participants' narratives. This was done through an audit trail and Reflexivity (Statistics Solutions, 2018). It is in this regard that this study on documentation of Nhangas is expected to be credible and ready for application in environments where it was found to be of worth.

1.5.10 Ethical considerations

According to Opie (2004), any research that involves people has the potential to cause (usually unintended) damage. In the same vein, Sieber (1993) in Opie (2004) indicates that ethics has to do with the application of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful and to be fair. In this research the researcher considered the confidentiality of participants, made known to the participants the purpose of the research and why particular respondents would have been chosen. Codes were used in place of names to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The researchers also sought the consent of the participants before carrying out the research. The researchers made sure the safety of respondents was guaranteed by using the results of the research for the intended purpose only. Copies of the research report were supplied to Rozaria Memorial Trust.

1.6 Justification of the Study

For the past three years, Rozaria Memorial Trust has been exploring and pre-testing the Nhangas Concept as safe spaces in communities' for program delivery and in the national, regional and global advocacy platforms. However, despite the concept growing and being adopted by many partners, RMT has not managed to document the idea to enable its systematic use. This has limited its full replication and identification of areas that need strengthening for more impact to foster intergenerational dialogues and the co-creation of solutions to promote the rights of girls and young women especially on SRHR, education and leadership.

Given the importance of Nhangwa as an innovative cultural methodology in advancing girls and young women's rights and building their agency, RMT is planning to carry proper documentation of the concept to ensure that guidelines and tools are developed for replication by other partners and for its systematic replication. RMT will do the documentation of the past three (3) years' experience of using the concept, further consult within the communities in Murewa and Shamva on all the key aspects of the concept. In addition, consultations will be done with partners and stakeholders nationally, regional and international level as part of refining, strengthening and validating the Nhangwa Concept. Nhangwa Concept guidelines and physical and virtual online Nhangwa Toolkit will be produced for use in the community programming and in the policy platforms at all levels.

The documentation of the Nhangwa will help to bring innovation of positive and progressive cultural practices that promotes safe spaces for girls and young women agency and empowerment on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), education, mentoring, counselling and leadership.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on documentation of Nhangwa as a feminist and intergenerational space for advocacy, mentorship, skills building and leadership in contemporary society. The respondents were drawn from Southern African Development Community countries.

1.8 Limitations

The research was carried out during the COVID 19 pandemic, and this led to some limitations in terms of travelling to most parts of the country. The other challenge associated with the pandemic was that the researchers had to resort to virtual means to interview some of the respondents we could not get to physically. Despite the constraints, the respondents we visited in person across the country availed rich information that made it possible for us to do this documentation. WHO COVID 19 protocols were followed in all situations to ensure the safety of both researchers and respondents from the virus. This observation brought relief to the respondents and as a result, they were in a position to volunteer worthwhile data that made this documentation possible. The researchers used their vehicles to ensure their travel from one place to another was safe and that boosted the morale of the researchers to concentrate during data generation and resulted in trustworthy data being generated. The virtual interviews were conducted in a mutually peaceful environment between the researchers and respondents that enabled the interviews to be done and completed without disturbances on both ends of the communication. The researchers applied cautious and friendly approaches to new respondents they had never met to ensure conducive environments were created. Before engaging in the prepared interviews for chiefs the researcher would start by requesting to know the genealogy of the chieftainship before shifting to the purpose of the visit and this indeed motivated the respondents to participate with enthusiasm cutting on the barrier of meeting the strangers for the first time. This endeavour resulted in the subsequent generation of valued data being realized, hence the documentation of this study was a dream come true. The researchers received a write up from the historian whom we intended to engage on a face to face virtual interview but this did not materialize due to the time factor. The write up, however, gave us adequate clues to what we intended to get from him hence this did not compromise the data generated in this study. The researchers did not have more days of observation of the processes of Nhangwa in districts where the methodology is

running but the few days they got acted as a catalyst to understand the views of the respondents and in that way, the process of data generation was made easier. It is to this end that the limitations faced by the researchers did not in any way undervalue the generation of this documentation.

1.9 Definitions of Terms

1.9.1 Nhang

Shoko (2016) defined Nhang as a Shelter built and allocated to girls by the head of the family. This description by Shoko portrays the physical structure allocated to the girl child as the identity of Nhang. This description by Shoko tallies with The Herald (2020) definition which regards Nhang as the residence of female offspring.

Manyonganise and Museka (2010) present Nhang as a hut built a distance away from the boys and parents' huts. In addition to describing the physical structure of Nhang, the scholars also provide the position of this structure with other structures at a given home. This description implies an additional role of Nhang to the girl child which required privacy from parents, boys, and any other unsanctioned visitors that came into the home. From this description, Nhang was more than a physical structure but possibly an approach to respond to the needs of a girl child into maturation and sustainable contribution to the African society.

This previous analysis resonates with Johnston's (1982)'s crystallization of Nhang as a hut of the highly secret initiation rites. Johnston further describes Nhang as the scene of considerable symbolic indoctrination. From the submission of Johnstone, Nhang is also viewed as a methodology.

1.9.2 Intergenerational space: Nhang is defined as places for those of an active age to relax and socialise with each other, or a setting for healthy exercise regimes. The space is to enhance social and emotional understanding between age groups, increase harmony and reduce generational conflict (Biggs& Carr, 2015). This is a space where people from all generations learn together (Camargo,2017). Definitions resonate quite well with the thrust of Nhang as providing a space for the young and the old to facilitate transfer of knowledge. This space in particular is inclusive in terms of age groups.

It is agreeable in this section that Nhang was more than a girls' residence but also a methodology. In the process of this documentation, Nhang is considered as a cultural praxis that aims at equipping young women and girls with womanhood skills, in a platform where there is a consciousness of respect, equality, comfort, and dignity of all.

1.10 Summary

The chapter introduced the study and gave the background to the problem. The background highlighted the concept of Nhangas from both Afro-centric and Euro-centric scholars. The chapter looked at historical development in the pre-colonial era and its setting up in contemporary society. The Chapter also presented the research methodology that was used in data generation. Justification, research objectives, and definitions of Nhangas are also presented in the chapter. The chapter also stated the problem which helped in clarifying the existence of the problem and the need to carry out an intervention to the problem which is this study. The scope of the study was laid out under the delimitations of the study. The subsequent chapter reviews the literature for the study and deals with the theoretical frameworks that provided the lenses for this study. The human development approach framework is discussed for it focuses on enlarging people's choices and enhancing human capabilities and freedoms, enabling them to live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge and a decent standard of living, and participate in the life of their community and decisions affecting their lives. The human rights approach to development was also adopted in a complementary role for it focuses on the elimination of extreme poverty, in our case poverty casts down girls and women to the vulnerability level. In conjunction to the two preceding frameworks the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists was also included as Nhangas documentation centres much on creation of female intergeneration space.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the study and gave background as well as the rationale for this research. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework guiding the study and reviews literature informing the study. The chapter then ends with a summary having located the study in the context of what other scholars say on the concept of Nhangas.

2.2 Human Rights-Based Approach to Development (HRBAs).

Gauri and Gloppen (2012) aver that there are three kinds of human rights-based approaches to development. Gauri and Gloppen (ibid) say that there are aspects of human rights-based approaches to development (HRBAs) that target duty bearers by raising the moral pressure and other aspects that target rights-holders by instilling the dignity and self-respect necessary for political, social, and legal mobilization; and that both can, arguably, reduce poverty and inequality at the global and national levels. In other words, HRBAs work both on the supply and demand sides of development. HRBAs are principles that justify demands against privileged actors, made by the poor or those speaking on their behalf, for using national and international resources and rules to protect the crucial human interests of the globally or locally disadvantaged. Annan (1998) in Pace (1998) states "The rights-based approach to development describes situations not simply in terms of human needs, or of developmental requirements, but in terms of society's obligation to respond to the inalienable rights of individuals. It empowers people to demand justice as a right, not as a charity, and gives communities a moral basis from which to claim international assistance where needed. "The rights discourse is used for national self-determination, the recognition of alternative identities, class-based

and labour empowerment, gender equality, democratic inclusion, property rights protections, the rectification of state violence, and consumer goods. The development has, in the past two decades, increasingly been framed in the language of human rights and related concepts, such as fundamental human capabilities and multi-dimensional poverty. The objectives for doing so, on the part of advocates, have been, broadly speaking, to characterize the elimination of extreme poverty as a moral imperative, and to underscore that the kind of political power associated with the assertion of claims by the poor themselves is a prerequisite to the elimination of extreme poverty. The first point is commonly thought of as speaking to the intrinsic dimension of human rights, and the latter to their instrumental dimension. The definition of HRBAs (i) does not include the rights of the relatively well-off, focusing instead on poverty; and (ii) emphasizes resources and regulation rather than the more interactional duties that arise from the natural law and natural rights traditions. (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009 in Gauri and Gloppen, 2012).

Osmani (2013) highlights that the human rights approach to development, particularly the concept of the right to development and its attendant principles, may be fruitfully used to condition the process of globalization to better harness the positive impact of globalization and to minimize the pain of negative impact at the national level. The human rights approach can counter the negative effects globalization brings about structural changes within an economy. It opens up new opportunities for enhancing employment and income. However, it also closes down, or at least diminishes, many existing means of livelihood: opportunities open up in activities in which a country has a comparative advantage, and diminish in those in which it has a comparative disadvantage. This may have profound implications for the achievement of the right to development. Economic theory suggests that the gains will, in general, outweigh the losses; a nation should gain an overall increase in welfare. The problem, however, is that gains and losses may not be distributed evenly across the population. This study has therefore chosen to combine this theory with the human development approach (HDP) for it moves further than creating a space for girls to realize their wellbeing but strives to eliminate factors that hamper the journey to wellbeing as advocated for the (HDP). This theory aims to reduce poverty and inequality. In particular, it focuses on the elimination of extreme poverty in our case which positions girls and women at vulnerability level. This situation created in women and girls retards the progress of the Nhang practice hence the theory serves as the lenses on how this menace could be abated. The theory also focuses on fighting for the cause of the globally or locally disadvantaged by giving communities a moral basis from which to claim international assistance where needed. In short, it also highlights society's obligation to respond to the inalienable rights of individuals. It is greatly hoped that the two theories complement each other in providing the lenses to this study to ensure sustainable support to the girls or women globally or at the national level

2.3 CHARTER OF FEMINIST PRINCIPLES FOR AFRICAN FEMINISTS

This study is also guided by the spirit of the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists in addition to Human Rights-Based Approach to Development (HRBAs) and Human Development Approach frameworks. According to the African Women's Development Fund (2007), the African Feminist Forum is an independent feminist platform. A key outcome of the forum is the adoption of the Charter of Feminist Principles. As such the Charter sets out the collective values that the feminists hold as key to work and to their lives as African feminists. It charts the change they wish to see in our communities, and also how this change is to be achieved. In addition, it spells out individual and collective responsibilities to the movement and to one another within the movement. With this

Charter, the feminists reaffirm their commitment to dismantling patriarchy in all its manifestations in Africa. Through the Charter the feminist takes it as a duty to defend and respect the rights of all women, without qualification. They commit themselves to protecting the legacy of our feminist ancestors who made numerous sacrifices, in order that women and girls can exercise greater autonomy.

The Charter is an inspirational as well as an aspirational document. As African feminists, they place patriarchal social relations structures and systems which are embedded in other oppressive and exploitative structures at the centre of analysis. The forum acknowledges the richness of Her story that has been largely undocumented and ignored that requires nurturing, mentoring and providing opportunities for young feminists in a non-matronising manner. This richness of the Charter and forum makes it quite relevant in this documentation whose objectives are aligned to the emancipation of women without any qualification. The framework is, in addition, quite relevant for it focusses on dismantling of forces in society that retard the progress of women at various social, political and economic stages. The forces lead to exploitation of women and girls as their space is constrained. It is through this charter that the relevance of documentation of Nhangas is seen as central.

2.4 Human Development Approach

This approach is defined as the process of enlarging people's choices and enhancing human capabilities and freedoms, enabling them to live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge and a decent standard of living, and participate in the life of their community and decisions affecting their lives. The emphasis is on cultivating an environment or a context in which human beings realise their maximum potentials and also realise useful or beneficial and inventive lives in alignment with their valued necessities and well beings (UNDP, 1990, Trinity College Dublin, 2016, Alkire, 2005). The Human Development Approach centres on the key values of equity, empowerment, participation, and sustainability. Nhangas as an institution that provides a unique space for girls and women to discuss challenges and opportunities, (Tsehay, 2017 in World YWCA, 2017) should identify the gap between girls and young women in terms of skills or capabilities, a Programme should then be carried out to empower these so that they could participate meaningfully in sustainable development globally. When girls and young women have been empowered and participation is sustained this, in turn, leads to quality living for sustainable development. This focus is in line with the United Nations (2014) sustainable goal number five (5) which buttresses empowering women and girls not only as a basic human right but also as having a multiplier effect across all other development areas. In the same vein Plan International (2020) stresses the need to catalyse girls so that they have access to decision-making spaces and can occupy leadership positions at every stage of their lives as key to building a world where girls and women can thrive across politics, the economy and society. Plan International (ibid), further highlights that girls and young women in particular are held back by gender inequalities and oppression that prevent them from being full citizens and leaders. Plan International further, views patriarchal norms and structural barriers as the root of these injustices which, therefore, need to be dismantled so that all children and young people can realize their civil and political rights and have their voices count as active drivers of change. It is based on these values that this approach was chosen to be used as the lens of guiding participation of girls and young women in Nhangas, in innovative quality safe living for all. This documentation, therefore, seeks to improve the capabilities of women for quality sustainable development. This is possible if a deliberate effort is made to motivate the girls and young women to engage in meaningful participation which allows them access

to resources needed most in any set up for their fair participation. This helps improve the quality of living for all citizens in a global village. The approach, however, focuses on the creation of a space to enlarge potentials which is a critical aspect in this study but is not heavy on the elimination of certain factors like poverty that curtail the processes to these enlargements of space for wellbeing, hence the need to use it in conjunction with Human Rights-Based Approach to Development.

2.5 The Constitution of Zimbabwe and Cultural Heritage

This section seeks to highlight what the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) says to some cultural practices in Zimbabwe. The practice of Nhangwa in this study is viewed as advancing essential cultural heritage, hence the need to visit the constitution to see if some sections or chapters related to it.

Chapter 1 Section (3:1) says: *Zimbabwe is founded on respect for the following values and principles-- (d) the nation's diverse cultural, religious, and traditional values; (e) recognition of the inherent dignity and worth of each human being;*

The practice of Nhangwa as cultural heritage should be seen to be fitting quite well in this section as it is meant to empower and advance the dignity and worth of each human being especially women. Women need to feel and exercise their worth in a space created for them by them as a process of realizing their wellbeing in line with cultural and traditional values that are not forced on them but willingly understood, accepted and freely participated in if their dignity and worth is to be recognized in line with human development approach ideals and Chapter 2 Section (11), Chapter 3 (51), (57), (60), (80), (86) and Chapter 4 fostering of fundamental rights and freedoms:

(60) Freedom of conscience (1) Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, which includes-- (a) freedom of thought, opinion, religion or belief; and (b) freedom to practice and propagate and give expression to their thought, opinion, religion or belief, whether in public or in private and whether alone or together with others.

Nhangwa Practice as a centre and methodology fulfils this demand of the constitution to women as an instrument of change and development.

Chapter 2 Section (16:1) states that *The State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must promote and preserve cultural values and practices which enhance the dignity, well-being, and equality of Zimbabweans.*

Nhangwa as a heritage-based methodology promotes and enhances the participation of women in matters that affect not only them but society in general. Women's issues are not only women's issues but everyone's issues. Empowerment of women is the empowerment of the global village hence the need for state and all institutions and agencies of government to take an active role in promoting this critical space for women as an important heritage-based methodology. This section of the constitution, in particular, calls for such as this methodology to be promoted as it enhances the dignity and wellbeing of the women which is in line with the goals of the Human Development Approach.

Chapter 2 Section (33) calls for *the preservation of traditional knowledge. The State must take measures to preserve, protect, and promote indigenous knowledge systems, including knowledge of the medicinal and other properties of animal and plant life possessed by local communities and people.* The Nhangwa practice provided intellectual and medicinal skills, and properties that need to be protected and passed on to the next generation. It is the role of the government as a larger institution to ensure these properties are protected as enshrined in this section of the constitution. These

properties can also be commercialized and exported for the benefit of humanity in general. The activity can also be used as a channel for the eradication of poverty as funding is availed in line with the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development.

2.6 The Historical Narration of Nhang

Shoko (2016) in her study of the Karanga people of Zimbabwe established that a Karanga man builds and allocates huts for the family members. Children were allocated their shelter: 'gota' for boys and Nhang was allocated to girls by the head of the family. The Varemba, who formed her case study, practiced initiation into adulthood for boys and girls. Boys however, are not a direct interest of this study, therefore from this description by Shoko (ibid) Nhang is coming in as both the physical structure which a Karanga man provides to the girl child and as methodology (initiation) programme into adulthood of the girl child. This deliberate effort to plan for the development of the girl child fit well into the desire of the well-being of the girl child by providing calculated guidance into adulthood where one is capacitated, empowered to face the future with the necessary skills a young female adult needs. This fits well with the Human Development Approach guiding this study (UNDP, 1990, Trinity College Dublin, 2016, Alkire, 2005), United Nations (2014) Sustainable Goal five (5) as well as Plan International (2020) focus on making sure girls and young women are catalysed for the relevant future ahead of them.

As part of the Nhang (initiation) Programme, Shoko (2016), buttresses that the education of women (girls) took place during weekends and was led by traditional elderly women. The mentors use various props and symbols to reinforce the inculcation of essential values. The mentors, as much as they appear as teachers, also remain to learn as they face new social challenges. Shoko (2016) brings in the aspect of age as a quality required of a Nhang mentor. From her findings, elderly women were part of the mentors found in these initiation institutions. Age is usually associated with experience and wisdom and in this regard, one concludes that young ladies attending Nhang courses were entrusted in the best hands to usher them into a promising future. In the same vein, the content or curriculum for developing the girls for adulthood and self-sustenance involves practical life skills. As part of the curriculum, the girls are taught skills for sex to please their husbands. They are exposed to various forms of sexual styles. As part of training (teaching and learning) a girl lies on the ground and raises her body supported by her hands and feet: Needles are placed below her body upright on the ground. One woman sits on top of the girl and imitates sex. In some cases, a stone is substituted for the elder woman. The girl must play the sexual act to avoid being pricked by the needles. (The needles and the stones formed part of the vast media used in the empowerment of the girls with the critical skills seen as worthwhile for the survival of the society). The fear of being pricked ensures excellent skills in sex. The women also stretch the girls' labia. In African experiences, the long labia act as sexual stimulators, (though in contemporary societies this should not be forced on girls, lest people are accused of violation of girls' rights). The initiates receive training on social matters of marital conduct. The girls are also taught the virtues of life which apply to the husband and family, such as kindness, industriousness, and moral uprightness, and the vices such as gossip and greed. They are also exposed to household activities and skills such as pottery, weaving, knitting, and sewing. Games such as nhodo and pada are also part of the methods used in developing young women and girls. The girls also share stories, proverbs, and riddles. For the girls' virginity was greatly emphasized the mentor used to inserts her figure in the vagina to feel if the membrane is broken or not. (this aspect however in contemporary

society is discouraged for health and rights reasons). In line with these girls, are highly discouraged to engage in premarital sex. Physical checks on girls are also related to menstruation. In brief gender roles are highlighted in areas of the kitchen, gardening, fetching of firewood, spirituality, brewing of beer, and others. Though one or two of the highlighted activities may clash with contemporary dictates, this documentation needs to look at the spirit behind the activities and find the best way to re-live the philosophy for the reconstruction of the Nhangwa methodology by in-depth interactions with various stakeholders in our contemporary society. This is done with deep consideration of vast changes in society today and the new thrust as provided by human development approach lenses to see that the women today lead from the front and not as second-hand human beings.

Manyonganise and Museka (2010) aver that, from pre-colonial Zimbabwe, in the traditional setup, the way huts were built was in such a way that the hut in which girls slept was built some distance away from the boys' and parents' huts. This girls' hut was jealously guarded, it was no go area for the males and in turn, daughters were prohibited from entering their parents and brothers' huts. In addition to describing the physical structure of Nhangwa, the scholars also provide the position of this structure concerning other structures at a given home. The structure was situated well away from the other two structures. This description implies an additional role of Nhangwa to the girl child which required privacy from parents, boys, and any other unsanctioned visitors that came into the home. From this description, Nhangwa was more than a physical structure but an approach to respond to the needs of a girl child into maturation and sustainable contribution to the African society. The narration from Manyonganise and Museka (2010) serves to highlight that each home had its own home-based Nhangwa Programme, unlike the description given by Shoko (2016) where she highlighted weekend lessons by elderly women from the community, implying a community-based Programme. The stressing on privacy on this particular hut shows that Nhangwa Programme was ongoing most of the time in this hut hence males were not allowed near it. It should, however, be noted that home or community-based both had a special part to play in the empowerment of the young women and girls in the society which is a major concern of this study that this methodology should be refined for the betterment of society. The result should be the creation of a safe space, as implied by Nhangwa philosophy, for girls to grow and realise their full potentials to be who they want to be hence creating their own identity as independent individuals in society. This foregoing view forms the thrust of the human development approach, that forms the lenses of which this study is situated (UNDP, 1990, Trinity College Dublin, 2016, Alkire, 2005)

The physical historical setting of Nhangwa served a great purpose amongst the African communities in Zimbabwe. The interpretation is that the Nhangwa programme helped prevent several problems society is facing today. The position and the activities of Nhangwa, in the homestead, worked as a catalyst towards acceptable humanity among the family members and the community in general. Taboos like incest which are now a common feature were minimized due to the demands and setup of the Nhangwa Programme. Fathers and brothers would address their daughters and sisters as the mother Law (Ambuya) clearly defining the distance that existed between them. In light of the same Programme, if a girl was found not to be virgins at marriage, she needed to reveal the culprit, and virginity tests should be understood in this context (Manyonganise and Museka, 2010). Failure to observe the preceding as demanded by the Nhangwa Programme leads to instability in the communities. In this regard the Nhangwa spirit is still relevant hence this documentation should help its reconstruction by providing a friendly and effective methodology that should encourage peace and global social

cohesion through the development of the girl child. This would not only propel the womanhood world into motion but ignite the whole of humanity into positive sustainable development in line with sustainable development goals (UN, 2014).

A study was done by Johnston (1982) among the Shangani people portray Nhangas as a guarded women's hut of the highly secret initiation rites. Johnston further describes Nhangas as the scene of considerable symbolic indoctrination. From the submission of Johnston, Nhangas is historically viewed as a methodology meant to develop African society through the girl child as opposed to mere indoctrination. Johnston (1982) further states that maturity supported by chiefs was critical in coming with Nhangas mentors. This serious consideration in the selection of mentors shows how the African people value their future and sustenance of their culture. Indeed, a people without an observable culture are like a bat, which is difficult to classify, whether to call it a bird or an animal. It is the achievements of this wise selection of mentors that made Gelfand (1973) admire the Africans as people worth living with. It is this kind of nurturing that would promote a stranger to feel at home when persuaded to sleepover on a long journey. The United Nations Sustainable development goals (SDGs) (2014) make a deliberate mention of women and girls as deserving special attention for, any society that ignores the development of the girl child sentences its future to a deep disaster and it may not realize peace and meaningful sustainable development. A strong knowledgeable woman supports her family and helps unite kinships in neighbourhood communities. It is agreeable in this section that Nhangas was more than a girls' residence but also a methodology aimed at African Civilization or emancipation for the far great survival of the African Race. The study of Johnston (1982) over one and a half years and revealed content or curriculum that was implemented in the development of the girls into womanhood and economic participation as they were exposed to vocational skills for use at family and community levels. The young girls were assembled and taught a series of mimes and dances which symbolizes the role of women in society particularly in marriage. This includes sexual pleaser of the husband, bearer of many children, the tiller of the soil, keeper of the home. According to Johnston (ibid), Nhangas served as a conservative institution taking the critical role of allegiance to the significance of the communities. The Nhangas initiation also served as a fertility rite ensuring the health of women who intended to marry guaranteeing eventual motherhood. Secret musical rites of passage in the Nhangas Programme render girls eligible for 'roora/lobolo' (bride price negotiation). There were also mild forms of physical mutilation. Just like the practice among the Karanga people already presented, there were guided sexual rehearsals to be able to please the husband. African culture allowed men to have more than one wife, hence girls have trained the duties of a junior wife. Also, they were taught how to carry water long distances, clear village fireplaces of ashes, gather firewood, tend the fields, pound maize in the mortar and show humility to senior co-wives. In a nutshell, Nhangas' rites are to instil positive thoughts towards life's vicissitudes. As alluded to already, this documentation ensures a new approach is highlighted in the modern era that negates any forms of mutilation and actions that violets the girl's rights but instead empowers her to cope with the modern trends, that will not only help the girl child but the global village at large. The curriculum highlighted by scholars shows a historical spirit to emancipate young women in preparation for the social facts of life which one would not be able to cope with or without this effort. This study advocates for this effort as well to ensure the girl child is empowered to cope with contemporary challenges which are a social truth that the girls are assured of facing hence need the skills. This documentation in particular seeks to compare the evidence provided by these scholars and

the epistemological gap within contemporary society to positively merge the critical knowledge deemed a panacea to the current challenges prevailing in our global village.

Nhanga was a cultural heritage channel that helped in passing values from generation to generation. This organized system of education as it was and still has an essential social cohesion role in building African societies. The social cohesion among the Shona people of Zimbabwe was highly praised by researchers like Gelfand (1973): Gelfand ascribed this achieved to the Systems of values he observed among the communities, of which Nhanga was one such Programme noted to contribute virtues of truthfulness, humility, love, compassion, self-control, forgiveness, mercifulness, sufficiency, trustworthiness, strength, courage and industriousness among others. In support of this view by Gelfand, Chimuka (2001) highlights that children were socialized along the lines of hunhu (ethics) so that the values would be carried forward. In this regard, the goal of morality was to improve 'munhu' (a real person) informed by 'hunhu' (virtue). It was believed that this would contribute towards the grand goal of self- realization. Practically 'munhu ane hunhu' (a well-cultured person) was conceived as endowed with a disposition to act virtuously. She should exhibit 'tsika dzakanaka' (virtuous behaviour). This is the core activity (curriculum) of the Nhanga Programme that scholars observed as essential for sustainable social cohesion.

A study by Bourdillon (1987) further cements the significance of Nhanga in the preparation of women in Society. In the study, African Women were portrayed as playing a critical role in family stability and sustenance. Some of the findings of Bourdillon (ibid) are in tandem with the findings of Shoko (2016) and Johnston (1982) already alluded to in earlier parts of this section. A well-prepared wife is expected to prepare food for her husband and children. The inability to cook on the part of the wife is a serious shortcoming which may lead to the breakup of the marriage (besides sexual rights and rights over children). A wife was also expected to manage the gardens and fields to produce food. Women were besides expected to practice skills such as pottery or basket work and any other artwork. These skills though were supposed to be a basic requirement for each life graduate others excelled above others and became specialists in the construction of certain products and terms like 'hurudza, Mhizha' would be used. The specialists in various trades would then produce products on a commercial basis with moderation and not as done today in contemporary societies. It is to this effect that Nhanga is seen as serving a critical purpose among the African communities in Zimbabwe. Hence the documentation services to enhance and consolidate this role by providing a framework in its implementation in modern societies.

In line with the above analysis Bourdillon (1987) observed that African people when they met a stranger would endeavour to find at least a line of lineage to make a stranger feel at home and build a true relationship that would help build a platform to avoid harm between the two clans in the new situation. The gist of this documentation, therefore, seeks to ensure that this kind of nurturing does not face extinction but is promoted through interactions with respondents from a myriad of experiences, all for the benefit of humanity in this time and space.

The common historical narration shows that Nhanga Programme made use of various props or media that allowed concepts taught to be realized. Nhanga as a school just like any other school in the world would need media to ensure the objectives of the curriculum were achieved. The selection of media

was carefully done and in most cases had symbolic meanings attached to them. Needles, cloth, paint or dye, drums, poles, water, mortar, and pestle, are some of the props needed in Nhangang. Water is a prominent symbol in the Nhangang and the initiations represent 'crossing the river' (getting to the other side of life). This signifies purification, separation, transition, and finally motherhood. The tall poles are used in the procession as they celebrate their initiations. Singing and dances help cement the lessons taught and drums are therefore necessary as accompanying instruments. The cloth is for the headgear and paints and dye for markings on their faces and cloth. Mortar and pestle were used in pounding grain as well as symbolizing sexuality (Shoko, 2016; Johnston, 1982). The modern Nhangang has to fall on this background if education aims to be meaningful to the life graduates. Relevant props and methods have to be identified to make young women and girls achieve their well-being in line with the human development approach. The next section looks at the survival of Nhangang after colonialism and its prospects in contemporary societies.

2.7 Nhangang in Contemporary Societies

The narrations of Nhangang in the preceding section may not be expected to remain the same considering the cultural dynamics that occurred during colonialism, post colonialism, and human rights movements. The spirit however behind the Nhangang education Programme remains relevant and necessary if society is to survive to see the next day. This section traces the threats posed by different historical epochs towards the execution of the Programme to see how best this noble Programme could be sustained for the present and future generations.

Colonialism as a major historical event in Africa brought about both positive and negative effects on African traditional thought. The advent of colonialism meant a paradigm shift in the African education system, social setups as well as economic demands. As observed by Gelfand (1973) the social cohesion amongst the African communities was not conducive for colonialism. Descartes a French Philosopher argued that if one wanted to rebuild a city on the place where an old city existed, one had to destroy the old city and not build the one on top of the old. Similarly, to establish colonial empires in Africa, Europe had to destroy existing African social structures to make way for new civilization (Chimuka, 2001). This eventuality concludes that the progress of the Nhangang concept was hampered. Typical what this means was that there was a disturbance of African education of which nhangang was one of the African methodologies. In certain communities, the Programme halted despite its importance. Shoko (2016) and Bourdillon (1987) however, note urbanization as contributing to the negative effects on the development of Nhangang. The girls go to modern schools where they have completely separated from the village Nhangang programmes. Urban accommodation to a certain extent in the generality of citizens distorts the physical necessity of the provisions of a Nhangang to the girl child. The girl child privacy in terms of distance from the boys and parents' bedrooms is to a large extent hampered. According to Manyonganise and Museka (2010), the distance between Nhangang and other bedrooms played a critical role. What this means, therefore, is that the activities meant to be carried out in these rooms as part of the girl child are halted. Where accommodation allowed the girl child's apartment employment patterns separated the important Nhangang mentors from their students. The demand for work and new school work also limits the lessons as expected. The coming of boarding schools, also, separated the girl child from mentors for a long time and that provided limitations to the effective articulation of the Programme. The communal life that brings kinships together is also affected by the new trends of modern employment and life sustenance. New civilizations brought in alternative

programmes that occupy the girl child in a way that is not far-reaching as compared to the Nhangamethodology. The conclusion of this new development meant that family ties where Aunts (Vana Tete), who are the chief architects as the elderly mentors in Nhangamethodology in certain villages appear to have very little influence. This exposes the girl child who becomes vulnerable with academic knowledge (bookish knowledge) without adequate social life skills. Lack of these adequate social life skills has resulted in many social issues like child marriages, baby dumping, incest, rape cases, and other social vices (Manyonganise and Museka, 2010).

This study takes cognizance of the fact that modern education is relevant to a spectrum of economic demands prevailing but has gaps that this documentation sought to fulfil that addresses the direct needs of the girl child for without a healthy body and self-identity the acquired educational qualification may not be properly utilized. It is in light of this background that this documentation of Nhangamethodology seeks to establish the construction of Nhangamethodology in the phasing epoch and reconstruct and sustain the Nhangamethodology in the contemporary era. Research has done elsewhere show that documentation of important cultural heritage lag behind; Plan international (2020) highlights that there is a dynamic and vibrant culture of girls and young women's activism and organizing in West Africa, yet their activism in the region is not documented. Women in contemporary society have observed this gap and are in various ways striving to close it to empower and sustain the dignity of humanity through girls and young women empowerment programmes of which Nhangamethodology is one such programmes. Tsehay (2017) in a report highlights that Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership, Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT), and Women's Rights and Empowerment Partnership in Africa (WREPA) are some of the organizations championing girls and young women's empowerment.

The focus ranges from leveraging technology for girl's empowerment in Africa, "Mobile for Students' Reproductive Health (M4SRH)" intervention and the cultural innovation created by Rozaria Memorial Trust's Nhangamethodology Binti. Nhangamethodology-Binti Conversations which is an African curated and branded physical space for engagement. This unique space is one of the first of its kind and is a safe space to discuss the challenges and opportunities of women and girls. This platform served as a space to change the narrative of Africa and also a global space for advocacy and networking on women and girls. This new role is in line with the United Nations (2014) sustainable development goals. This is also in line Human development approach framework guiding this study. It is hoped that this reconstruction would help global nations achieve these novel goals. The next section looks at the summary of the chapter.

2.8 SUMMARY

Chapter two presented three theoretical frameworks guiding this study which is the Human development approach, Charter for African Feminists and the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development, showing why they were chosen for this particular study. The chapter also presents the historical narration of Nhangamethodology and the threats faced by the methodology during and post-colonial era. Extraction of some sections of the Zimbabwean 2013 constitution was done as a way of seeing how the heritage methodology can be supported in practice. The next chapter focuses the presentation of data that was collected and ventures into the analysis and discussion of data generated in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of data that was collected and ventures into the analysis and discussion of data generated. The chapter is typically dealing with the presentation of the findings of the study. The study sets out to document Nhangas as a feminist and intergenerational space for advocacy, mentorship, skills building, and leadership in contemporary society. The objectives of the study were to;

a) conceptualize and ground the historical and cultural foundation of the Nhangas as a safe space for girls and young women.

b) To develop the standard guidelines for the application of the Nhangas Concept as a safe space for learning and advocacy on girls and young women's rights especially SRHR, education, and leadership.

c) Provide research-based evidence on the regional perspective and varied country experiences within the SADC region of the concept of Nhangas for replication and scaling up.

d) Copyright and legal protection for the use of the Nhangas Methodology.

The data collection was done mainly covering Zimbabwe. An attempt was made to cover the whole of Zimbabwe. In trying to cover the whole of Zimbabwe there was a deliberate attempt by the researchers to, at least, interact with respondents from all the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. One or two provinces had more interaction than other provinces. The reason was the proximity of those provinces and also the two provinces having respondents who had the information and were practicing the Nhangas concept. As such, the various respondents were not all asked the same questions, but they all centred on the understanding of the concept of Nhangas. We were able to pick at least a respondent from each of the ten provinces and one or two provinces had more respondents through being nearer the researchers and having several relevant respondents who were information-rich.

Zimbabwe has ten provinces and the study attempted to cover the ten provinces and inquired about the Nhangas concept from people considered to have the information on the phenomenon. A total of 71 respondents were involved in this study and were drawn from the provinces as follows

Table 3.1 Gender of Respondents

Name of Province	Female	Male	Total
Bulawayo Metro	1	1	2
Harare	1	1	2
Mashonaland East	26	9	34
Mashonaland Central	12	7	19
Mashonaland West	1		1

Midlands	1		1
Matabeleland South	2	0	2
Matabeleland North	7	1	8
Manicaland	1	0	1
Masvingo	1	0	1
TOTAL	53	18	71

The study mainly targeted females for it is their experiences and dreams that we sought to shape the methodology. Men were, however, considered to help evaluate the progress of the methodology as most of them had either wives or daughters attending Nhanga. The inclusion of men was not meant to compare the views presented but to help refine the methodology. It is to this effect that the inclusion of both genders helped to generate this data for successful documentation.

Face to Face Interviews

Fourteen face to face interviews were conducted. The face to face interviews were conducted with the four Chiefs, the seven referrals from the chiefs, two urban women, one policeman officer from the Victim Friendly Unit, and urban man. In all the instances during the face to face, the respondents gave us their consent verbally and signed the consent forms permitting us to interview them. A total of 4 chiefs were interviewed between 28th July 2020 and 3rd of October 2020. There were three male chiefs and one female chief. Other face to face interviews were done by the referrals of the chiefs who were mainly women who knew or had practiced Nhanga. On average the interviews took around 30 minutes.

Virtual Interviews

Virtual interviews were also done with some of the respondents. We conducted a virtual interview with a journalist who has written prolifically on Nhanga. We also did a virtual interview with a lawyer and a gender activist. The main reasons were to try and observe COVID 19 protocols but also the busy schedules of the respondents. A total of 4 respondents were interviewed virtually through Zoom.

Write up

We also collected data using the write-up. With the Historian, we gave questions and areas to research and respond through a write-up. The Historian responded to the questions by giving us a four-page response. We intended to engage him in a face-to-face virtual interview but this did not materialize due to the time factor.

Focus Group Discussions

For this study, the Focus Group Discussion was one of the major tools we used to gather our data. We undertook 6 focus group discussions with participants of various age groups and sex. In all instances, the focus group discussion proved to be effective and respondents were forthcoming with information and assisted each other to give responses to questions asked.

Observation

To a less extent, observation was employed in both the face-to-face interviews, virtual and the focus group discussion as they gave their responses. We would observe the facial expression of the respondents against the argument they were pushing. The observation was also employed when we were considering age groups and observation on the constructed Nhanga in Murewa. Generally, observation was at play throughout our data collection. This guided the researchers to match the respondents' responses and body language in most cases leading to probing and clarification of responses. Researchers also observed activities in centralized Nhanga in Murewa and Filabusi Districts to build up an appreciation of the concept and that acted as a catalyst to understanding literature and respondents' views.

A total of 71 respondents were a part of this research and the graph below is the summary of the ages:

Table 3.2 Age Range of Respondents

Age range	Female	Male	Total
5 years to 9 years	10	0	10
10 to 15 years	13	0	13
16 to 20 years	9	0	9
21 to 24 years	5	1	7
25 years and above	16	17	32
Total	53	18	71

Respondents were from different age groups to get the expectations of different age groups as Nhanga in modern days is suitable for all women and girls as a safe space for them despite the differences in terms of age and other considerations. This helped in coming up with a document that recommends the inclusion of all age groups as their views were regarded as essential.

Language

The bulk of the respondents who were involved in this study used ChiShona to respond and this had to be translated. The majority of these, whilst they used ChiShona, now and again would resort to English. Another language that was used in this study is IsiTonga with the referral and the girls in the Focus Group Discussion opting for IsiTonga.

After the data collection, we had to translate to English all the responses in ChiShona, IsiNdebele, and IsiTonga. All the respondents were Zimbabweans of African origin.

The study also considered the level of education of all the respondents and their designation in society. For all the respondents we considered the highest level of education they attained **Table 3.3**

Respondents Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency
Primary Education	19

Secondary Education	42
Diploma Education	4
1 st Degree Education	2
Masters Education	3
Doctorate Education	1

Respondents had basic knowledge that allowed one to narrate and describe a phenomenon in a simple clear sequence. The inclusion of highly educated respondents marked a great turning point in this documentation, as respondents not only viewed Nhangas as a static phenomenon but fluid in a fast dynamic global social and economic sphere.

Designation in society and the profession was also considered in this study'

Table 3.4 Profession of Respondents

Full-time occupation	Female	Male	Total
Chiefs	1	3	4
Historians	0	1	1
Journalist	2	0	2
Lawyer	1	0	1
Policemen	0	1	1
Teachers	2	1	3
Student Secondary	42	0	42
Full time Housewives	17	0	17
Farmers	1	1	71

Professionals brought in views that relate to their expertise that ensured this documentation was richer in content. Without them, this documentation would have remained at the rudimentary stage. At the same time, the input of each respondent was highly valued.

3.1 TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF NHANGA

Respondents, as individuals and in focus group discussions were asked to present their understanding of the Nhangas / Ixhiba concept in their own ethnic set ups. Their responses were not quite different despite their differences as alluded to in the preceding statement. The responses mirror much from the physical to methodology and purpose of the physical structure. In the subsequent presentation various responses are explored:

A Chief in Shamva District, in Mashonaland Central Province advanced the following definition:

Nhangas is a 'secret' hut where a girl child is taught in privacy by a grandmother.

The Chief's Referral in the same district and province above, defined Nhangas on the basis of her own personal experience in Nhangas and said:

Nhangas is a hut where girls are groomed into motherhood.

The first two definitions from the chief and his referral focus on the physical structure and what happens in Nhangwa. This view of Nhangwa goes beyond the physical structure or just its mere use as a place to sleep. The hut symbolizes grooming of a girl for her role in the next phase of life. What is also noted from the definitions is the secrecy attached to the lessons to induct the mother in the making.

A male respondent in Shamva District who was a teacher and culture officer had a mouthful on the concept Nhangwa; the following is what he had to say:

Mabuja and Korekore view Nhangwa as place for dwelling for girls who are at puberty up to twenty-five (25 years), who are now on menstruation. Basically the body features served as a guide for a qualification to be in that place. Every home is expected to have this hut.

The respondent added to the physical structure, the requirement for one to be in and forming part of what happens in Nhangwa. From the definition it was not for every girl but those on the verge of adulthood with a possible cap of 25 years. This is interpreted to be a norm at every homestead, as those making a decision were guided by the physical features of a girl. This decision to target this age group also implies a possible programme or activities to be attached to this age group. In light to this understanding this place (Nhangwa) was serving more than one purpose of dwelling but was also a place of inculcation of certain, most probably critical, virtues. To this end Nhangwa was more than a physical space but a practical attachment for grooming of the young ladies.

A male focus group Discussion in Shamva District had a consensus on the concept Nhangwa, below is their response:

Nhangwa is a hut for girls, which is normally highly decorated as compared to the other huts. It is the hut where discussions about the girl child are done. This is a place where a girl is taught how to treat her husband properly. This is a place where guidance on the maturation of a girl is done.

A Chief in Murewa District, in Mashonaland East Province, viewed Nhangwa from a physical structure and purpose of the structure point of view:

Nhangwa is a structure where girls discuss and help each other.

A Focus group discussion of the elderly women in Murewa District, attached the physical structure and purpose in defining the concept. The following was their agreed response:

This is a hut where the girls are taught the virtues of life and how to manage womanhood.

Male focus group discussion in Shamva District, chief in Murewa District, a focus group discussion five to nine (5-9) year olds in Murewa District and focus group discussion (elderly women) in Murewa District, respondents concur that the definition of Nhangwa sprouts from the physical structure for a girl child and moves on to what transpired in that special hut. The male focus group discussion in Shamva District goes further and describes the appearance of the hut, as that which is most decorated at a homestead. The same male focus group discussion group, in addition to other activities, were so particular of one of the activities in this hut as that of learning how handle their husbands. This point was to be expected from the group, basing on the background of the previous era when the girl child's social environment was much more limited compared to today. This does not dispel the importance of marriage but seeks for a wider perspective to life. Other respondents just mentioned grooming

into womanhood and sharing of secrets as part of the definitions of Nhanga. This interpretation further illuminates Nhanga as more than a place to sleep at night or any other time of the day but a learning centre or if one chooses, a miniature school in size but more than a school in essence.

A Chief's Male Referral in Murewa District, defined Nhanga as:

In general, Nhanga is a hut where girls sleep which is a no go area for boys. In that hut there are lot of 'things' that take place just like 'dare' for men (men's place). In this place girls meet aunties and grandmothers who teach the girl child to become a full woman.

A male Focus group discussion in Murewa District, stated that:

Nhanga is a place where the girl child is taught especially when they reach a certain age.

Usually breasts and the girls' legs guided elders on the readiness of girls for this place.

Victim Friendly Unit officer in Mashonaland East Province defined Nhanga as:

A hut where girls sleep and which is well kept all the times.

A Chief Male Referral in Murewa District, a male Focus group discussion in Murewa

District and Victim Friendly Unit officer in the Province respondents placed Nhanga as a hut for girls. The chief male referral in Murewa District added that this place is restricted only for females. The restriction highlighted here implies privacy and gender sensitive content or methodology that was the sum total meaning of Nhanga as a programme than just a mere Structure. A male Focus group discussion in Murewa District's description also tallies the male respondent in Shamva District already presented earlier on. This alignment of thought therefore, proves that Nhanga as methodology was not haphazard but systematic and age category based.

A Focus group discussion of ladies who do not attend Nhanga in Murewa District, viewed Nhanga as:

Grooming on how to become good girls and as a place where one can go and say her problems at home or community.

This definition is similar to the one given by a Chief's referral in Shamva District. The definition brings in the aspect of guiding or moulding someone into acceptable social standard. This first part of the definition implies carrying out activities in order to bring up some young women to a certain social standard. That last part then looks at the physical structure used for the purpose of facilitating or sharing of ideas most likely seen as worth the attention of the occupants. The role in other words resembles an ordinary room serving as a learning centre.

A Chief referral in Filabusi District in Matabeleland South Province, proposed that:

Ixhiba (Nhanga) was a girls' hut built behind the kitchen with the parents' hut just in front of the homestead for the protection of the girl child.

In Matabeleland South, Nhanga is known as Ixhiba lemantombazana meaning a hut for the girls. Its function and purpose is not different from the responses already given from other regions. The major feature that makes it distinct was its position in the homestead in relationship to other structures.

This was mainly for the security of the girl child. This could also imply how much value they placed on the girl child hence she had to be protected.

A Chief in Binga District, in Matabeleland North, a focus group discussion of seventeen - nineteen (17-19) year old girls in Binga District and Chief's referral in the same District concurred that:

Nhanga among the Tonga people had no special name but was only referred to as "N'anda yabasimbi" (girls' hut'). This a place for girls and men and visitors are not allowed into it. This was an agreed position by all respondents in Binga. The girls said:

This is a secret hut for girls where we display our 'everything' and are taught how to face the future.

The definition given is as well depicting a methodology in which a girl is prepared to face the future. N'anda yabasimbi in this regard is more than a structure among the Tonga, people of Matabeleland North.

The traditional Nhanga mainly was made of a traditional hut and assigned to the girl child in a family set up. The hut was built such that it would be near the parents' main bedroom so that the girl child is protected. It was also strategically positioned so that it is nearer the aunt or the grandmother's bedroom so that they can mentor the girl child. The aunt and the grandmother had access to the Nhanga at any given time. No male was allowed in the Nhanga for whatever reason. It was a no go area even for the father or brother of the girl. In essence it reduced the chances of incest.

3.2 CONTEMPORARY NHANGA

An Advocate for Nhanga who was also a journalist from Harare Province, had quite a mouthful of a Nhanga definition. The following is what she had to say:

Nhanga is a place for adolescent girls, for the girls who have come out of childhood into adolescence and those who are preparing to start their careers getting themselves socially structured by marriage or whatever issues. Nhanga is a space for sharing ideas. It is a space where when girls talk and when they share their experiences and expertise, they know they are not going to be misconstrued. This is where the girls are able to speak matters of their heart, where they speak about their dreams, in terms of education, pursuing careers, talk about their fears, in terms of how to deal with certain issues in life even if it is cross generational issues. It is conference room, a meeting room, a space where as Africans we can say, tie your hair to allow ourselves to dance and be free, take off our shoes, our bras, take off anything that constricts our ability to express ourselves really. It is a pertinent space this day and age we are talking of child marriage, gender based violence that is when you have been beaten or violated. It is a place to go and pour out, to go and be heard and not be judged. It is indeed a space where there is peer to peer counselling, where there is cross generational information sharing, where it is not the adults that talk to you but a space where adults and young women support and correct each other. This is a space where they can come and cry, a space where they can be celebrated within their own context. A place they can move around in their 'knickers' and bras, where they can wear loose clothes and not worry about their little porches hanging out that make them free. A place where it doesn't matter what they wear, eat, a space they can play music and dance. A place they can just lie down freely.

A Focus Group Discussion of girls in the age range five to fourteen (5-14) years old in Shamva District, averred the definition of Nhanga from a discussion rendezvous centre, and this what they stated:

This is girls' hut where we discuss freely our problems and also how you are handled by others.

The girls' definition brings in the notion of free space for girls all enclosed in a particular hut, where there is free sharing of challenges, tips and how best to respond to such challenges. In other words, one can interpret this space as a space for girls' empowerment to face social ills of any kind.

A Focus Group Discussion of the young girls five nine (5-9) years old in Murewa District, had an interesting understanding of Nhanga. To the girls:

Nhanga is a hut where girls discuss secrets. It is also a hut where they sleep and are taught how to behave well.

The respondents portrayed Nhanga as a freedom square, a dreamer's space, a stock exchange of ideas, a hub, a place of equality, a centre of social scaffolding from childhood to adulthood in a number of spheres. The definition also depicts Nhanga as a therapy centre through various activities to reach out the deeper core of the girl child's soul. The definition, in addition, illuminates Nhanga as a victory centre where one is celebrated and never judged despite the circumstances.

Women's Rights Legal Expert woman from Harare Province gave the following definition:

Nhanga is a bedroom for young women at village level where boys and girls are separated.

An urban young woman (upper middle class) from Harare Province

Nhanga is a safe space for girls and not only for girls and even elderly women have it as a place for sharing experiences, stories, relaxing as well as enjoying the moments of being a female person and feminism.

A focus group discussion of urban girls in Murewa District had this to say on their understanding of Nhanga:

This is a room where unmarried girls sleep. This is where they keep their personal 'things'. This is also a place where we discuss our own personal issues. It is a place where we do not allow boys but girls for girls talk. Girls talk involves problems facing girls, divorce of parents, fight between boy and girl, abuse of a girl by close relatives among other problems.

The urban girls viewed Nhanga as a room reserved for unmarried ladies who use this room for their talk above everything else. This is a problem solving centre where issues affecting ladies are discussed. The room is out of bounds to men for its functions are to provide for the girl child.

Women's Rights Legal Expert (woman)'s definition is not much different from responses already given. Urban young woman (upper middle class)'s response likewise is not much different from the one given by an Advocate for Nhanga (journalist) above though presented in a nutshell. What is worth noting

from her definition is the safety of the space. The requirement for the safety tallies quite well with the description by Chief referral in Matabeleland South, which started from the positioning of the structure in the homestead. The safety should not only focus on the physical but methodology applied in the social scaffolding.

Nhanga in a modern world is viewed differently and is seen as place that women and girls can come together and discuss women issues. Nhanga in the homestead means that even in an urban set up there is need for a room assigned to the girl child. Nhanga is seen to be in every place as long as there are girls and women in that community. The contemporary Nhanga can be centralised at ward, village, district, provincial level. A modern Nhanga can also be found in other institutions like churches, community clubs and other institutions. The schools, should also follow suit in the modern Nhanga and create spaces for girls and women within the institutions. Not to be left out are the tertiary institutions, like colleges and universities. The internet has made the world smaller and there is need for a virtual Nhanga. Girls and women should be able to utilise the internet and connect with all other girls and women in other parts of the world and share in a modern virtual Nhanga. Nhanga in modernity is seen as the coming together of women in whatever forum and sharing their experiences and this can be at parliamentary level, regional level or international level.

3.2.1 DISCUSSION ON THE CONCEPT OF NHANGA

This part of the section discusses the definitions of Nhanga in relation to the literature in Chapter Two. From the definitions provided by both scholars and respondents, two parts to the definition emerge: Physical Space and theoretical (Methodology). The two depend on each other and their separation could be interpreted to be that of a thin line.

The definitions of Nhanga as a physical structure by respondents in this regard, resonates quite well with the descriptions given by The Herald (2020); Shoko (2016); The Marin Theatre Company (2020); Johnston (1982) and Manyonganise and Museka (2010). This concurrence in description should not be taken for granted. Whatever is attached to the physical structure is possible if the first and most important action is done, that of providing the physical safe, secure place where a girl child enters, closes the door behind herself and confides to herself or others of her sex without haste or interruptions. This physical space means a lot if the girl has to realize her dignity and identity. The consideration for this physical space creates an environment of enlargement of a girl's capabilities and her well-being, which is in line with the Human Development approach (UNDP, 1990, Trinity College Dublin, 2016, Alkire, 2005). This will subsequently give them an opportunity to realize their potentials and allow them to compete with their counterparts reducing the effects of poverty as they get empowered by having a physical safe space to grow in. This is in line with the Human rights based approach to development (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009 in Gauri and Gloppen, 2012).

The second part of the methodology coming out from the definitions is attached to the functions attached first to the physical structure though it could later become fluid. The physical space or Centre provides the first critical space for the most important lessons, it acts as a classroom, a conference room, a therapy or counselling room and later allows for outdoor activities or fieldwork that goes into unlimited space and time. Johnston (1982); Shoko (2016); Bourdillion (1987) and Manyonganise and Museka (2010)'s descriptions of some of the activities attached to the physical structure, its set up in

the homestead and purpose is highly interpreted to confirm this important pedagogical role of Nhanganga. This being the case, Nhanganga should be defined from both physical and theoretical bases. Nhanganga therefore should be regarded as a freedom square, a dreamer's space, a hub of stock exchange of ideas, a place of equality, a Centre of social scaffolding from girl hood to adulthood and ensuing initiation into economic empowerment in a number of spheres. It is a therapy Centre through various activities to reach out to the deeper core of the girl child's soul. It is as a victory centre where one is celebrated and never judged despite the circumstances. It is this understanding that the girl child's space could be enlarged for elimination of poverty and creation of equal opportunities in a global village (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009 in Gauri and Gloppen, 2012; UNDP, 1990; Trinity College Dublin, 2016; Alkire, 2005; UN, 2014).

3.3 TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY PROTOCOLS AND BEHAVIOURS IN NHANGA.

Traditional Protocols and Behaviours

What Happens in the Nhanganga?

There are several activities that take place in the Nhanganga. For starters, the routine is more or less the same. The following were observations at the centralised Nhanganga in Murewa:

All the various individuals who went into the Nhanganga observed this rule. They removed their shoes and walked into the Nhanganga barefooted. On further inquiry on the routine, on why people removed their shoes, the elderly women in Murewa in Mashonaland East had this to say:

We remove our shoes as a way of respecting the Nhanganga. We are also valuing the place and respecting the place and all others that are in the room.

The observation was also that even if one is coming into the Nhanganga for the first time one is expected to remove their foot wear. They can keep their socks on. As we stood and observed the attendees, it looked natural to all to take off their shoes. It was just a norm for most of the lady attendees including the youngest generation. One of the 5-year-olds had this to say:

Removing of shoes is a rule that we observe when getting into the Nhanganga.

We are also told that all visitors to the Murewa Centralised Nhanganga, like the Japanese Ambassador when he came for the official opening of the RMT Head Quarters, removed his shoes when he got into the Nhanganga. A doctor, who is also a director of RMT Centre, gives a narration of Nhanganga in other forums as side events where ministers, high powered delegates visit the Nhanganga with all observing the rule of removing their footwear as a sign of respect.

Once inside the Nhanganga, another routine is observed. There are no chairs or tables in the Nhanganga. The Nhanganga has both modern and traditional mats. The mats are spread and meant to be sat on. There are also pillows of different sizes for the comfort of the attendees. Some people just held the pillows in their hands, some sat on the pillows, whilst others leaned on the pillows against the wall. Other aspects that were present in the Nhanganga were women's cloths. These are commonly known as 'tsaru' and were used mainly by those who felt their dresses were short and others just used 'tsaru' to cover their legs. In the Nhanganga the attendees sat in a circular formation. The circular sitting formation is forced by the round shape of the room. A Doctor in Murewa in Mashonaland East had this to say:

The circular shape of the Nhangas is meant to ensure that all are equal in Nhangas. It removes the power dynamics that any other sitting arrangement usually brings. In Nhangas we are all equal, and everyone's voice matters and is listened to.

As people sit in the Nhangas, generally they would want to lean on the wall. This forces the sitting formation to be circular. On further interrogation on the issue, one of the elderly women in Murewa in Mashonaland East said it is meant to take away the power struggles that go with other sitting arrangements. She emphasized that when the Nhangas is in session, each person's contribution is taken seriously and there is no monopoly of knowledge.

The Nhangas building, as previously alluded to, is round. It is built of mostly natural materials, the roof is thatch (grass), the windows are wooden frames with a bit of metal. The trusses are all wooden. The door is wooden and with the lockset being the only metal piece. The roof trusses and even the runners are all made of wood with nails being the only metal. The door frames, window frames are also wood constructed. On the inside it is warm when the weather is cold and cool when the weather is hot.

Back then, Nhangas was easy to identify as it was one of the smartest structures in the homestead because of its occupants. Young women and girls were taught to keep their bedroom clean and, as a result, they would even decorate the outside using colourful mud and go on to ensure that even though the floor was made of mud it was kept shining using a bottle to smoothen it to a shine.

To control the gossip that may occur there is a slogan that is sung by all the attendees. A Doctor in Murewa in Mashonaland East explained:

What goes on in the Nhangas, remains in the Nhangas (zvemunhangas zvinosara munhangas).

It is aimed at preventing gossip that may take place after sharing in the Nhangas. Attendees are discouraged strongly from gossiping about what was said or done in the Nhangas after the session. This is a rule that the participants actual sing and practice. It is like a vow that one commits to and nothing is shared with anyone after the session.

Other activities that were said to be happening in the Nhangas include the free sharing of issues by the women and girls. Some of the shared issues may be too sensitive hence they guard against spread of such issues using slogan, 'Whatever happens in a Nhangas remains in the Nhangas'. Another activity that is very common and much embraced is the singing.

3.3.1 DISCUSSION ON THE PRACTICAL OBSERVATION OF NHANGAS PROTOCOL

The practical activities that happened in the Nhangas that include removal of shoes, seating arrangement, singing and keeping of Nhangas secretes could have kept the social cohesion described by Gelfand (1973). When people treat each other as equals, respect each other and have confidentiality around each other's issues, then that is bound to unite people in the community. The oneness and group activities narrated by Shoko (2016) and Johnston (1982) could have been influenced by these protocols. Surely Africa was very strong at this stage before diffusion of their culture due to modernization as reading well with the notion of Manyonganise and Museka (2010) and Chimuka (2001) already presented in Chapter Two. An interpretation from the observation and the literature is that African heritage was and continues to be at stake. The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe in Chapter 1 Section (3:1); Chapter 2 Section

(11), Chapter 3(51), (57), (60), (80), (86); Chapter 4 (60) Chapter 2 Section (16:1) Chapter 2 Section (33) calls for preservation of traditional knowledge and gives room for the protection and preservation of such valuable heritage. Nhangas as a heritage-based methodology promotes and enhances participation of women in matters that affect not only them but society in general. Women's issues are not only women's issues but everyone's issues. Empowerment of women is empowerment of the global village hence the need for state and all institutions and agencies of government to take an active role in promoting this critical space for women as an important heritage-based methodology. This part of the Constitution in particular calls for the methodology such as Nhangas to be promoted as it enhances the dignity, equality and wellbeing of the women which is in line with the goals of the Human Development Approach and Human Rights based approaches to Development (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009 in Gauri and Gloppen, 2012; UNDP, 1990; Trinity College Dublin, 2016; Alkire, 2005; UN, 2014).

3.4 TRADITIONAL NHANGA AND AGE GROUPS

The age of a person is generally aligned with his or her behaviour in most cases. With the Nhangas concept as stated in our literature, not every woman went to the Nhangas. According to one Bulawayo urban woman respondent:

Only those girls who would have developed breasts and experienced their first menstruation go to attend the Nhangas or ixhiba.

She refers to this first menstruation as 'ukuthomba' and that this was taken as a sign to have the girl taught about the maturing she just experienced. The Referral for a Chief in Matabeleland South also confirmed that the girls who would have experienced their first menstruation were considered for the Nhangas lessons. She uses the word 'Bhoboka' to refer to the first menstruation. The Tonga women in Binga also alluded to the fact that the first menstruation was a mark for a girl to be taught about womanhood. Another aspect that the respondents across the country said was used to see if the girl is grown or not were the development of breasts. As a girl grows, she develops breasts. The existing centralised Nhangas has various age groups. The content that the various age groups are trained in is different and it depends on the age of the individual, not the breasts. The Chief Referral in Matabeleland South emphasized and explained that if breasts developed too early they were swept using a traditional grass broom and they would disappear and only redevelop some time later. The Referrals by the Chief in Binga were also of the feeling that at the age of 7 years or more girls can join other girls in the Nhangas.

The traditional Nhangas did not consider ages of girls as a criterion for admission into the Nhangas. Two aspects were mainly considered. The girl's maturity, meaning when a girl reached a stage where her breasts were starting to develop, then she was said to be ready for the Nhangas. When the breasts develop and the elder ladies think it is premature, they would sweep the breasts using a traditional broom and they would disappear and reappear later. Another mark that the traditional Nhangas elders used to measure maturity is when a girl experienced her first menstruation it was a mark to admit her in the Nhangas.

3.5 CONTEMPORARY NHANGA AGE GROUPS

Organized modern Nhangas in Murewa had the following age groups:

First age group: 5- 14 years.

This group was the youngest amongst groups that attend the Nhangwa session. The 5-14 years were able to respond and gave the essence of why they are attending the Nhangwa session

Second age group 15- 21 years.

The second age group are aged between 15 and 21 years. The group was happy and felt that the Nhangwa was their place as they were now dating and getting ready for marriage. This age group in Murewa urban felt there is a need to educate the girls on the processes of dating. The girls practicing Nhangwa justified their attendance. One of the respondents said:

I would have never known about the menstruation issue if I had not attended Nhangwa session as I stay with my father. (She was quick to say) I do not talk about such things with him (her father). (Therefore, there is the justification of this age group attending Nhangwa).

Third age groups: 22- 24 years

This was also another age group that was there in the centralised Nhangwa of young women aged 22 to 24. Some were married, some were single and others were single parents. They justified their coming to the Nhangwa session as a chance to share their good and bad experience in their marriages. It was also acknowledged by the single ladies as necessary sharing experiences. One lady noted that:

After the death of my husband last year, I was devastated and only found closure when I started coming to Nhangwa sessions and I am healing.

The Nhangwa sessions here are being seen as providing healing and safe space for the young women.

Women above 25 years

These were women in the range of 25 years and above. The group was made up of married, widowed and single mothers. The general approach was in a focus group discussion and all the six participants were eager and willing to share their experiences. The point of reference was the Nhangwa from the cultural perspective as a tradition and what was done back then. It was the history of the Nhangwa helping inform the present. It was noted that some of them were mentors in the Nhangwa.

Age Range

5 - 10 -being the youngest

11 - 15 -second youngest

16 – 21 third

22 - 24 fourth

25 and above

Observations are that the centralised Nhangwa in Murewa and Shamva Districts, are particular about the age groups. One of the Mentor explained this by stating that:

The various age groups are taken up and they are taught different topics depending on the age. They are times when we mix them if we are dealing with a general topic and she gave an example of washing a shirt'. On dealing with the other sensitive topics they are split and go into these groups.

What we deduce even from old practices that the Focus Group alluded to is that long back the girls were given their space when they were mature, usually at puberty, (Generally after first menstruation). As the older girls graduated the next in line would be taken to be groomed and taught various womanhood responsibilities. There is a paradigm shift with the modern Nhanga that is advocating for catching them young. The modern Nhanga is also pushing for the young girls to be taught basic protection from abuse of any kind especially sexual abuse. The approach promotes various age groups being taught relevant skills that are relevant to the age group. Putting them in groups also brings about the modern way of sharing as PEER learning is said to be very powerful and modern. Hearing certain concepts from a peer is more effective at times than having an older person always leading. The same age group concept also brings up issues that are common and therefore easy to discuss. The same age groupings as observed in Shamva and Murewa Districts, also brings about social identity amongst the girls. In this modernized centralised Nhanga in Murewa they have even gone a step further and used name of birds to identify the groups. Apart from preserving culture the birds name has a quality that resembles expected behavior of a particular age group. An example is a group called Suri-suri referring to the smallest girls in the Nhanga. With the stork referring to the oldest group and indeed they somehow fit and define the age group.

Modern Nhanga is pushing for an agenda to catch them young. As such, the youngest age group in the Nhanga is 5 years old. Others areas like Binga opted for 7 years as the youngest age in the Nhanga. This can translate to an average of 6 years old for the youngest Nhanga attendee in Zimbabwe. When the girls are in the Nhanga the key guiding principle is the content that the girls are exposed to. The content should be relevant for their age group. Whilst there is a minimum age group there is no limit to the attendees as long as they will be with their appropriate age group. Modern Nhanga also sees the intergenerational age groups being accommodated as long as they are six years old and above. This new phenomenon aligns quite well with the Charter for the African Feminist forum framework that seeks to empower all women and girls without any qualification (African Women's Development Fund ,2007).

3.5.1 DISCUSSION ON THE AGE GROUPS

The ages described in existing Nhanga in Murewa and Shamva Districts, respond quite well with the need to inculcate virtues or values in the young ones so they grow with these cultural values. Literature in the first two chapters indicate that a person's character, to some extent, lies in the tradition in which the person was brought up and the experiences the person has undergone. The patterns of thinking and acting that have been instilled into us as children are fundamental to our instinctive patterns of behaviour in adulthood (Bourdillon, 1987; Dzavo, 2020). It also noted that our requirement of sexual maturation was also a common practice in the past for one to be an active participant in Nhanga (Shoko, 2016; Bourdillon, 1987). The aspect which literature appears to be silent about is that of divorcees, single mothers, widows and other individuals not really being defined by old objectives of Nhanga, having a space in Nhanga. The preceding view helps create hope in both young and old women. This enlarges the territories of the women and their well-being as well as creating opportunities for equality and a possible reduction of poverty through Nhanga activities. This understanding resonates quite well with the approaches of Human Development and Human Rights based approaches to development guiding this study (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009 in Gauri and Gloppen, 2012; UNDP, 1990; Trinity College Dublin, 2016; Alkire, 2005; UN, 2014).

3.6 CURRICULUM IN TRADITIONAL NHANGA

People generally view Nhangas as a safe place for women and young girls. As they practice the concept, there are some expectations of what should be discussed in the safe space for the benefit of all participants. During the research, it was noted that the issues that are discussed in the safe space range from respect to household chores and beyond.

In Murewa District, Mashonaland East, the making of the pads uses some barks of trees that are processed and used during that period. In Shamva District, Mashonaland central, they called the process “kumakwenzi” translating to “in the shrubs” which is where the process is done, away from the homestead in shrubs where they would leave their tins that they use to put water for pulling of labia. This is done every day and the mentors actually monitor the size of labia that is acceptable for each individual. This process was for management of menstruation and also for preparation for marriage with thrust of enhancing sexual pleasure.

In Murewa labia are called “zvidhori” meaning dolls. Literally, the dolls are meant to play with hence pulling of the labia is referred to as zvidhori each one should make sure that they enlarge their labia up to a certain length. The use of roasted marula seeds (pfuta) powder and oil makes lubrication easy. Others use wild fruit seeds (tsongoro dzetsvanzva) they burn and make powder then mix with some little oil for lubrication. However, some young women are living in a dilemma because they feel that pulling of the labia goes against some Christian cultures and their conscience. On the other hand, they feel they have to enlarge their labia so that their husbands can enjoy the foreplay. In Binga every woman has to enlarge their labia. They do this without being forced. They enjoy doing that, in their narration they indicated that this makes them secure when they get married to a husband who values the long labia. However, there is no one who monitors if ever the women will be doing the correct thing. There was an indication that the women have to do that as a way of pleasing the husband during the sexual act. In IsiNdebele they call the labia “indlebe.” The extension of the labia goes hand in hand with the issue of being taught how to please the husband in bed. The movements that are supposed to be done by a woman so as to please her husband during sex are also discussed. In Matabeleland, it was indicated that the lessons to please men are taken seriously because they prepare girls for womanhood.

The issue of skills impartation is also being done. However, in most cases it is done theoretically and the young women discuss in Nhangas that they should have busy hands so that when they get married they are in a position to fend for their families not to wait for the husband to do everything. Busy hands include the making of mats, gardening, backyard butchery and making of beads that will be used by the young women as a way of impressing their husbands during sex. The beads popularly known as “gomwe” do not have any medicinal additions to them. It is some beads that are put on the women’s waist so that the husband can play with them before, during and after the sexual act. In Filabusi, the women are taken to the river early in the morning on an arranged date so as to be tested for virginity. However, in some areas, this practice is no longer done for it contradicts the law. These women are also taken through training on behaviour towards in-laws, husband’s relatives and relations with other people.

A referral of the Chief in Filabusi in Matabeleland South, had this to say:

“All the women of the same age group within an area were assembled together in a (centralised girls hut) Nhangas and prepared for the graduation by being given a number of herbs to make them strong.

Then one day in June when it is very cold the aunts and the grandmothers would take the girls to the river and the time when the girls would go for a ceremony called 'Ubhudluweziziba'. (Diving in rivers). After diving in the river they would stay in the cold water for a given time and after the satisfaction of the mentors they would be told to come out. The younger group would also be told to jump in but it was for a shorter period of time".

For the older girls it marked the end of the grooming. It was a graduation ceremony for womanhood and they were said to be ready for marriage. The young women were given some herbs so that they keep their bodies strong and ready to be ushered into womanhood. The starting of the menstrual cycle, marked the ushering into womanhood. In the past the young women were also taught how to make pads that they would use during their menstrual days.

The urban woman in Bulawayo Metropolitan and Shamva woman in Mashonaland Central also narrated something similar, they said:

Even though there was no diving in water. There was "Chinamwali" which is a ceremony for the elder girls who were graduating to womanhood. The families of the graduating girls made a feast for the graduates and expectation of the girl getting married and the community, parents, family are all convinced the girl child is now ready for marriage. So using Nhanga we were convinced we eliminated any forced early child marriages.

June activities in the IsiNdebele culture is another aspect that is likened to and be seen as a graduation ceremony for the bigger girls or young women who are seen to be ready for marriage. The ceremony was done as the last aspect in the grooming of young women. After the diving into the water, when they got back to the centralised 'xhiba' they would sing and celebrate. The Chief's referral in Filabusi in Matabeleland South went on to sing one of the songs that were sung back then. After this June graduation back then the next stage was the young women were seen to be grown up and would be given a husband.

According to the lawyer in Mashonaland West, some of the activities that took place and should take place in Nhanga are to have just a free space where a girl or woman can come and just sleep and rest after a day's work. She also talks of Nhanga as a place for sharing with peers and younger and older women. She also states that, "It is a space to go and celebrate whatever achievement with other women and girls. It is a place to bring about equality to those who are vulnerable. Nhanga should allow girls to get three aspects, Freedom, Power and Presentation" The referral of the Chief in Murewa in Mashonaland East concurs with what the lawyer proposed, on empowerment of the girl child. Both respondents are for the empowerment of the girl child and ending patriarchy.

Traditional curriculum in the Nhanga mainly centred around the girl child being a good housewife. As such the curriculum looked at ensuring that the girl child is a groomed to be a good housewife and be a woman who shows respect to the husband and the in-laws. Another aspect that they considered is that of teaching the young woman how to prepare different meals. The curriculum back then also ensured that the woman was able to satisfy the husband sexually. So the curriculum back then centred on teaching the girl child how to perform sexual dances for the husband. It also ensured that the women would perform sexual acts with the girls as a way of teaching them. The elder women would teach the young women the pulling of labia and this proved to be a main activity. Women who did not have long labia was not considered "real" women. Virginity checking was part of the traditional

curriculum. Marriage was the core for it was viewed as responsible for sustaining cultural heritage through philosophical principles of traditional indigenous education systems where the father and mother were the first teachers.

3.7 CONTEMPORARY CURRICULUM

The modern curriculum in the Nhangwa is a total departure from the old days or the traditional culture as it seeks to depart from the patriarchal upbringing to an equal paradigm. The modern curriculum seeks to bring the girl child to see herself as an equal partner with the boy child. It seeks to bring in the aspect of equality from the time a child is born to the time they go to school up to old age. Therefore, the curriculum is about teaching the girl child her rights. It also ensures that the girl child is taught basic home maintenance chores and also entrepreneur skills like basketry, gardening for starting a business. The modern curriculum will also teach the girl child modern skills such as Information Communication Technology which empowers the girl child. Girls are taught to be self-reliant and not to see marriage as the aim in life.

Generally, the curriculum depends on the age group of the participants. In Shamva and Murewa the 5-9 age group is called “Tusirisiri” meaning very small bird that makes some noise. In Shamva Mashonaland Central, the young girls aging from 5-9, discuss hygiene. One respondent had this to say:

We are taught how to bath and take care of our bodies.

Another issue that is discussed in the space is respect for elders, respect for peers and self-respect. Participants are taught how to address elders. When they are caught at a young age, they grow up with an appreciation of the importance of respect.

In Murewa Mashonaland East, the young ones are taught the theory aspects of household chores and they are expected to be practicing that when they go home. They are taken through content on hygiene and deportment. Another aspect that the young ones discuss is gender based violence. The discussions look at all the forms of abuse that can happen to them and how best these can be addressed. The girls are taught to be able to identify forms of abuse and the reporting structures they can use if they encounter it. In Murewa District, Mashonaland East and Shamva District, Mashonaland Central, the young girls also have a sports session as part of their curriculum.

They compete in their respective districts and with other districts as a way of socialization and talent identification. Basically the curriculum for the “Tusirisiri” is on hygiene and GBV. They indicated that they would appreciate it if they could have more games, singing competitions and outdoor cooking so that they improve their skills in those aspects.

The young women in Murewa and Shamva are either “Hanga”, or “Hangaiwa”. Their curriculum takes them through hygiene issues. They discuss how one should take care of themselves always. A woman should always be smart and should keep a clay water pot (gate) in her bedroom so that she uses that water to wash her hands first thing before she starts doing household chores. Depending on their location the participants are also taught what herbs they should take to keep their bodies strong. Participants in Chinamwali, are not allowed to add salt to cooking food during their menstrual cycle for health reasons. The young women are also taken through dating issues. They learn about what dating is, including who to date and how to date. They are encouraged to share their social lives with the mentors so that they are directed to healthy relationships and how to nurture them. In all the provinces visited, pulling of the labia is very common.

3.7.1 DISCUSSION ON NHANGA CURRICULUM

The curriculum highlighted in this section is centred mostly on what should be done by a woman when she gets married. She should be able to please the man and fend for her family. The wife should be submissive to the husband and she does not have any say when it comes to sex. The curriculum highlighted across the country was centred on marriage and issues around marriage. This finding tallies quite well with the findings of Shoko (2016), and Johnston (1982). The scholars, as already alluded to in Chapter Two, showed that issues to do with marriage formed the pride of African teaching. There is nothing wrong with learning about marriage issues as marriage is the bedrock of many issues that support peace, stability and development but modern society should be seen to widen this curriculum as has been alluded to by some respondents in this chapter on the challenges of Nhangwa. In Murewa, Mashonaland East and Shamva, Mashonaland Central, it was noted that the curriculum is widening with the inclusion of issues to do with women empowerment and education rather than focusing on pleasing the husband. This would see women rising to the economic demands in the country and globally allowing them to compete positively and effectively in line with human development approaches guiding this documentation.

3.8 MENTOR IN THE NHANGA / IXHIBA

Mentors in the traditional Nhangwa were mainly the elder women in the community or the women in the homestead. The mother of the girl was the first mentor to the girl and would teach her almost all the basics. The mother would also be assisted by two other relatives who were close to the girl, especially the grandmother of the child, usually from the father's side. This was considered the main mentor of the girl child. She would be responsible for teaching her almost everything she needed to know. If the grandmother passed away the responsibility of mentoring the girl was taken by the aunt. The aunt was responsible for teaching the girl child everything and when it came to marriage time the aunt was responsible for taking the girl child to her new home. Mentorship was family rooted and it involved the women within that particular family. These three mentors; mother, aunt and grandmother taught the girl child.

Various options were given on how the mentors for the Nhangwa/Ixhiba should be selected and who would do the selection of the mentors. Different methods were suggested by the various groups and individuals. Some of the methods were common to several groups but others were different. On the appointment of the mentors in the Nhangwa, the young women practicing Nhangwa in Mashonaland East were of the opinion that the girls and young women should select the mentors. They were loud and clear on this and went on to say imposed mentors could lead to low attendance. On the other hand, young women and girls in Binga did not mind who the mentor was, but they wanted someone who was knowledgeable with current trends. Other respondents like the women who are not attending the Nhangwa session were of the opinion that it should be any woman who is a role model within the community. A chief in Matabeleland South said the selection could be delegated to the kraal heads who would work with other ward leaders to identify the mentors for the centralised Nhangwa. A chief in Binga in Matabeleland North said he thought retired teachers or other professionals would do as mentors. A woman interviewee in Bulawayo urban was of the opinion that seeing that the Nhangwa ritual is now attached to the church, it should be the church counsellors who should be the mentors. A young chief in Mashonaland East was of the opinion that the mentors should be chosen by the whole community and this would give the community ownership and lead to their willingness to have their

children participating in the Nhangas. The Focus Group Discussion with men said they did not mind who the mentor was or how they were chosen, they just wanted a role model. The group of men were also of the opinion that the mentors should not be divorced women. This notion was debated and they ended up saying even the women from failed marriages could be mentors and teach girls and young women from their experiences. A young chief in Mashonaland East was of the opinion that the mentor should be chosen by the community as a whole and be someone who is accepted by the majority of the community.

The researchers further sought to find out what qualities should be exhibited by the mentor in any given Nhangas. A number of attributes were given. Role model was suggested by women who do not attend Nhangas sessions. Binga girls and young women opted for knowledgeable grandmothers as they have seen it all. Chief in Matabeleland South preferred women chosen by the kraal heads as they will select a role model.

Johnston (1982) supports this notion when he states that, "Chiefs came up with the Nhangas mentors" It is another method that can be adopted in selecting the mentors for the Nhangas. Other qualities of mentors for a Nhangas included someone who was non-judgmental, a good listener, a person who does not gossip, someone who has undergone some training in Nhangas, is knowledgeable about young women or girls' issues, has good counselling skills, is likeable, is exemplary in the community and has the time to talk to and listen to the girls and young women. There are a number of attributes that a mentor should exhibit and depending on the person, age and sex the attributes expected of the mentor differ.

Mentors in the modern Nhangas are not family-linked and do not have to have a family relationship with the girl. In the modern Nhangas it can vary from one Nhangas to the other, firstly in this modern era the first mentor should be the mother of the girl. Grandmothers and aunts can also come in as well. However, mentors in the Nhangas can be trained volunteers who have the know-how of teaching and guiding the girl child to make the correct decisions and, thereafter, live a happy life. Mentors in a modern Nhangas can also be peer educators. When people are teaching others of the same age, the discussion tends to be free as there is no age dominance. In a modern Nhangas the elder women can be mentors in the Nhangas as they share topics that require elder women's experience. Elder women can also learn from the young about aspects of young women's life, such as computers, in intergenerational sharing. Men can be invited to share and be mentors in certain topics in a modern Nhangas. Some Nhangas in this modern time are leaning much on the church and therefore the counsellors can be mentors for the girls in the church. Modern mentors should be trained to handle various age groups.

3.7.1 DISCUSSION ON THE MENTORS IN THE NHANGA / IXHIBA

The observation and the submission from all the respondents on Nhangas/ iXhiba is that there should be people to teach the young women and girls in the Nhangas. This is agreed right across the Zimbabwean provinces. The only difference is the attributes that the person who becomes a mentor should have. For starters, it is impossible to get a person who matches everyone's expectation. It also becomes difficult to reach consensus when it comes to the young women to have all of them preferring a single person. Even if the community chooses the mentor, it cannot be everyone's choice. Again the individual may be chosen but she may not be willing to be a mentor or may not have the

time. Whilst the community choice is a good option, one may think it is a form of employment and expect payment in return.

As observed by Bourdillon (1987) urbanisation is a barrier that may hinder Nhang progression. This observation is being countered by adjustments that are being practiced in urban set ups. The church-linked Nhang imposes the counsellors and girls work with these whether they want to or not. The Nhang is seen and linked to the church as a result of urbanization. The aspect of mentorship can be viewed in the same way as what happens in a school where pupils do not choose their teachers. Whilst the issue of mentors is central in a Nhang there is also the aspect of having knowledgeable mentors with skills to impart to the young women and girls. As such Shoko (2016) states that, "Age is usually associated with experience and knowledge and says Aunts (vana tete) were architects of Nhang and were mentors". Role models may not be skilful or knowledgeable. So when an individual is selected to be a mentor, whatever method is used, the next aspect is to train the mentors to have basic requisite skills and knowledge of handling any Nhang session in an interesting and vibrant manner. Skills that may be handy include those listed by the respondents in their expectation from a mentor. Basic counselling is one of the skills that the mentor should possess. The aspect of mentorship at homestead level is something that needs urgent attention. The girls and women who will attend Nhang or ixhiba will be coming from different backgrounds and the mentor should be accommodative, tolerant and patient. One of the Chiefs, (a lady) brings in the aspect of being mentored by the mother. It is very important for every girl that the first mentorship should start at home. The mother should start the grooming before the child goes to a centralised Nhang. Shoko (2016) states that:

... Elderly women were part of the mentors.

A grandmother and an Aunt are expected to do the mentoring but because of changes in family set up, an aunt and a grandmother are no longer staying as a one family in one homestead and this means the mentor has had to change. As a result, the mother, grown up sister or any female guardian in the homestead should take responsibility and teach the girl child about womanhood.

The other consideration that is worth looking at, is the use of peers as mentors. When a mentor is a peer in the same age group, the advantage is that the sessions are generally more open and the girls or young women are more or less experiencing the same physical changes and can share experiences. The peer-led mentorship group has a relaxed atmosphere and the peers may be free to air and exchange experiences. The only disadvantage is the limitation in terms of knowledge or lack of experience. One @QueenBestHerRoyalHighness said this when she contributed to the Webinar on the 29th September 2020, she said "There is need to breakdown stereotypes and have role models of women and girls" This summarises the thrust on mentorship, being open and consider qualities that will promote the Nhang concept going forward.

3.9 RELIGION AND NHANGA IN TRADITIONAL NHANGA

3.9.1 RELIGION AND CULTURE OF NHANGA

Religion is part of everyday life. People generally have the freedom to follow a particular religion or not. History has shown that at times there is the clash of religions, a common clash being that Christianity and Islam. It is not surprising therefore to find that there is also a clash between culture

(Nhangas) and Christianity. From the respondents the female Chief in Filabusi in Matabeleland South noted that every time she puts on the royal regalia some churches associate it with evil spirits. The Chief went on to say that there are some churches that work with them in the cultural village and have no problems with what they do culturally. The urban woman in Bulawayo Metropolitan talks of a Nhangas that operates within the structures of the church. She narrates of mentors who are chosen by the church doing the monitoring and educating the young women and girls as they mature. The elder women practicing Nhangas in Murewa see the church as complementing the Nhangas practice. They also stated that the Nhangas activities do not interfere at all with the church practice. The elder women in Binga were not for the church. They stated that some churches were doing all night prayers which see quite a number of girls and young women getting pregnant. They even narrated instances of some church pastors who are involved in getting girls pregnant and therefore saw religion as a hindrance to the girls' cultural space. Another observation by the Murewa women was the taking of some herbs in the Nhangas that creates another conflict. Girls in all the focus group discussions in Binga and Murewa and Shamva see the church as complimenting the aspect of culture and that some girls' issues are discussed in church.

History will tell us that culture, religion and leadership are always in conflict or are complimenting each other. In considering religion in relation to culture practice in a Nhangas one observes that there are mixed reactions. First the submission by some respondents is straight forward. They see religion as complimenting culture. As observed by some respondents the church as a form of religion has taken up the culture of Nhangas and is practicing it from a Christian point of view. Some of the activities that were done in a traditional Nhangas have been adopted by the church and the process is working positively.

Another insight is that all social entities should be taken as partners to the Nhangas. Social entities are the family, the village, the townships, the wards and the school. The religion one tends to follow is determined by one's family. As such as there is need to push for all the girls and young women to attend Nhangas there is need to engage the families. Let the family appreciate and have a buy in on the Nhangas. Other social entities should also be engaged, such as church elders, the school head and all other stake holders of all these social entities. The leadership should have a buy in. At village level the buy in by the Chief and the Kraal heads is a push in the right direction.

The church or religion can also be an area for conflict against Nhangas. As some respondents pointed out, some churches are anti Nhangas for different reasons. This becomes an area of conflict. Some churches promote polygamy and will not see Nhangas as a good thing, no matter how it is presented. Some churches promote and shy away from denouncing child marriages and as such will be in conflict with the Nhangas advocates. Churches or religion as a social entity are a key stakeholder and help in the running of Nhangas. The negativity is being pushed by those churches that are advocating for polygamy and those churches who condone child marriages. Some churches with sinister motives are seen to have hidden agendas like hosting all night prayers which sometimes result in girls getting pregnant as explained by the Binga elder women. Religion has a very big influence on people's lives and as Nhangas is formed it should not be ignored as an important social entity. The engagement with religion should not focus on the girls and young women only. It should target the leaders of the entities and engage so that they can help push for girls and young women's advocacy. The religious leaders should also be bold enough to advise other religious sects practicing oppression of the girls and young women. A webinar held on (29.09.2020) indicated Chiefs in various countries are leading and

championing positive advocacy for girls. The Chiefs as custodians of culture should be on the forefront on promoting girls space and discouraging forced marriages as one chief put it. One speaker also encouraged Chiefs and religious leaders to caution and advise each other when one is not doing the right thing. The aspect of religion, diverse as they are, should be considered and the Nhanganga concept as a space for women explained if girls, in their big numbers are to be carried on board with the aim of ending child forced marriages.

For years before the coming of the whites, Africans had religion systems that they followed and it was the traditional religion that our ancestors practised. Africans in Zimbabwe back then would drink and eat herbs as part of the religion. This fitted well in the rituals that took place in the Nhanganga back then. The religion allowed the girls in the Nhanganga to eat and drink certain herbs and these were said to make women strong. Religion back then complimented the Nhanganga. The elders in the provinces acknowledged that the girls were given herbs but due to lack of documentation they did not know the names of the herbs. When the whites came and Christianity was introduced some churches saw Nhanganga as a bad idea.

Modern Nhanganga and the church or religion is seen as complimenting each other. The churches such as Church of Central Africa Presbyterian and Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa, see Nhanganga and church as complimentary. The changes such as the ones mentioned see the church as complimentary to Nhanganga and have gone on and taken the role that Nhanganga used to play on board. They have sessions that they hold as Nhanganga with girls in their church. They have church counsellors who do the teaching in their Nhanganga sessions. In modern Zimbabwe, churches support Nhanganga. However, some churches are against the Nhanganga as they encourage polygamy and are bent on promoting early child marriages.

3.9.2 DISCUSSION ON NHANGANGA AND RELIGION

Religion is part of a cultural heritage which should promote dignity and equality of citizens hence no one should use it to undermine any one's rights. The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe in the chapters and sections covered in Chapter 2 propose observance of these requirements if girls and women are to realize and enjoy their space in society. This would avail them the opportunity to grow and lead in society as highlighted in UN (2014) goal number 5. It is to this effect that religion should not be a hindrance but a facilitator and provider of space as highlighted by respondents on cooperation of the community Nhanganga in society. It is good to note as some respondents noted that religion in other communities is seen as complementing the role played by Nhanganga. In Chapter Two, religion could also be bunched as part of civilization or modernization which is thought as having contributed to changes that affected the practice of Nhanganga (Bourdillion, 1987; Chimuka, 2001; Manyonganise and Museka, 2010; Gelfand, 1973). Certain activities could have been labelled satanic or unholy due to lack of adequate information on what they really were and their purpose. Today churches are common everywhere and have large followings, hence as a way of complementing Nhanganga, churches should see many girls enjoying their space without much struggle.

3.10 STRUCTURE OF NHANGANGA TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY

3.10.1 Set up of Nhangas at homestead and at Community Level

Respondents were asked for their views on the set up of Nhangas at homestead and community levels. Questions focused on position, identification and feasibility of the set up. This section presents the respondents' views below:

In Shamva District, Mashonaland Central Province the chief indicated that each home was supposed to have a Nhangas. The chief was also for the idea of a community Nhangas. The following were his sentiments:

When there is a home without a Nhangas, we make the parents pay a fine to avoid 'zviminamina, baba vanodya humhandara hwemwanasikana wavo' (incest), this is major reason why we chiefs have to intervene. We do not want a situation where a girl child shares the same bedroom with the parents or sleeps in a kitchen for that makes her vulnerable.

The response shows that in this community Nhangas was a must. There was also justification for its existence. Among the reasons given was the prevention of incest by creating decency for the girl child's space. Crafting a punishment for offenders probably helped in enforcement of this essential requirement.

A teacher and a cultural officer in Shamva District, looked at Nhangas in two phases in the past and today. He had this to say:

Every home is expected to have this hut. In the modern era however, let's make use of substitutes, have public institutions like a college housing a community Nhangas and at homes, a house with many rooms having one room reserved for girls.

The respondent brought in the idea of substitutes to community and homestead Nhangas by suggesting construction of Nhangas in public institutions like colleges and reserving a room in modern houses respectively. Shamva has a centralised Nhangas and what they do not have is a structure for their meeting. Almost all the respondents spoke well about a centralised Nhangas. This idea of incorporating Nhangas in existing public institutions was also highlighted by respondents below. This idea would ensure the needs of the girl child are catered for at places where they spent most of their time. This could also provide the much needed support for girls learning or working in those institutions.

The male focus group discussion in Shamva District, stated that:

At a homestead Nhangas is found as a stand-alone hut. This hut is usually round in shape and well decorated.

The chief in Murewa District, placed great hope on the formulation of by-laws, which was in progress, to help enforce setting up of homestead and community based Nhangas. He castigated a situation where parents shared a room with a girl child. Following are his views:

This practice of sharing a room with a girl child results in incest. In the past, Nhangas was quickly identified as a hut with many decorations, today, however, a 'spare' room serves as a Nhangas.

The chief's views are not different from the Chief from Shamva District's views already covered on the rationale for establishment of Nhangas at each home. The issue of enforcement was also highlighted showing how importantly this concept was being regarded by chiefs in these communities. Murewa

RMT Centre has a centralised Nhanga that is catering for various Nhanga in the different wards in the area and this is adding value to the conservation of the cultural heritage, not only in Murewa but, globally. Urban girls in Murewa and the girls in Nhanga in Murewa in Mashonaland East, saw a centralised Nhanga as a big relief as it affords them counselling from women and other girls as they said they were staying with men who had little knowledge about women or girls' issues. The girl who was interviewed was very appreciative of what she had learnt in the centralised Nhanga. She said:

I stay with my father and it would have been difficult for my father to talk about these things to me. I got to know all about these women's issues from the centralised Nhanga (She was grateful for the Nhanga lessons in Murewa).

A journalist in Mashonaland East was very forthcoming in shaping the centralised Nhanga. She gives a wide variety of directions which the centralised Nhanga should take. She touches and suggests on this unique dimension of bring Nhanga in every space convenient. She advocates for Nhanga in war zones like in South Sudan, Nigeria, Cambodia, and Syria. She is of the opinion that is where there are girls and women in difficulties who may need space to share their sad experiences and vulnerability. She also states that:

Let Nhanga be in every space possible, be it at the borehole when girls go and fetch water, be it under a tree or be it virtual let it be in every space possible for the girl child and women to access with ease.

She even suggests a situation where older women in urban areas can sacrifice just a room to accommodate Nhanga for the girls in that area. The Journalist in Mashonaland East is also advocating for a centralised Nhanga that cuts across generations, boundaries ethnicities and even nations. At national level on centralised Nhanga, the Journalist in Mashonaland East further argues that:

Churches should be opened every day to accommodate the girls and women in times of need and afford them a safe space. Schools should provide space for girls to do their girls talk. Even in COVID 19 we should be observing protocol and talking about issues and create space for girls to share issues.

The urban woman interviewed in Bulawayo Metropolitan was for the centralised Nhanga and went on to liken it to the youth clubs that are in existence in Bulawayo. She was of the idea that it would work very well if treated like clubs and functioned like clubs in the city do.

The chief's referral in Filabusi District, in Matabeleland South, highlighted that:

Each homestead had Ixhiba (Nhanga) lamantombazana (a hut for girls). This hut was positioned behind the kitchen hut and was highly decorated. There was also a community set up for Ixhiba (Nhanga), situated in a cultural village near the chief's homestead. The grown-up girls were called together from various households. As long as they were of the same age and reaching the ceremony entailed them being grouped in in the community. All other activities would take place in this centralised Nhanga up to graduation time or day.

It, therefore, means that the centralised Nhanga is not a new phenomenon. It was practiced long ago and is still being practiced to date. (The researchers visited the cultural village and observed as narrated by the respondent that Ixhiba (Nhanga) the girl's hut was highly decorated). This was great evidence that the community regarded the concept of Ixhiba lamantombazana highly. This was a great development by the female chief which deserved support in any forms possible.

Centralised Nhanga as seen by the Chief in Filabusi in Matabeleland South is already in existence and what is left is the practical application. The Chief in Filabusi, Matabeleland South has a cultural village that is situated next to her homestead and has the Nhanga amongst the other structures that are there. It is said that almost all the Chiefs in Matabeleland South have a cultural village that has a Nhanga amongst other structures within the cultural villages. The Chief in Filabusi in Matabeleland pointed out that it is the centralised Nhanga for all the villages and all girls and women can access the centralised Nhanga.

The community Nhanga appeared to be a favourite from the views of these two chief's referrals in Binga District. They stated that;

'Hinzila ebotho' (this is good idea). This is so for there is a problem of controlling the young girls because of the human rights demand.

The sentiments of the ladies were in line with their chief's position that a community nhanga was welcome for the purpose of guiding the girls whom they indicated wandered about the community. In this area a community Nhanga was being viewed as coming in at right time if ever it was going to be possible, for it would help solve a problem that the adults were losing sleep over.

Urban young woman (upper middle class) from Harare Province, gave her views to community Nhanga mostly focusing on urban set ups. The following is what she said:

In urban areas we can have a stand or build a structure that is Nhanga and advertise or make it known to the people that there is this place. If it is in Harare, a central place can be chosen and the girls can know that they have a Nhanga space for them just like youth corners, youth centers and youth hubs. It should be in all provinces as a start then cascade to districts and wards.

The urban young woman (upper middle class) proposed an approach that can be used in urban areas in order to come up with community Nhanga. The Nhanga should be constructed in the same way public centres like youth hubs or youth centres are done. The respondent in this regard views the demand as requiring state support for it to be cascaded to all parts of the country. Such an approach would highlight the needs of the girl child not only in Zimbabwe but globally as it has potential of attracting international attention.

Centralised Nhanga is supported by almost all the groups that were interviewed and they outlined advantages to the centralised Nhanga. As the name may suggest the centrality of the structure or the meeting place is of paramount importance. Centralised Nhanga of yesteryears were not permanent structures but were girls' bedrooms and they would use one of the graduates' places. A modern centralised Nhanga must be centrally located geographically and be accessible to all community girls. Community involvement on its site and position is crucial for their buy-in and ownership of the concept. Once the community has a buy-in and sees the Nhanga as their brainchild they are lightly to support it and allow their children to attend.

Some of the communities have certain facilities like community-owned clubs, such as Youth Clubs in Bulawayo Metropolitan. Such facilities can be made to co-exist with the Nhanga or one of the buildings can be turned into a Nhanga. An alternative would be using the building for a few hours on a particular day as a space for girls and women. Some of these youth clubs are centrally located in the various

suburbs and would make excellent centralised Nhanga. Construction of a special house within the Youth clubs as Nhanga would be a special and welcome move.

The Rural areas in Matabeleland South have a concept worth adopting by all the chiefs in Zimbabwe. The Chief in Filabusi's cultural village that has a Nhanga ('ixhiba) for girls and 'ixhiba for boys is worth copying and applying. The centralised Nhanga at the Chief's place is, by virtue of the location, supported and belongs to the community and is centralised as the chief belongs to everybody and all are his or her subjects. The centralised Nhanga as mooted by the Chief in Matabeleland South is a centralised Nhanga and is likely to be supported by the whole community as the chief calls the shots and oversees the facility

3.10.2 DISCUSSION ON NHANGA SET UP

The response shows that in this community Nhanga was a must. There was also justification for the existence of Nhanga. Among the reasons given was the prevention of incest by creating decent space for the girl child. Crafting a punishment for offenders of this essential requirement probably helped in its enforcement. Manyonganise and Museka (2010) also echoed the preceding view by indicating that a lack of Nhanga led to many vices in society in addition to incest raised by respondents. The conclusion therefore points to the importance of this methodology and physical structure at homesteads as well its activities in communities as propounded by Shoko (2016) and Johnston (1982). The respondents brought in the idea of inclusion and construction of Nhanga in public institutions like colleges and reserving a room in modern houses respectively. This idea of incorporating Nhanga in existing public institutions can be viewed as cost effective and this idea would ensure the needs of the girl child are catered for at places where they spent most of their time. This could also provide the much needed support of girls learning at or working in those institutions. This intervention would help alleviate the problem of modernization (Shoko, 2016; Bourdillion, 1987) where beneficiaries of Nhanga spend most of the time in pursuit of education and employment. These efforts would result in creation of safe space for girls to enlarge their choices and freedoms for their emancipation, which is in line with the human development approach. The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe Chapter 2 Section (33) calls for preservation of traditional knowledge where the State must take measures to preserve, protect and promote indigenous knowledge systems of which Nhanga is one of such heritage based methodology. This would mean funding and any other support from the government for the construction and resourcing of these centres for the girls. Such an approach would amplify the needs of the girl child not only in Zimbabwe but globally as it has potential of attracting international attention

3.11 CHALLENGES OF THE TRADITIONAL NHANGA

Respondents were asked questions on challenges faced in the practice of Nhanga and among some of the issues that came up was the issue of religion. Other respondents, however, felt religion was positively complementing the purpose of Nhanga. In this section some of the respondents' views are presented.

A Chief from Shamva District in Mashonaland Central Province highlighted religion, poverty, new family practices and modernization as some of the challenges to the Nhanga practice. This is what he stated:

Some churches do not allow other people to participate in the grooming of the girl child but instead expose the girl child to abuse through early child marriages. Poverty is another challenge, as much as people may want to convene for organized Nhanga activities they are forced to venture into activities like informal mining in order to earn a living. In addition, new family rearing practices, where people no longer stay together as relatives, as in the past due to modernization present a challenge. Some aspects practiced long ago are now viewed as working against human rights and the constitution.

A male focus group discussion from the same district as the foregoing chief, placed blame on churches among other factors that act as a stumbling block to the practice of Nhanga. The following is their response:

“Chimanje manje” (modernization) churches and television work against the practice of Nhanga practice. They view the practice as outdated.

In Murewa District, Mashonaland East Province the Chief from this area, said in addition to changes in economic activities and up -coming of western education:

The churches, which are now everywhere, bring in teachings that make the practice of Nhanga to be sidelined.

Chiefs from Murewa District; Shamva District and a Male focus group Discussion from Shamva District brought in ideas which are not very different from each other. The respondents highlight the new economic set up as threatening effective functioning of Nhanga. This brings in the issue of new employment patterns that separate people from their families. As people desperately desire to earn a living they go to many different places in order to get a living, in this case the respondent indicated that villagers ended up finding themselves spending more time in informal mining that they could spend at home or in a space where they could receive guidance from fellow girls or revered adults. Cultural diffusion through various religions is posing a threat from the perspective of the respondent. A close look at the narration, leads to the interpretation that there is an abuse of religion in order to take advantage of innocent girls by exposing them to early marriage. Misinterpretation of laws or human rights may also serve as a threat to Nhanga as villagers may fail to separate bad aspects from good practices. Modern education which separates the girl child from home, parents and important adult relatives for at least 9 months of the year provides a threatening environment for the grooming of the girl in most preferred manner. Media like television is seen as taking over the role of aunts and grandmothers in having adequate time in grooming the girls and, according to the respondents, the platforms receive more attention as Nhanga is viewed as outdated.

A focus group discussion of young women and girls aged between sixteen and twenty (16-20) years in Murewa District, had a very interesting view of religion in some of the activities associated with Nhanga practice:

Some girls do not participate in Nhanga practice because they believe that in the Nhanga practice, girls pull their labia which is against the will of God, because if God had wanted it to be like that, He should have made it so. In the same vein some churches want early marriages and this distorts the vision of the Nhanga practice.

The girls felt that certain aspects associated with Nhanga in the past were against certain girls' faith where they thought aspects like labia pulling were against God's wish and hence they would rather

stay away if that was to be practiced in Nhangwa sessions. Child marriages, as a practice common in certain churches in Zimbabwe, were seen as another major threat to the practice of Nhangwa. On interrogation with the mentors and the girls however, in Murewa and Shamva Districts the practice of labia pulling was no longer being practiced but they indicated that focus was now more on girls' empowerment among other important activities being carried out.

A focus group discussion of elder women in Murewa District felt there was no conflict between the church and the Nhangwa practice but rather the two worked together to develop virtues in girls. The following is an extract from what they said:

Ndine gomwe rangwa, chinu changu, ne gate uye ndinoenda kuchechi zvinokurudzirwa ikoko ndozvinodzidziswa munhangwa. Hapana chakarevererwa pazviri ndinoshandisa pasina dzimwe pfungwa (I have my waist beads, oil container and my clay water jug and I also go to church. There was no spiritual ritual done for them and I use them with a clear conscience. In fact, what is taught at church complements what is practiced in Nhangwa).

The focus group discussion felt there was a complementary role between the church and the Nhangwa programme which is all centred on inculcating virtues in young women.

Men in focus group discussion in Murewa District were appalled by certain practices by religious groups, which they viewed as hindering Nhangwa practices; They had this to say:

Churches affect the Nhangwa programmes for example a man aged 70 years under the guise of religion marries a girl aged 17 years in exchange for a cloth (mutambo) worth \$20 dollars.

Technology is also hampering the Nhangwa practice for people now rely on this against the normal procedures encouraged by the Nhangwa process.

Men reiterated the same point highlighted earlier of child marriages perpetrated by certain churches as a challenge to Nhangwa practice. In addition, they also highlighted modern technology as being used negatively to counter the Nhangwa programme. Technology can be used either positively or negatively. It depends on how different individuals use it. In this case respondents thought it was negatively impacting on the programme of Nhangwa as they claim it provides alternative teaching seen as working against the ethos encouraged in Nhangwa.

Views of a focus group discussion of young ladies in Murewa District who do not attend Nhangwa were critical in the documentation of Nhangwa process. Their views represented how the modern Nhangwa is viewed by those not participating in them. Their views were captured as follows:

Quite a number of people no longer have adequate knowledge on the concept of Nhangwa. In communities where Nhangwa is being practiced, quite a sizeable number of people misconstrue what happens in those centres for example people think those who go there have a problem of being abused by their husbands or they want to report early marriages or even those who are needy. The work dynamics also compel some of us from attending though we appreciate the good work done there.

Lack of information on the role of Nhangwa in society is seen as threat to the practice of Nhangwa. The group also raised the same point raised by chief 1 respondent of work commitments and the need to survive as major factors that hamper the effective practice of Nhangwa. This recurrence of this problem

shows that people succeed when they are economically stable than when they are threatened by poverty. As we were further interrogating the functions of Nhangas we established that modern Nhangas are indeed offering a shelter to women whose rights are violated through gender-based violence or child marriages. Instead of viewing this essential function negatively members in the community should embrace it whole heartedly and information about this function cascaded to all, for any woman or girl can end up being a victim of abuse of girls through child marriages.

Focus group discussions with urban girls in Murewa District, factored in important aspects to the study. The girls highlighted special concerns that they thought were a cap to the practice of Nhangas in urban areas. The subsequent extracts are some of what they said:

Due to poverty young girls are left without an option to accept proposals from older men driving expensive cars. This leads to pregnancies and affects how we should grow. In urban areas there are situations where there are no rooms set aside for girls (Nhangas), and we have to go outside behind the house to create our own space, as we do that we speak in low voices because we will be discussing our secrets. There are also certain issues we cannot confide to our mothers and may prove difficult to do so to aunts due to work commitments. Certain issues about being pestered by married men or seeking help in making a decision over three boy friends may prove to be difficult or risky when you try to discuss with your mother. Your mother can say what did you do for him to wave at you? So as result next time it will be difficult to share such issues with your mother.

The girls highlighted poverty as major stumbling block to the practice of Nhangas as they become victims when they and their families cannot make ends meet. This exposed girls to unplanned pregnancies, diseases and early marriages. Urbanization, under economic hardships, further makes girls vulnerable as parents may not afford to build adequate shelter that provides the girl child with a safe space to grow and manage her life. Poor communication between close relatives including the mothers and the girls further complicates the situation of the girl child hence threatening the Nhangas methodology and leaving the girl child poor socially, intellectually, emotionally and economically. This puts the girl at risk.

The Chief in Filabusi District, in Matabeleland South highlighted family ties, westernization of African culture and refocusing of curriculum as critical to the continual practice of Nhangas.

Subsequent extracts are some of her sentiments:

Nowadays there is a problem. Loose family ties, where aunts and grandmothers' role are no longer recognized in their communities. This has left girls vulnerable without any one teaching them. This has been coupled by westernization of African culture where even what we wear has changed. There is general lack of discipline among the young as compared to the old days where a child was every one's child and could be disciplined by every adult in the community. There is also suspicion of witchcraft between the young and the older people where the former no longer trust the latter hence rendering the latter ineffective in guiding or grooming the former towards the expected standards in society. Another major problem is that of refocusing of curriculum from highly focusing on marriage to focussing on empowering the girl child through vocational skills that provide the girl child with an opportunity for self-sustenance and independence in economic circles. The school should also incorporate critical Nhangas knowledge for they spend much time with the girl.

The views raised are quite pertinent in the practice of Nhangas and the life of the girl child. What is noted in the sentiments are the gaps created in society due to the disturbance of the effective practice of Nhangas which boils down to lack of critical space for the girl child and essential empowerment opportunities that would result in raising the girl child to greater heights. The chief's views are in line with the Women's Rights Legal Expert (woman) from Harare Province on refocusing the curriculum to address key issues today that enable the girl child to gain autonomy and freedom in a global village to lead and not only to be led.

In Binga District, Matabeleland North, two referrals by the chief, felt that it was quite difficult to contain and groom the girls in their area. They lamented:

There is a problem of controlling the youngsters because of human rights. If you try to groom them they just rush to Binga and make a police report and thereafter you will be in trouble.

The major problem noted in the responses here were misinterpretations of "human rights." Under normal circumstances grooming or supporting of the girl should not be regarded as violating the rights of the girls. One interpretation could be that there was poor communication between the adults and the girls. Another interpretation is that the adults lacked a proper strategy to reach out to the young hence there was a conflict that resulted in a blame game. This scenario would continue, leaving the girls vulnerable and hampering the progress espoused by the Nhangas practice.

Women's Rights Legal Expert (woman) from Harare Province focused on the curriculum as core to the success or failure of Nhangas. The ensuing extracts were her views:

Current Nhangas as viewed from the standards of the past, faces challenges of lack of innovation and clear cut curriculum. The curriculum should move beyond 'zvavarume' (marriage issues focusing on husbands). Another challenge could be failure to pitch instruction to different levels of girls and meeting their real needs as opposed to dictates.

The respondent brought in a dimension of innovation and lack of clear cut curriculum as a possible challenge to Nhangas practice. The respondent's view is significant for any education system that remains static and fails to embrace new social trends faces extinction. The girl child needs a vast set of skills in order to lead and participate in the economic activities in the global village. This, therefore, calls for a broader curriculum to be introduced in Nhangas if it is to remain relevant.

History and Nhangas

Researchers observed that another threat to Nhangas was lack of clear documentation of Nhangas as a specific point of reference by historians. Where it is covered it appears it was done so in passing while covering other concepts. During data generation the researcher asked a popular historian in Bulawayo Province to provide written evidence guided by supplied questions on Nhangas/Ixhiba lamantombazana and the following report was produced:

OPERATIONALIZING INKUNDLA CONCEPT

1 Introduction

A community is a well-knit component of society and shares in common several attributes, such as a common vision, a common past, shared values, common objectives, a shared worldview, moral and ethical conduct and above all, a shared vision for the future.

What is implied here is the presence of a forum, both in the physical and virtual sense where minds meet and exchange views so that a common and shared standpoint is articulated so that the community or part of it moves forwards with mediated ideas, beliefs, practices so that the community becomes one that has a shared vision mission and desired future.

Among the Ndebele such a forum was provided for men within the context of *INKUNDLA*. However, that was a forum exclusively for men. It was as a physical site in the front part of a home, under some shady tree where men articulated their vision for the community, the challenges they met, strategies for dealing with those challenges and nurturing and investing talent in leadership development and methodologies for coping with conflict that arises from time to time.

Back then we should appreciate that Ndebele society was largely patrilineal and to a lesser extent patriarchal, and characterized by masculinity. The important role of a social, political, cultural, spiritual and economic role was acknowledged, and effected/implemented. Sadly, it was not so for the women folk who were regarded as subservient to men. Time has moved on and communities are at the stage where what is good for the gander is equally good for the goose. There is thus need to provide for a that would be exclusively for the women folk where issues pertaining exclusively to them are centred and dealt with prior to their sharing a common forum with men where general issues touching on both men and women are tackled.

2 Name for the Forum

Within traditional Ndebele society there was no equivalent for the *INKUNDLA* which was solely for men. Now, when it is acknowledged that a better community is where women folk participated fully there is need to innovate a sustainable forum for women and give it an acceptable name rooted in the language of the Ndebele and is sensitive to Ndebele cultural usages. The term *NHANGA* should never be used within an Ndebele context. Actually that was a term used in other cultures but also referring for men. It has to be acknowledged that the various ethnic groups in central and southern Africa shared a common history, cultural traditions and a common belief system and worldview. Save for the Tonga they were patrilineal societies with some elements of patriarchy.

I propose, at the outset that the forum be termed/named *EMTHONJENI* or *ENKUNINI*. There is some basis for choosing these names, though only one of them required adoption. *EMTHONJENI* refers to the place where water is fetched. Women were the ones that used to fetch water and continue to do so to this day. In Bulawayo there are various boreholes where water is available at a time when piped water is not available as a result of shortages in supply dams. The importance of water to communities cannot be underestimated and historically it has been women who performed that critically important role. Besides women were met at the well to share, in the absence of men, issues that related to them so that they arrived at a shared position as responsible citizens within the community.

When the girls took their time to come back home it was said are they using reeds to inject some medicinal formulations into the rear orifices of frogs-ukuphozisa amaxoxo. The term suggests there were issues that the girls were dealing with which took their time resulting in delayed return to their homes. Where a forum was not provided to them, they provided themselves with one within the context of their daily routines.

ENKUNINI is an alternative term/word that I proffer for the forum that is exclusively for the women folk. It is acknowledged that women may have to meet on their own and the girls on their own before the two get together where the girls take their issues to the mature women folk for advice as the latter have had experiences that they learnt from and may share these with their daughters, particularly those who are not yet in marriage. The term *INKUNI*, locative, *ENKUNINI* refer to firewood, another occupation for the women folk in the old days and still applicable both in towns and the rural areas. As in the case suggested above women created the forum within the context of their daily chores to exchange information where there was privacy-in the absence of men. Once again there was and there still is acknowledgement that there are social, political cultural, economic issues that related to the women folk so that they thrash out these before arriving at a common position when they will lobby men in order to improve their lot within communities as it is they who drive the communities. It is within t=such for a that they canvass for their economic empowerment, work out the best win-win strategies for themselves and their communities.

3 Significance for the forum

We have already pointed out the importance and significance of the envisaged forum both physical and virtual particularly in these times of Covid-19. It is acknowledged that within a community there are gender-specific issues which require attention by the affected, in the absence of competing self-interests. Some of these may be issues that pertain to female sexual health issues that do not require the presence of men. Within the context of these f women develop some esprit de corps so that they develop a common vision and approach to issues that affect them in the communities. It is within these for a that they develop and nurture bargaining and lobbying skills.

Conflict is a perpetual component of all communities and yet the members of those communities need to have the knowledge and skills to cope with the negative situation through conflict resolution. An informed leadership is critically important for the driving of a community through challenges and hurdles standing in the way of development which should be sustainable. This is particularly all the more important where women were neither to be seen nor heard. Well-crafted intervention strategies need to be implemented, which strategies will minimize alienation of the men folk who may then throw the spanner into the works. At the same time there will be sites of information and knowledge exchanges, both within the community and indeed with other communities. Problems encountered by a given community may have been faced by another community elsewhere. There is, in the circumstances no need to reinvent the wheel. Where a similar problem was solved another community may draw from those experience. Where there is physical or virtual interaction ideas are shared for the good of other less endowed communities. A people without confidence, self-esteem and positive egos are not likely to approach issues with a positive frame of mind. It is hoped that the forum will act

as some interactive space where the women and girls gain confidence in themselves and discover their potential and worth.

4 Instruments used

Here we should not think of instruments in the physical sense of the word. Rather we should be thinking of methodologies, strategies, programs and projects that are used to fulfil the aims objectives that have been formulated. We are here thinking of focus-group interactions, invitations to experts to deliver presentations on relevant issues that have been identified.

From time to time there has to be some monitoring and evaluation of the instruments that have been applied. The aim is to fine tune the adopted strategies and assess whether they work or not, in particular to check whether the results at the end of the day tally with what was intended as outcomes and results. This is keeping track of progress and for that there has to be documentation of the work being done. Analysis is best done where there is data' where there is qualitative and quantitative data.

5 Universality of the forum

A forum is essentially exchange of ideas, knowledge, fear, desires and challenges, among other issues. What is important is that the idea is not confined to a physical place. Yes, within a community that can and should happen. Importantly where it is a physical site it should be a well-built structure that is well equipped with requisite equipment such as seats, tables, laptops, toilet facilities, projectors, screens, breakaway rooms, internet connectivity and facilities so that the forum becomes a two-in-one, as both physical and virtual.

While the forum may be dealing with issues already alluded to above, there is benefit in planning for skills transfer. Among the skills could be handicrafts, agriculture (both crop and livestock), cookery etc. These will give women self-confidence and economic empowerment. These are skills whose products would engender support from the men folk and lend respect and recognition to women. That may become a springboard for them to tackle head on more challenging community tasks and apply the instruments referred to above to increase chances of success in their endeavours.

6 Negative aspects

The one problem that may arise is over politicization of the women who have come together. As Africans we are not yet at the stage where we tolerate opposing political stances. The focus should thus be development issues. Coupled with that there should be strategies that are worked out to prevent conflict and resolve it where it has broken out. At all-time there should be no women who then place themselves in the shoes of other women by becoming domineering, self-centred and self-aggrandizing. Bossy tendencies tend to destroy the esprit de corps that is needed to weld the members of the forum so that they walk together as a unified group with a common vision and approach.

7 Vision for the future

The one observation that we should make from past experience is not to advantage or empowering one group at the expense of the other. A good example is seeking a solution by dealing with women and doing so with no reference to men. All this is done with the full knowledge that the perpetrator of gender-based violence is the father and his son. In such a situation one begins to wonder what the aim really is. For decades now the gospel has been preached but there is no change in the situation to which remedy is sought and yet there is no change in strategy. It is clear the strategy that has been adopted has failed. Is the aim to end gender-based violence or something else?

It is imperative that the community and its beliefs and practices is taken on board and seek solutions and seek strategies within the relevant context using strategies that are informed by what members of the community understand and will go along with. Exotic, seemingly good strategies are like square pegs in round holes. A starting point could be a pilot scheme somewhere where the concept is initiated, studied and polished up before it is broadly applied after deriving lessons from a pilot project. Starting with broad based implementation may result in broad based failure. A humble beginning should be made by undertaking some situational analysis. Exactly what is wrong from the perspective of the affected people, the women and girls in this case. Precisely what is it that has gone wrong or has always been wrong? Who or what is it that fuels and perpetuates the untenable situation? What instruments, resources, personnel and amenable templates are required to effectively deal with the situation?

Once some start has been made there has to be some measures that seek to check if the planned strategies are working. This is where monitoring and evaluation come in. Corrective measures need to be taken before things go irretrievably wrong. The women require sensitizing to the benefits of the project so that they lend willing support. The successes need publicity so that other communities' interests are aroused and begin from a convinced standpoint.

Without doubt if the project is conceptualized with a vision, planning and contextual relevance it will succeed. Endogenous development is the way to go.

8 Conclusion

I hope the project will get the support it deserved. When well conceptualized it stands a high chance of success. The first humble steps should be right. The targeted individuals should be won over so that they lend their unflinching support for the program and are prepared to release energies to push the program to fruition. The women themselves should be the drivers and beneficiaries of the project. That means they have to be involved from the outset, design and envision the project and its benefits be apparent and in line with what the women sought to achieve from the very outset. (ENDS)

The areas highlighted in italics in the above report bear witness to probable reasons why most historians ignored writing about *nhanga /ixhiba lamantombazana* when it is such a powerful heritage methodology common in communities across Zimbabwe. Face to face interviews done in Matabeleland with chiefs and selected women proved that this practice is an essential methodology and in one district the physical space was observed both in homes and in a cultural village. Narrations in these communities were available which any researcher could record and present as an important

cultural heritage in Zimbabwe. The title of the report and the stressing in the subsequent paragraphs as shown on highlighted areas in italic as already alluded to show a lot of bias towards patriarchy at the expense of the reality on the ground or focus of the discussion. As the historian continued to write, he appeared to be having a debate on whether or not women had a space in the home or community in the same way men had. This dilemma may indicate lack of interest in the development of girls sprouting from the physical Nhangas into the outdoor world. This could also imply that historians ignored positive issues to do with women, and chose not to write much about them or to distort them as non-existent as a way of showing superiority over the other gender as reflected in the write up, despite the vast evidence in communities unearthed by this documentation. The historian seems to suggest creation of a space, which is already there, showing how much people choose to see or hear what they want to, at the expense of the reality at hand which is critical and can sustain the whole global village through supporting and refining women space. In general, the report turns to glorify men at the expense of women or try to compare the two where comparison is not called for, this scenario therefore makes the documentation and practice of Nhangas a challenge. This scenario justifies the African Feminist Charter for African Feminist Forum framework, that there are systems in society that work against women's emancipation in society and have to be removed for women to realise their goals (Women's Development Fund, 2007)

3.11.1 Discussions on the challenges to Nhangas

This part discusses possible challenges to the practice presented by respondents. Among the challenges were poverty, new patterns of lifestyle, religion, urbanization, and technology and curriculum innovation. The respondents highlight the new economic set up as threatening effective functioning of Nhangas. This brings in the issue of new employment patterns that separate people from their families. As people desperately desire to earn a living they try to be anywhere and everywhere in order to make a living. The girls highlighted poverty as a major stumbling block to the practice of Nhangas as they become victims when they and their families cannot make ends meet. This exposed to unplanned pregnancies, diseases and early marriages. Urbanization under economic hardships in addition further make them vulnerable as parents may not afford to build adequate shelter that provides the girl child with a safe space to grow and manage her life. Poor communication between close relatives including the mother and the girls further complicates the situation of the girl child and hence threatening the Nhangas methodology and leaving the girl child scarred socially, intellectually, emotionally and economically. This unfortunately put the life of girl at risk. Modern education which separates the girl child from home for at least 3 months from the parents and important adult relatives provides a threatening environment for the grooming of the girl in most revered manner. Media like Television as well is seen as taking over the role of aunties and grandmothers in having adequate time in grooming the girls and according to the respondents the platforms receives more attention as Nhangas is viewed as outdated. Some of the issues raised tallies with the observation made by Shoko (2016); Gelfand (1973) and Bourdillion (1987) who narrated that social cohesion in African societies were disturbed modernization that introduced in other settlements urbanization that changed family patterns.

Cultural diffusion through various religions is posing a threat from the perspective of some respondents. A close look however on the narration, may make one to interpret the situation as where there is an abuse of religion in order to take advantage of innocent girls by exposing them to early marriages. 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 2 section (16:1) calls for promotion and

preservation of cultural values and practices which enhance the dignity, wellbeing and equality of Zimbabweans. Where religion is abused to take advantage innocent girls by violating their rights then the future of girls is compromised. This will work against the interest of Human Rights based approach to development approaches that calls for empowerment of vulnerable members of the society and alleviation of poverty. The intended creation of girl child's space to grow, learn and realization of well-being is highly compromised hence working against the spirit of Human Development approach (UNDP, 1990, Trinity College Dublin, 2016, Alkire, 2005).

Misinterpretation of laws or human rights may as well serve as a threat to Nhangas as villagers may fail to separate bad aspects from good practices. The girls felt that certain aspects associated with Nhangas in the past were against certain girls' faith where they thought aspects like labia pulling were against God's wish and hence they would rather stay away if that was to be practiced in Nhangas sessions. Child marriages as a practice in certain common churches in Zimbabwe were seen as another major threat to the practice of Nhangas. On interrogation with the mentors and the girls however, in Murewa and Shamva Districts the practice was no longer being practiced but indicated that focus was now more on girls' empowerment among other important activities being carried out. In the past however this was the pride of women but the curriculum is now overtaken by events hence it has to change (Shoko, 2016; Johnston, 1982)

In contrary to what literature is saying in Shoko (2016) and Johnston (1982) where communities participated in community activities and set aside days when girls participate in these festivals in Mberengwa and among the Tshangani people, in Murewa and Shamva District, issues of lack of information and excuses of tight work programmes were reported. This, therefore, appeared as a threat to the practice of Nhangas. The interpretation of this problem shows that people prevail when they are stable economically than when they are threatened by poverty

The views raised are quite pertinent in the practice of Nhangas and the life of the girl child. What is noted in the sentiments are the gaps created in society due to the disturbance of the effective practice of Nhangas which boils to lack of critical space for the girl child and essential empowerment opportunities that would result in raising the girl child to greater heights.

The respondents brought in a dimension of innovation and lack of clear cut curriculum as a possible challenge to Nhangas practice. The respondents' view is significant for any education system that remains static and fails to embrace new social trends faces extinction. The girl child needs a vast set of skills in order to lead and participate in the economic activities in the global village. This calls for broader curriculum to be undertaken in Nhangas if it is to remain relevant. This resonates with UN (2014) goal number 5 and the thrust of both Human development approach and Human Rights based approaches to development approaches (UNDP, 1990, Trinity College Dublin, 2016, Alkire, 2005).

3.11 .2 Pillars that Have Sustained the Nhangas Existence

Family as the First Pillar

Firstly, the continuation of the Nhangas concept in Zimbabwe leans heavily on the existence of a family structure. The extended family structure has been the king pillar of ensuring that the Nhangas concept survives for centuries. The extended family has seen the grandmothers and aunts within the homestead hold and pass on the Nhangas routines and cultural practices to the next generation within the Nhangas. Mothers within the families have helped sustain the Nhangas culture in Zimbabwe.

Absence of family has a negative effect and is eroding culture and skills acquisition. Finally, the family formed the first socialization agent and school to the girl child and it has to play the critical role of sustaining Nhangas.

Facilities as a Second Pillar

The physical and social space that is being availed and was availed back then and now is a keystone to Nhangas viability. The girls and young women were naturally assigned a hut that belonged to them and it was respected as such. Physical and social space that communities and society will assign to the girls and women will matter and determine the sustenance of Nhangas. The security of the place and privacy of the attendees will also play a crucial role in the sustenance of the Nhangas Concept.

Mentors (Aunts and Grandmothers) as a Third Pillar

Willing and the readily available mentors to teach the young women and girls various things and skills in the Nhangas have been a pillar of the Nhangas viability over the years. The natural obligation associated with traditional roles of these stakeholders ensures the practise of Nhangas is not taken as an option but a must. This also meant community involvement and shared culture and beliefs. The first mentor in many homesteads is the mother. Other mentors that should take credit for the viability of the Nhangas are the grandmothers and the aunts. These are the mentors that have sustained the Nhangas up to now. Other members of the community coming and supporting the concept have ensured it remains relevant to date. Peer educators, as new entrants, are also taking the concept forward towards the acceptance and embracing of the whole concept of Nhangas

Transformative Nature as a Fourth Pillar

Nhangas concept has not remained static over the years, it has evolved and taken on concepts that are relevant at the time. The evolving of the Nhangas over the years has seen it remain relevant to the generations over time through a natural process of change. There was no committee that set up some meeting to institute the changes. They happened and embraced the modernity of that time. From one generation to the next the Nhangas has been passed on. Some practices were maintained and some were dropped as they became archaic and irrelevant to the times. This transformative nature of Nhangas has kept it going and has kept it relevant.

Cultural Phenomenon

Nhangas is a cultural phenomenon as it is a way of life for the people of Zimbabwe. Women, men girls and boys are all interested parties to the Nhangas practice and it is accepted by the entire community. It benefits the whole community directly or indirectly. The whole of society stands to reap benefits as a results of the outputs from the Nhangas from an African perspective. As part of the Zimbabwean culture it also falls in the hands of the Chiefs as the custodians of our culture and in these hands viability is guaranteed.

Biological Thrust

Some of the Nhangas concept leans a lot on the biological nature or reality of sexuality and the experiences that go with women and men's sexuality. When a girl grows up the various stages that she goes through she need careful monitoring and supervision. This biological or natural reality of Nhangas has made it a reality which cannot be ignored or forgotten.

Rooted in the Livelihoods

Nhanga is seen as part and parcel of the African daily lives that is taking place naturally. It affects the livelihoods of the families and is seen as a necessary concept that is kept going naturally. It is seen as developing the skills that will contribute to the livelihoods in families and for future families to come. Successful households are mostly credited to the mothers who went through the Nhanga upbringing. All the stakeholders tend to benefit from the output of the Nhanga hence the support from all spheres of society.

So, as long as there are girls being born, as long as there is a mother, who becomes a grandmother and who also becomes an aunt, the Nhanga will always be there. As long as the Chiefs, as the custodians of the Zimbabwean culture, are there and play their role the Nhanga will forever exist. As long as society realises the benefits that graduates of the Nhanga bring and their work in society in general, Nhanga will always be there. Cultural practices are dynamic but some are just a way of life, as is the case with Nhanga.

3.12 What Has Been Discarded

Nhanga has a special quality of being transformative, this has seen it remain relevant up to now. It also does not require a committee or board or parliament to sit to chart its way forward as it happens naturally. It is modernising on its own.

3.12.1 Genital Mutilation

This is slowly going out and being discarded from the Nhanga. Firstly, some of the girls are not comfortable with it. Some of the respondents were loud about being uncomfortable with the whole experience. Secondly, according to Zimbabwean law, it is a crime to force and undertake genital mutilation on a girl child. If the mentor is reported, she can be arrested. Thirdly, some communities use certain animal species as they perform genital mutilation. It is against the Wildlife Preservation Act.

3.12.2 VIRGINITY TEST

Linked to the genital mutilation practice, there is the virginity test. The girls argue that they are not comfortable with the practice as it will be prying into their privacy. They indicated that virginity can be lost through other means like sports or exercises. Therefore, it is very offending for one to be having their private parts manipulated as way of testing.

3.12.3 TAKING OF HERBS

The use of herbs in Nhanga seems to be discarded and gone in most parts of the country. This has been necessitated by;

1. There is very little that has been documented as far as herbs to be taken in Nhanga is concerned. The elder respondents confessed that they did not know the names of the herbs that were taken by people in Nhanga.

2. The current generation indicated that they associate the taking of herbs with witchcraft practice and hence they shun the use of the herbs. There was an indication that there are no dosages that go along with the herbs.

3.12. 4 Menstruation Materials

The use of particular types of barks as sanitary wear, chewing of some herbs is also being done away with as a result of the diseases that are now affecting people especially the women, such as cancers. This is being discarded as the more hygienic and scientifically proven pads are coming on board. In some cases, it was noted that the girls were made to put their first menstrual blood in a bottle as a way of preventing the girls from getting pregnant. The blood would be thrown away only after the girl was married. The girls no longer want to have their blood in the bottles and they feel it is very unhygienic and would also pave way for witchcraft. There was an issue also about the herbs that are supposed to be put in the blood, the girls no longer know what herbs were used. This then makes the practice very difficult to follow. The girls indicate that there are modern and accurate ways of preventing pregnancies as opposed to the use of blood in the bottle.

3.12.5 Introduction of Boyfriends to Mentors

The girls indicated that the issue of introducing their boyfriends to their mentors is falling away. Some mentors would actually reject all the boyfriends that the girls introduce them to because they (the mentors) would have their own choice of boyfriend for the girl. There is some favouritism as well as jealousy attached to the whole process.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at data presentation, analysis, and discussion. This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the whole study. Further, the chapter avails the new knowledge contributing to the Nhangas methodology. The purpose of the study was the documentation of Nhangas as a feminist and intergenerational space for advocacy, mentorship, skills building, and leadership in contemporary society. The objectives of the study were:

- To conceptualise and ground the historical and cultural foundation of the Nhangas as a safe space for girls and young women.
- To develop the standard guidelines for the application of the Nhangas Concept as a safe space for learning and advocacy on girls' and young women's rights especially SRHR, education, and leadership.
- Provide research-based evidence on the regional perspective and varied country experiences within the SADC region of the concept of Nhangas for replication and scaling up.
- Copyright and legal protection for the use of the Nhangas Methodology.

Data on Nhangas was generated from the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. The study mainly targeted women and girls and used mainly purposive sampling to select the respondents. The next section presents the chapters' summary.

4.1 Summary of the Main Ideas from the Chapters

Chapter 1 introduced and gave the background of the study. In the background, the concept of Nhangwa, its philosophy, mentors, the props, and threat to the methodology were highlighted in the context of Zimbabwe. The chapter also covered a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions as well as the objectives. The background justified why this study was carried out. The chapter further presented the significance of the study, its delimitations, and limitations and defined the key terms used in the study. Methodology that guided the research process was included in this chapter. Aspects included the following: research paradigm, research approach, and design, population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection, instruments, and processing of data. The chapter also discussed the issues of crystallization of data.

Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical frameworks that guided the study. The theories chosen for the study are the Human development approach and Human rights-based approaches to development. The inclusion of the theories was their strength in advocating for a free space for the well-being of people as well as reduction of poverty and promotion of equality which are key elements in this study. The chapter also looked at the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe and cultural heritage. The other broader areas looked at are the historical narration of Nhangwa and its position in contemporary society.

Chapter 3 presented and analysed data. This presentation and analysis were done in conjunction with the research questions of the study and critical themes identified for the documentation to be a reality. The first section analysed the bio-data of the respondents who participated in this study. This particular section was regarded as significant as it comprised variables which are considered to have a direct impact on the documentation of Nhangwa. The other sections in this chapter were based on the major themes identified in the generated data. Data were presented under the following themes: The concept Nhangwa, Nhangwa protocol, Age groups in Nhangwa, Curriculum done in Nhangwa, Religion and Nhangwa, Homestead and community Nhangwa, Contemporary Nhangwa and Challenges to Nhangwa.

Chapter 4 was a summary of the whole documentation. It synthesized and presented the conclusions of the study. The chapter consolidated the themes by summarizing the major areas of study to new knowledge by providing a framework for the Nhangwa methodology in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the chapter presented recommendations based on the findings from the study and gave indications for further studies.

4.2 Summary of the Major Findings

4.2.1 The Concept Nhangwa

In this subsection, the researchers were keen to establish an understanding of the concept of Nhangwa. The researchers sought to find how people from different provinces in Zimbabwe defined Nhangwa in their ethnic setups. Their responses were not quite different despite their differences as alluded to in the preceding statement. The responses mirror much from the physical to methodology and purpose of the physical structure.

From the definitions provided by both scholars and respondents, two parts to the definition emerge: Physical Space and Theoretical (Methodology). The two, however, depend on each other and their separation could be interpreted to be that of a thin line.

From descriptions, the physical space is supposed to be safe and secure where a girl child enters and closes the door behind herself and confides to herself or others of her sex without haste or interruptions. This physical space means a lot if the girl is to realize her dignity and identity. The second part of the methodology coming out from the definitions is attached to the functions attached first to the physical structure though it could later become fluid. The physical space or centre provides the first critical space for the most important lessons. It acts as a classroom, a conference room, therapy or counselling room, and later allows for outdoor activities or fieldwork that goes into unlimited space and time. This being the case, Nhanga should be defined from both physical and theoretical bases. Nhanga, therefore, should be regarded as a freedom square, a dreamer's space, a stock exchange of ideas hub, a place of equality, a centre of social scaffolding from girlhood to adulthood, and ensuring initiation into economic empowerment in several spheres. It is a therapy centre through various activities to reach out to the girl and women's emotions.

4.2.1 Nhanga Protocol

In this subsection, the researchers were keen to observe the actual practical activities done when one comes to Nhanga in Districts and provinces practicing community Nhanga. The observations were of good interest to the researchers.

There are several activities that take place in the Nhanga.

All the various individuals who went into the Nhanga observed this rule. They removed their shoes and walked into the Nhanga barefooted as a way of respecting the Nhanga, valuing the place, and respecting all others that are in the room.

Once inside the Nhanga, another routine is observed. There are no chairs, tables in the Nhanga. The Nhanga has both modern and traditional mats. The mats are spread and meant to be sat on. The other thing present in the Nhanga was the pillows, of different sizes for the comfort of the attendees. Some people just held the pillows in their hands, others sat on the pillows, whilst others leaned on the pillows on the wall. In the Nhanga the attendees sat in a circular formation. The circular shape of the Nhanga is meant to ensure that all are equal in Nhanga. It removes the power dynamics that any other sitting arrangement usually brings. In Nhanga all are equal, and everyone's voice matters and is listened to. To control the gossip that may occur there is a slogan that is sung by all the attendees. What goes on in the Nhanga, remains in the Nhanga (*zvemunhanga zvinosara munhanga*). It is aimed at preventing gossiping that may take place after the sharing so whatever is said in the Nhanga remains in the Nhanga. There is no gossiping about what was said or done in the Nhanga after the session. This is a rule that the participants sing and practice. It is like a vow that one commits to and nothing is shared with anyone after the session. The practical activities that happened in the Nhanga that include removal of shoes, seating arrangement, singing, and keeping of Nhanga secrets could have kept the social cohesion described by Gelfand (1973). When people treat each other as equals, respect each other and keep each other's confidentiality then that is bound to unite people in the community. The oneness and group activities narrated by Shoko (2016) and Johnston (1982) could have been influenced by the protocols in Nhanga.

4.2.2 Ages of Nhang

In this section, the researchers sought to establish the age groups that were allowed in the Nhang practice in the past and in Nhang currently taking place across the country. The respondents provided useful information regarding this question.

In the past, the first menstruation was a critical point that qualified one into Nhang sessions. This was a common characteristic across all respondents in the country. Another aspect that the respondents across the country said was used to see if the girl is grown or not was the development of breasts. As a girl grows, breasts develop. The existing centralised Nhang has various age groups. The content that the various age groups are taught is different and it depends on the age of the individual, not the presence or absence of breasts. In Matabeleland South if breasts developed early they were swept using a traditional grass broom and they would disappear and only reappear later. In Binga however, they were comfortable with the age of 7 years or more joining other girls in the Nhang.

Organized modern Nhang in Murewa had the following age groups:

Age Range

5	-	10	-being	the	youngest
11 - 15	-second				16
- 20	-third				21
- 24	-fourth				25
and above					

Observations are that the centralised Nhang in Murewa and Shamva Districts, are particular about the age groups where the various age groups are taken up and they are taught different topics depending on the age. There are times when they mix the age groups if dealing with a general topic for example “washing a shirt.” When dealing with other, sensitive topics they are split into the original groups.

The ages described in existing Nhang in Murewa and Shamva Districts, corresponds quite well with the need to inculcate virtues or values in the young ones so that when they grow the cultural values become a part of them. Literature in the first two chapters indicates that a person’s character, to some extent, lies in the tradition in which he was brought up and the experiences the person has undergone. The patterns of thinking and acting that have been instilled into us as children are fundamental to our instinctive patterns of behaviour in adulthood (Bourdillon, 1987; Dzavo, 2020).

4.2.3 Curriculum in Nhang

During the study, researchers wanted to establish a curriculum that made up the practice of Nhang in the past and present Nhang. The responses generated throughout the country were quite similar with minor variations.

The curriculum highlighted in the past centred mostly on what should be done by a woman when she got married. She should be able to please the man and fend for her family. The wife was supposed to be submissive to the husband and did not have any say when it came to sex. The curriculum highlighted across the country was centred on marriage and issues around marriage. This finding tallies quite well with the findings of Shoko (2016), and Johnston (1982). In Murewa Mashonaland East

and Shamva Mashonaland Central, it was noted that the curriculum is widening with the inclusion of issues to do with women empowerment and education rather than focusing on pleasing the husband. This would see women rising to the economic demands in the country and globally allowing them to compete positively and effectively in line with human development approaches guiding this documentation. A wider array of the curriculum was suggested for possible infusion in the modern Nhanga

4.2.4 Mentors in the Nhanga

The researchers sought to find out who was involved in the Nhanga mentorship, how they were chosen and how they should be chosen. The views were divergent but meaningful.

The observation and the submission from all the respondents on Nhanga are that there should be people to teach young women and girls in the Nhanga. This is concurred right across the Zimbabwean provinces. The only difference is the attributes that the person who becomes a mentor should have. Whilst the community choice is a good option, one may think it is a form of employment and expect payment in return.

As observed by Bourdillon (1987) urbanization is a barrier that may hinder Nhanga progression. This observation is being countered by adjustments that are being practiced in urban setups. The Nhanga is seen and linked to the church as a result of urbanization. The church-linked Nhanga selects the counsellors and girls work with these whether they want to or not. The aspect of mentorship can be likened to a school where pupils do not choose their teachers. Whilst the issue of the mentor is central in a Nhanga there is also the aspect of having knowledgeable mentors and having skills to impart to the young women and girls. As such Shoko (2016) states, "Age is usually associated with experience and knowledge and says Aunts (vana tete) were architects of Nhanga and were mentors". The role model may not be skilful or knowledgeable. So when an individual is selected to be a mentor whatever method is used the next aspect is to train the mentors to have basic requisite skills and knowledge of handling any Nhanga session interestingly and vibrantly. Skills that may be handy including as listed by the respondents in their expectations from a mentor. Basic counselling is one of the skills that the mentor should possess. The girls and women who will attend Nhanga will be coming from different backgrounds and the mentor should be accommodative, tolerant, and patient. The mother should start the grooming before the child goes to a centralised Nhanga. As such grandmothers and aunts are expected to do the mentoring but because of changes in the family setup, the aunties and grandmothers are no longer staying as one family in one homestead it changes the mentor. As a result, the mother, grown-up sister, or any female guardian in the homestead should take responsibility and teach the girl child about womanhood. The other consideration that is worth looking at, is the use of peers as mentors. When a mentor is a peer, within the same age group the advantage is that the sessions are generally more open and the girls or young women are experiencing, more or less, the same physical changes and can share experiences. The peer-led mentorship group has a relaxed atmosphere and the peers may be free to air and exchange experiences. The only disadvantage is the limitation in terms of knowledge and a lack of experience.

4.2.5 Religion and culture of Nhanga

The researchers wanted to establish if there was a conflict between Nhanga and religions in Zimbabwe. The responses depicted a dual effect from religion.

The study viewed Religion as part of a cultural heritage which should promote dignity and equality of citizens hence no one should use it to undermine anyone's rights. This was so for certain churches were abusing religion and reversing the gains of Nhangas. Other respondents noted that religion in other communities is seen as complementing the role played by Nhangas. Churches have turned into Nhangas and provide space and mentors.

4.2.6 Set up of Nhangas at the homestead and community level

Researchers were keen to get the views of respondents on the homestead and centralized Nhangas. The focus was on how these were set up or could be set up. Various suggestions and descriptions were submitted. Questions focused on the position, identification, and feasibility of the setup.

The responses show that Nhangas were a must at the homestead and a requirement at the community level. There was also justification for these requirements. Among the reasons given was the prevention of incest by creating decent spaces for the girl child. Crafting a punishment for offenders of this requirement probably helped in the enforcement of this essential requirement. Manyonganise and Museka (2010) also echoed the preceding view by indicating that the absence of Nhangas led to many vices in society in addition to the incest raised by respondents. The conclusion, therefore, points to the importance of this methodology and physical structure at the homestead as well as its activities in communities as propounded by Shoko (2016) and Johnston (1982).

The respondents brought in the idea of inclusion and construction of Nhangas in public institutions like colleges and reserving a room in modern houses respectively. This could also provide the much-needed support for girls learning or working in those institutions. This intervention would help alleviate the problem of modernization (Shoko, 2016; Bourdillion, 1987) where beneficiaries of Nhangas spend most of the time in pursuit of education and employment.

Nhangas as a safe space for girls and young women exist in several formats. There is Nhangas at homestead level, Nhangas at village or ward level and Nhangas at some religious settings.

4.2.7 CONTEMPORARY NHANGAS

This aspect was meant to solicit the views of the respondents on their expectations on contemporary Nhangas. The focus was on the curriculum or organization of centralized Nhangas.

Respondents indicated that the contemporary Nhangas should have features that are user friendly and that will give the attendants full maximization of the space. Space should have qualified people to deal with issues that need counselling. This should enable those in the space to be able to deal with issues that they come across in their day to day life as well as in the Nhangas as well. Conflict management should be part of the contemporary Nhangas so that women and girls can resolve issues within and outside their homes. The topic on conflict management will discuss issues like Gender-based violence, same-sex relationships which are taboo in our culture where one should be able to deal with such issues without being offended. Dialoguing in any form of relationship should be discussed.

A contemporary Nhangas should have modern features so that the women can use the space wherever they are. Wherever possible the internet should be installed so that women can have virtual Nhangas as a way of embracing ICT in this fast growing world. In a contemporary Nhangas, mentors should be trained on how to communicate with girls and women practicing Nhangas. Some churches have elders and mentors that work with girls and women. However, the bottom line is that they should be in a

position to impart knowledge and skills to the groups. The girls and women should be given the chance to choose the person they want to work with as long as they meet the qualities of a mentor. As a way of modernizing Nhangwa, any space can be used to discuss issues about girls and women. In an urban setup, any girls' room can be used as girls' and women's space. Some might even want to use a free environment as their space for their discussions. Nhangwa may not be expected to remain the same considering the cultural dynamics that are prevailing in the global village associated with human rights movements. What this implies is that contemporary Nhangwa should reconstruct and resituate to meet the needs of modern African scholars. This would bring relevant innovation that empowers and builds the dignity of the girl child by equipping her with advanced skills that allow her to navigate her way in various global economic matrices. As such, a virtual Nhangwa at a global level is the next progressive thing.

4.2.8 Challenges to Nhangwa Practice

Respondents were asked questions on challenges faced in the practice of Nhangwa. Several issues came up.

Among the challenges were poverty, new lifestyle patterns, religion, urbanisation, technology, and curriculum innovation. The respondents highlighted the new economic setup as threatening the effective functioning of Nhangwa. This brings in the issue of new employment patterns that separate people from their kin. As people desperately desire to make ends meet they go all over the place to make a living. The girls highlighted poverty as a major stumbling block to the practice of Nhangwa as they become victims when they and their families cannot make ends meet. This exposed them to unplanned pregnancies, diseases, and early marriages. Urbanization and economic hardships further makes them vulnerable as parents may not afford to build adequate shelter that provides the girl child with a safe space to grow and manage her life. Poor communication between close relatives including the mother and the girls further complicates the situation of the girl child, threatening the Nhangwa methodology. This exposes the girl child as she is left vulnerable to all manner of abuses. The structure of the modern school in the same vein makes it difficult for the traditional functions of the Nhangwa to operate. In addition, other means of socialisation like the television comes into play taking over the critical role of the traditional mentors and further bringing the unwanted social damage to the girl child. These observations are associated with modernisation and tallies well with the views of Shoko (2016); Gelfand (1973) and Bourdillion (1987) who asserted that social cohesion in African societies were disturbed by modernization, which introduced urbanization in other settlements which changed family patterns and, in the process, brought in a new social fibre that negates the Nhangwa methodology.

Culture is dynamic and, as a result, how one interprets what is right or wrong changes from one society to another. It is to this effect that it was noted during this study that these differences brought about a challenge to the practice of Nhangwa. Child marriages and forced marriages as practiced in certain common churches in Zimbabwe were seen as another major threat to the practice of Nhangwa. Retrogressive leadership in communities as well, also served as a challenge to the practice of Nhangwa as they engaged in polygamous marriages as well as child marriages and, as a result, retards the progress of girls and derails women's empowerment.

The respondents brought in a lack of clear cut curriculum as a possible challenge to Nhangwa practice. The respondents' view is significant for any education system that remains static and fails to embrace

new social trends and innovation faces extinction. The girl child therefore, needs vast skills to control her destiny in the global village.

4.3 Conclusions

Nhanga as a concept was defined as both a physical structure and a methodology all aimed at providing a safe space for women and girls for social scaffolding from girlhood to womanhood besides initiating them into economic empowerment in several spheres.

The practical activities that happened in the Nhanga, which include the removal of shoes, seating arrangement, singing, and keeping of Nhanga secrets serve the purpose of keeping the social cohesion that unites people in the community.

The study concluded that, in the past, maturation based on puberty characteristics determined qualification into Nhanga sessions. In modern Nhanga, all age groups are welcome in the sessions. What differs is the kind of instruction or service that is given to each age group.

The curriculum highlighted across the country was centred on marriage and issues around marriage as what was mainly taught in the past. In modern Nhanga, it was noted that the curriculum is widening with the inclusion of issues to do with women empowerment and education rather than focusing on pleasing the husband.

The study concluded that in the past mentors were experienced aunts and grandmothers but due to new civilization this system was disturbed. The study further concluded that communities were dissatisfied with certain mentors currently mentoring in existing Nhanga as they felt were not suitable or qualified enough to do the mentoring considering the dynamic changes in global social and economic issues.

The study concluded that religion was, to a larger extent, complementing the Nhanga practice save for a few churches abusing their role by exposing girls to child marriages.

Nhanga is being practised in most communities in Zimbabwe with different approaches mostly affected by ethnicity, geographical location, urban or rural setting, and religion.

The study concluded that contemporary Nhanga should discard old practices that violate the girls and women's rights and introduce new skills aimed at empowering the girl child.

The study concluded that poverty, new patterns of lifestyles, religion, urbanization, and technology and curriculum innovation were some of the challenges affecting the practice of Nhanga.

The study concluded that there was a lack of documentation of Nhanga as a safe space for girls and women.

There was a lack of a framework to guide the practice of Nhanga in existing Nhanga centres.

4.4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions on Nhangas, as researchers of the safe space for women and girls, we would like to recommend and implement the following:

1. The interpretation of Nhangas by society should not only be viewed as a bedroom for girls but as a critical methodology that is meant to recalibrate the world's view of girls and women for the empowerment and dynamic global economic space.
2. Organizations, institutions, private and public, local and international should provide support for Nhangas establishment in every corner of the planet for all the women and girls in whatever space or whatever situation for social support, empowerment, and freedom of an individual in communities.
3. Nhangas sessions should be intergenerational and inclusive for all women and girls without any segregation based on age, physical appearance, or whether one is living with a disability.
4. Mentors and all the Nhangas stakeholders need to innovate its curriculum to have methodology, content, and skills that address modern trends of the global village.
5. Mentors in the Nhangas, should be trained to be able to handle various needs of women and girls.
6. Religious institutions should complement Nhangas Methodology by providing space and mentorship in the form of counsellors.
7. Community or centralized Nhangas should exist with the support of the central government, local authorities, churches, schools, colleges, business people, and individuals by contributing to setting up the Nhangas in every corner and every nation especially the war-torn countries all over the world. It will help in ending all forms of violation against girls and women. Institutions such as the United Nations, African Union, and Southern Africa Development Community are encouraged to embrace the Nhangas concept and help end the woman and girl child violations.
8. Parliamentarians, Councillors, Chiefs and Kraal heads should be at the forefront in the establishment of centralised Nhangas in their constituencies, villages and wards.
9. Chiefs as custodians of our culture should establish a centralised Nhangas within their homestead to cater for the village women and girls.
10. A contemporary Nhangas should teach the girl child and women skills that are relevant for their survival in the digital era.
11. Different stakeholders like journalists, writers, researchers, historians, school pupils, broadcasting, and all forms of media including social media are encouraged to document Nhangas in their different areas of expertise to help reduce the challenges faced by the practice of Nhangas.
12. RMT and other partners should increase advocacy about Nhangas by running competitions in schools, colleges on essay writing, poems, songs about Nhangas.
13. RMT and partners to promote visibility and of advocacy of the Nhangas by running with the theme Nhangas and making use of branded corporate wear.
14. All Nhangas establishments to use the Nhangas framework to guide the establishment of Nhangas, and the curriculum to be implemented in Nhangas be that of empowering the girls and women and protecting them from any oppression and abuse of any kind.

15. **Engaging the First Ladies of various Countries to be Ambassadors and run with the Nhang concept in their countries and having structures set up throughout their countries.**
16. Setting up virtual groups of Nhang by the current practicing girls in the Nhang and connect with other provinces, then other regional countries and other world countries.
17. Setting up Nhang in every corner of the world by the world's women and girls as a safe space and methodology including in war-torn countries.
18. RMT and other partners should strongly consider pushing for the boys and men agenda in fighting early forced marriages and establish GOTA - men's space.

NHANGA FRAMEWORK (A.S.S.E.T.S)

The Nhang Framework, adopted the characteristics of Human Rights Based Approach to Development (HRBA), Charter of African Feminists (CAF) and Human Development Approach (HDA), guiding this documentation. HRBAs aim at providing dignity and self-respect of the girl child as well as empowering the girl child in order to reduce poverty which is the greatest enemy that threatens the health and life of the girl child. These aspects have been infused in the framework by advocating for the girls' and women's safe space that allows them to gain skills and knowledge. The knowledge and skills enable the girls and women to practice entrepreneurship vocations that empower them to fight poverty and put them at par with their male counterparts in society. CAF charts the change women and girls want to see in their communities and how to achieve this. It also defends the rights of all women without qualification and protects the legacy of feminist ancestors. These aspects have been used in coming up with the framework by bringing in the aspects of evaluation of girls and women empowerment by the girls and women themselves through intergenerational exchange, that brings in all women and girls without qualification, during transformation and transfer level of the framework. The legacy of the feminist aspect is provided for by the documentation that is reflected through the syllabus and support, through implementation of the theory to ensure critical heritage is passed on from generation to generation in a systematic manner with the support of men as well, at all critical stages of the framework. Finally, HDA, focuses on enlarging people's choices and enhancing capabilities and freedoms as critical for improving people's livelihoods. This is critical for women and girls if they are to maintain and sustain the feminist legacy now and in the future. This aspect is reflected in the entrepreneurship, empowerment, and evaluation stage of the framework where girls and women should be given the role to evaluate their programs. In the process, they have an input in the designing of their development. The process should be transparent and allow free intergenerational exchange to enhance capabilities in girls and women at various stages of life.

The framework on the guidelines on the establishment of the Nhang as a space for women and girls takes the acronym A.S.S.E.T. The meaning and the framework on Nhang is as follows

ADVOCACY AWARENESS AND ASSESSMENT

The approach is to bring awareness to the communities about the concept of Nhang. It is the selling of Nhang to the communities and bringing about awareness on the Nhang objectives as a free space to share and gain various skills for women and girls. Undertaking a needs assessment of the need to have a Nhang as well as considering the numbers of women and girls and their age group. From the onset the inclusion of men in the formation of Nhang is very important, so the Committee that is formed to set up a Nhang in any area must include men as key stakeholders. Chiefs, Councillors and

the community's fathers should be consulted and some taken on board at inception. This helps in the advocacy as men convince other men on the formation of the Nhangas. Chiefs, Councillors, Kraal Herds, Ward Chairperson, Village Headmen are some of the men to be taken on board from the beginning and be part of the Nhangas Committee.

STRUCTURE

When the consideration of putting up a Nhangas has been reached there is the issue of the structure as in the place where the sessions will be done. Structure will also mean the standing committee which should have women and men to run the Nhangas. There is need to consider suitability of the building if it is available. If not, a site must be chosen where it will be erected, taking into consideration accessibility by all. The inclusion of men when it comes to construction is crucial and whatever structure the community settles for, physical labour by men will be required. The expertise of both men and women may be required in the construction of the structure from the ground clearing to siting of the location. The other structure that has to be put in place is the people who will lead in organising Nhangas. Who will chair the Nhangas and who will be the mentors cannot be overemphasized in the Nhangas. The involvement of the women and girls goes without saying as this is their space.

SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE

The skills and knowledge being learned in the Nhangas should be for the empowerment of the girl child and for the girl child to take her space without feeling inferior to the boy child. There is need for skills and knowledge that are relevant to the age of the attendees. The skills transfer should always be revised and match the times. Some of the skills and knowledge transfer will be done by people, including men who are experts in those fields, Skills like basic electrical knowledge, wood cutting etc, some men in the community will be asked to facilitate sessions that they are knowledgeable in. Skills and knowledge should aim at empowering the girls so that they can stand on their own and sustain themselves with or without a husband. Skills and knowledge should help women and girls take up leadership roles and help them to stop forced early marriages, gender-based violence, and all other human rights violations.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EMPOWERMENT, AND EVALUATION

The Nhangas operation has to be evaluated and the community that owns it can evaluate it. The outsiders can evaluate it. The girls coming out of the Nhangas should be the answer to the evaluation process. The grooming and the mentoring that would have taken place will be displayed by the girls and women from the Nhangas. Evaluation should be cohort by cohort and not generalised. Evaluation should also feed into the other components of the framework. If certain skills have come through and are appropriate, like computers, they should be taken up in the skills and knowledge. If fewer girls are attending Nhangas, the advocacy team should take it up.

TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSFER

The transfer is a stage in the Nhanga where the elder girls and young women and even the older generation share. The transfer of knowledge and skills may be going in both directions and it is an inter-generational exchange. The transfer is also a stage where there is the passing of the baton to the next generation to take over the transfer of knowledge and skills. Transfer of leadership of groups with the group and transfer of Nhanga organisation from one leader to the other, from the old to the new. This ensures sustainability.

SYLLABUS, SUPPORT, AND VIABILITY

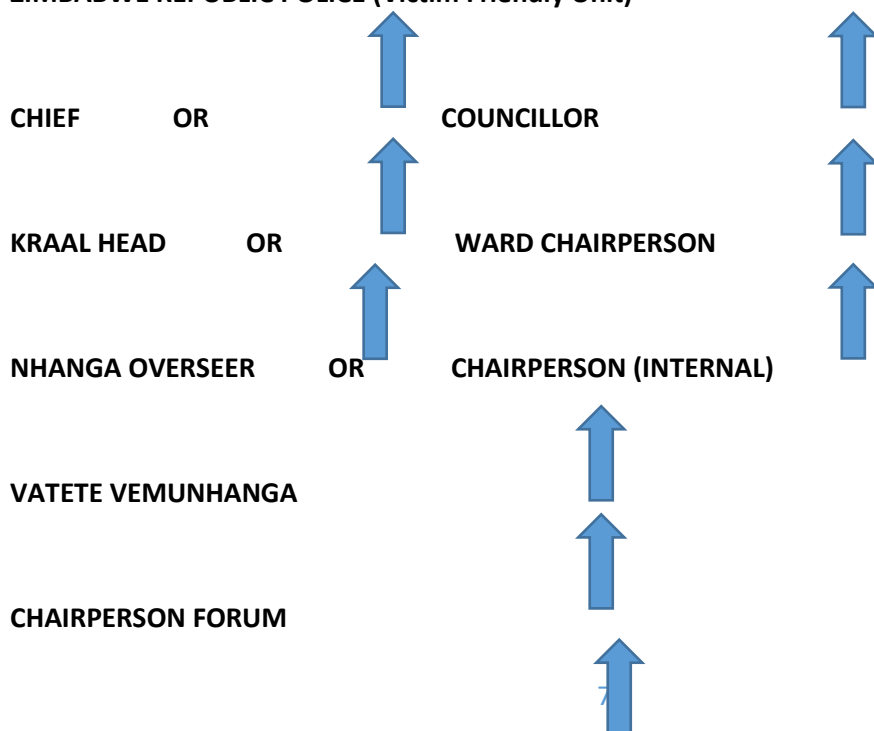
The Nhanga syllabus should be an open document that will require upgrading now and again. The syllabus should be reviewed more regularly as it accommodates the changes within society. There is a need for support of the women and the girls in the Nhanga in fulfilling the needs of the syllabus. Sustainability of the Nhanga also hinges on the benefits that are derived in this space called Nhanga. The sustenance of Nhanga by former and present attendees is a must. The Nhanga concept requires support from everybody in the community. The fact that it is for women and girls the men in the community should give their support to the Nhanga activities and the attendance by the women and girls in the community. Men will show support by allowing their wives and daughters to attend Nhanga sessions freely. Financial support in the same way the boy child is funded in doing his programs, should also be extended to fund the girl child in implementation of the Nhanga programs.

PROTOCOL IN NHANGA

Any social entity has its own way of handling its conflicts and disputes that may arise within, and the Nhanga is no exception. The conflicts and the misunderstanding that may happen in the Nhanga should be solved within the Nhanga as far as is possible. The reporting structure of the Nhanga also helps in the formulation of the reporting structure. Below is the protocol of the Nhanga. Extra ordinary cases of law breaking should be reported the Police and the law of the country will take over.

PROTOCOL IN A NHANGA

ZIMBABWE REPUBLIC POLICE (Victim Friendly Unit)



CHAIRPERSON OF THE AGE GROUP



ATTENDEES OR MEMBERS

The structure is that the lower person reports to the next person who is in the hierarchy up to the last person who is the Chief or the Councillor. If it is a straight forward case like, Gender Based Violence or rape it is taken straight to the police. The mediation in a Nhangas is expected to be able to solve the conflicts and disputes that occur on a daily basis.

The following are some of the Mediation routes within the Nhangas

- a) Attendee vs Attendee, they talk and try to solve the dispute or conflict (This should be encouraged as much as possible)
- b) Attendee vs Attendee and having the Chairperson of the Age Group mediate the conflict
- c) Attendees vs Chairperson Vs Another Chairperson and the One Chairperson Forum member mediates
- d) Attendee/ Chairperson / Chairperson Forum VS Vatete vemuNhangas Overseer Chairperson Mediates. This is the last stage within the Nhangas to mediate.
- e) Attendee/ Chairperson / Chairperson Forum/ Vatete vemuNhangas/ Overseer Chairperson, Kraal Head mediates
- f) Attendee / Chairperson / Chairperson Forum/ Vatete vemuNhangas / Overseer Chairperson, Kraal Head Vs Chief. Mediation by the Police Victim Friendly Unit
- g) Attendee / Chairperson / Chairperson Forum/ Vatete vemuNhangas / Overseer Chairperson, Kraal Head Vs Chief. Mediation by Police Victim Friendly Unit for any other crime like RAPE, GBV, ASSAULT and these should be taken straight to the ZRP.

As much as possible all other small conflicts should be resolved within the Nhangas. If a member is not satisfied they should appeal within the structures and the issue should be resolved within the Nhangas protocol. Crimes are taken straight to the ZRP.

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GLOSSARY

- Nhangalixiba lamantombazana----- safe space for girls and young women
- Mentor----- a woman who facilitates in the nhanga proceedings
- Nhangalixiba props----- items that were used in the nhanga during the women's discussions
- Munhu-----real person
- Hunhu-----virtue
- Munhu ane hunhu-----well cultured person
- Curriculum---- a course of study in the nhanga
- Hurudza---- an expert in Agricultural activities
- Contemporary Nhangalixiba---- modern safe space
- Advocacy---- public support for a particular cause
- Respondent---- participant in a study.
- *Zvidhori*--- shona name for labia
- **Kudhonzalixiba**---pulling of the labia
- *Bhobokalixiba*---- Ndebele name for first menstrual encounter
- ***Tusirilixiba***-----***very small birds meaning the very young children in Nhangalixiba***
- Centralised nhangalixiba----safe space at village or community level.
- Karangalixiba---shona dialect in Zimbabwe
- Tongalixiba---dialect in Zimbabwe
- Ndebele ---- dialect in Zimbabwe