

ABSTRACT

This research explores the tension between women's personal wellbeing, expectations and desires and the expectations imposed by cultural practices, customs, beliefs and norms. We know that there are harmful traditional cultural practices which violate the rights of women and that policies and legislative instruments have been put in place to outlaw these practices. Examples of such practices in South Africa include marriage by abduction, child marriages and virginity testing (Wadesango, et al., 2009). So far, the nature of interventions that deal with women's rights in rural South African communities tends to focus on advocacy and education, but fail to recognize the existence of intergenerational conflict among women. This conflict compromises the ability for interventions focusing on women's rights to have sustainable impact on the community and gives opportunity for further violation of women's rights through harmful traditional cultural practices. This study demonstrates and offers the use of Story, in Applied Theatre and Drama (Chinyowa, (2001), Fox (2006), Mutwa, (1965), as a tool to engage women on traditional cultural practices which violate their rights. It takes a Generational Approach (Howe and Strauss, 2007) to understanding the underlying causes of the continuation of such practices by engaging with the personal narratives of an intergenerational group of women from Ntoane Village, Limpopo, South Africa. Using Narrative Inquiry (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997), Reflective Practice (Schon, 1987) and Narrative Practice (Gubrium and Holstein 1998) in partnership with Story, women from Generation X and Y cohorts embarked on a four-day process which revealed how the characteristics and behavioural patterns of each generation impact and determine the positioning of women in the community and ultimately women's experiences of traditional cultural practices. The research findings suggest that applying a Generational Approach to social development processes in rural South African communities, as it proves in this research, may contribute to the sustainability of sociological interventions in such environments.

Key Words: Intergenerational conflict, traditional cultural practices, Women, Generational Approach, Transgenerational Dialogue, Story, Reflective Narrative Practice.