



A Quest for Cultural Emancipation through Traditional Attire in Mphambo Village, Vhembe District of South Africa

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ABSTRACT The use of traditional attire as a cultural and an expression of social identity has become more prevalent amongst female Tsonga youth particularly during traditional ceremonies and/or cultural festivals. This might stem from the quest for the South African youth to reclaim their African identity and ways of life. The paper sought to understand the drive behind wearing traditional attire, which is currently fashionable amongst youth at Mphambo village, Malamulele municipality in Limpopo Province. The paper followed a qualitative research approach which is ethnographic in design. The purposive sampling method was used to select ten key informant participants. Thematic data analysis was used to organize raw data into meaningful themes and descriptions. The findings discovered that female youths staying in rural areas frequently wear fashionable traditional attire called *xibelane* during festivals. The female youths enjoy the freedom, respect, and honour from elders through wearing *xibelane* and *nceka*. The paper also revealed that *xibelane* stands out to represent an emancipated social identity, which communicates one standing in the community and belonging to one's culture in a society.