

# Cultural Feminism in South Africa



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## INTRODUCTION

Cultural feminism is a variety of feminism which emphasizes essential differences between men and women, based on biological differences in reproductive capacity. Cultural feminism attributes to those differences distinctive and superior virtues in women. What women share, in this perspective, provides a basis for "sisterhood," or unity, solidarity and shared identity (J. Lewis, 2010). This unit covers the following cultural feminism topics: Cultural Feminism in South Africa, The Role of Traditional Women in South African Cultures, and The Historical Roots of Patriarchy, Chauvinism, and Tribalism as They Impact the Status of Women in South Africa.

This unit is designed to acquaint students with cultural feminism as a topic and to also inform them of the plight of women in South Africa. Students will be exposed to how the goals of South African feminists and Western feminists differ. Also, students will be exposed to the role of women in traditional South African Cultures and how their role compares to the role of women in the United States. Furthermore, the impact of male domination in South Africa will be explored and possible ways that women can free themselves of this domination will be discussed.

**Unit 4: Cultural Feminism in South Africa**  
**Sub-Unit Topic 1: Cultural Feminism in South Africa**  
**Scholar: Julette Bingham**  
**Level: Post-secondary and University**

**I. Introduction and Background**

This unit is designed to inform post-secondary and university level students about the topic of cultural feminism in South Africa. This unit is a result of a month-long Fulbright Scholarship research project in South Africa. Research included visits to schools and universities in Johannesburg, Richards Bay, Alice, Durban and Cape Town. In addition, visits were made to museums and local communities in order to develop this educational unit on Cultural Feminism in South Africa.

**II. Research Methodology**

Interviews, Internet research, library research, university visits, museum visits, lectures, community visits, university panel discussions, and cultural experiences throughout South Africa were utilized in order to fully research the topic of cultural feminism in South Africa.

Research Questions:

(1) How is cultural feminism defined in South Africa? (2) What are the feminist concerns of women in South Africa? (3) In what ways have feminist goals been tied to the South African Liberation Movement?

**III. Unit Overview**

This educational unit will explore cultural feminism in South Africa. In this unit, cultural feminism will be defined from a South African context. Furthermore, the differences between cultural feminism in Western culture and African culture will be examined. The unit will explain the interactions between nationalist and feminist goals and the South African liberation

movement. The feminist concerns of African women in South Africa, white women in South Africa, and other ethnicities in South Africa will also be discussed, as their concerns or feminist goals often differ.

#### **IV. Unit Objectives**

The general objectives for students in completing this educational unit are to be achieved by the end of the semester that the unit is taught. Students will develop the ability to:

- A. define and understand the term cultural feminism.
- B. explain the differences between South African cultural feminism and Western feminism.  
Students will be able to write a four page synopsis of these differences by the completion of the course.
- C. discuss the interactions of the nationalist and feminist goals and the South African Liberation Movement. This ability will be evidenced by class presentations by each student.
- D. distinguish between the feminist concerns of African women in South Africa, white women in South Africa, and other ethnicities in South Africa.

#### **V. Unit Content**

##### **Cultural Feminism Defined**

Cultural feminism developed from radical feminism. It is an ideology that attempts to revalidate what cultural feminists consider undervalued female attributes. It is also a theory that commends the differences of women from men (Alcoff, 2006). Brooke Williams is credited with introducing the term cultural feminism in 1975 in order to describe the depoliticization of radical feminism (Taylor and Rupp, 2006.)

Cultural feminism commends the positive aspects of what is seen as the female character or feminine personality. Cultural feminism is a theory that praises the positive aspects of women. Pioneers like Jane Addams and Charlotte Perkins Gilmer argued that in governing the state, cooperation, caring, and nonviolence in the settlement of conflicts in society seem to be what was needed from women's virtues (Ritzer, 2007).

Josefine Donovan argues that the nineteenth century journalist, critic and women's rights activist, Margaret Fuller, contributed much to cultural feminism. She argues that Fuller's *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) initiated the cultural feminist tradition. It stresses the emotional, intuitive side of knowledge and expresses an organic world view that is quite different from the mechanistic view of Enlightenment Rationalists (Josefine, 1985; Blickenstaff and Levine, 2005; and Wikipedia, 2009).

Critics of cultural feminism, particularly those belonging to men's rights groups, assert that cultural feminism is misandric in nature, and also claim that there is no evidence to support that a woman's way is any better than a man's way. Because cultural feminism is based on an essentialist view of the difference between women and men and advocates independence and institution building, it has, says its critics, led feminists to retreat from politics to "lifestyles" (Taylor, Verta, and Rupp, 2006).

### **The Differences between South African Cultural Feminism and Western Feminism**

Scholarship on the place of gender in African realities must of necessity raise questions about prevailing concepts and theoretical approaches. This is a result of the fact that the architecture and furnishings of gender research have been by and large distilled by from European and American experiences. Today, feminists scholars are the most important gender-focused constituency and the source of much knowledge on women and gender

hierarchies. As a result of their efforts, gender has become one of the most important analytic categories in the academic enterprise of describing the world and of prescribing solutions. Thus, although our quest to understand cannot ignore the role of western feminists, we must question the social identity, interests, and concerns of the purveyors of such knowledge (Oyewumi, 2002).

Feminists in Western societies have used their collective power to turn the private troubles of women into public issues. Western feminists have demonstrated that personal troubles of women are in fact public issues caused by the gender equality of the social structure.

Oyewumi (2002) stated that many scholars have critiqued gender as a universal concept and have shown the extent to which it is particular to Anglophone/American and white women's politics in the United States, especially. Perhaps the most important critique of feminist articulations of gender is the one made by a host of African American scholars who insist that in the United States there is no way that gender can be considered outside of race and class. This has led to the insistence that on the differences among women and the need to theorize multiple forms of oppression particularly where inequalities of race, gender, and inequalities are evident. Outside of the United States discussions have focused on the necessity of paying attention to imperialism, colonization and other forms of stratification, which lend weight to the assertion that gender can not be abstracted from the social context.

## **VI. Instructional Strategies**

A variety of instructional strategies will be utilized in order to ensure thorough coverage of the unit. The lecture method will be utilized in order to convey a general overview of cultural feminism to students. Group work activities will be used in order to help students understand

the goals of feminists in relation to the South African liberation movement. PowerPoint presentations will be used to show students who some of the leading South African feminists are. Videos, slideshows, book reviews, newspaper articles, and library research will be used to further convey to students the differences between Western feminist goals and the goals of feminists in South Africa. Guest lecturers will also be invited to speak on specific goals of South African feminists, which will include combating poverty, HIV, and poor living conditions in South Africa.

## **VII. Unit Activities**

The following activities will be used to ensure coverage of course objectives:

- A. Students will participate in classroom role-play activities on a weekly basis. Role-plays will focus on the interactions of men and women and how male chauvinism and cultural bias affects these interactions. Interactive classroom discussions on South African laws and how they do not illustrate the reality of South Africa women will also occur each week.
- B. Students will complete three book reviews of books on the suggested readings list or other books that are approved by the instructor. In their reviews, students must define the role of cultural feminism in South Africa. Students will be expected to explain to the class the development of cultural feminism in South Africa.
- C. Provide real world examples that show how the efforts of selected cultural feminists in South Africa have improved the lives of South African women.
- D. Students will summarize a journal article that pertains to cultural feminism in South Africa.



- E. Students will develop a PowerPoint presentation on cultural feminism in South Africa and will complete an essay on the impact of cultural feminism upon the rights of women in South Africa.

### **VIII. Critical Thinking Activities**

Discussion Sessions on the following topics:

- A. How has colonialism affected the status of women in South Africa?
- B. In what ways have women's rights been expanded in the post-Apartheid era?
- C. What are the differences in the women's movements prior to liberation and post liberation?
- D. Which major pieces of legislation have most improved the plight of women in South Africa?
- E. How have western influences affected the women's movements in South Africa?
- F. Who are some of the leading cultural feminists in South Africa? What issues did these activists represent?

### **IX. Suggested Research Activities**

Students are advised to focus on the following sources for further exploration and research upon the topic of cultural feminism in South Africa. Students are also encouraged to contact the University of Fort Hare and the University of Zululand for more information on feminism in South Africa. The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg is also a rich resource for further information on Cultural Feminism in South Africa.

## **Unit 4: Cultural Feminism in South Africa**

### **Sub-Unit Topic 2: Role of Traditional Women in South African Cultures**

**Scholar: Valarie Jackson**

**Level: Post-secondary and University**

#### **I. Introduction and Background**

Inequality of women's rights has long been a topic of debate for activists worldwide. In South Africa, male domination has long decided the role of women in society. This research will examine factors that attribute to the (1) role of women, (2) cultural differences, and (3) social change in women, children, and families.

#### **II. Research Methodology**

The research methodologies for this study are: (1) field study in seven cities in South Africa, (2) lecture series, (3) question and answer sessions, (4) interviews with diverse African women, (5) online research, and (6) reading of relevant print literature in local libraries.

##### Research Questions

- a. What is the role of a traditional African Woman in South Africa?
- b. How do tribalism, tradition, and religion influence the role of women?
- c. How are little girls taught to view the role of men and women?
- d. How do the role of women in South Africa compare to the role of women in the United States?

#### **III. Unit Overview**

This research will provide students and future researchers with information on social change of women in South African cultures. Learners will better understand the role of women in traditional South African families and the social plights that hinder their progress. This research also explains the affect that tribalism and tradition have on South African women.

Lastly, students will be provided with the information needed to make a comparative analysis between women in South Africa and women in the United States.

#### **IV. Unit Objectives**

The general objectives for readers of this unit are to:

- A. define what a traditional woman is in South Africa;
- B. understand how girls are taught to view themselves and males in a traditional family structure;
- C. learn how tribalism shape the role of women in rural South African communities;
- D. discover how cultural influences affect the social order of women in traditional South African culture;
- E. contrast the roles of women in South Africa and America;
- F. connect the political movement of human right issues with social change of women; and
- G. have a basis to continue research on social change in women, children, and social change in South Africa.

#### **V. Unit Content**

The role of women in traditional South African cultures is shaped by tribalism, tradition, and religion. Many of the tribal customs and beliefs are male-dominated and male-centered. Women often find that their existence is defined by child-bearing, home management skills, socio-economic status, and service to the husband and his family. Even in today's society women struggle for equality and justice.

#### **Wretchedness of Womanhood**

Inequality is not only the plight of black women, but all races of women in South Africa. White, black, or colored-- women find often that they are subordinates in the social order of family and society. They also find that to become educated, a leader, have a career, or start a business is challenging in a male-dominated society.

From childhood to adulthood, women are taught to respect and serve men. Women are expected to be submissive to their own husband and their in-laws, because in traditional African culture, the in-laws pay a labolla for the bride of their son. A labolla is a payment in the form of cows or money to the bride's family for marriage. The labolla amount is agreed upon between the parents of the couple-to-be. Once the labolla is paid, the new bride loses both her first and last name and is given new names by her new family. She then becomes the property of her husband and is expected to serve him and his extended family. Sometimes the newly married couple will live with the husband's family for 6 to 12 months.

### **Men, Money, Marriage**

Husbands may also choose to marry more than one wife, depending on his economic status. Men who are wealthy sometimes choose to have several wives. The husband must pay a labolla for each wife and be able to care for all his wives and children. Men who choose to take on multi-wives do not have to ask the first wife (or any of his wives) for permission. She must simply comply or risk losing her children.

Women rarely divorce or leave their husband. They do not want to deal with the stigma attached with not having a husband. However, more often than not, many women do not want to lose their children. In South Africa, children are given to the husband; so many women stay with their husband to keep their children.

This way of living is more prevalent in rural areas than urban cities. In urban areas, women are a little more independent. They have access to more information and resources. They are also in the pinnacle of the job market. This means more opportunities for careers and more career choices and more opportunities to be self-sufficient.

### **The Ole' Ways**

Traditionally, women are expected to be stay-at-home moms. Even as little girls, women are taught how to clean and care for their families. All of their daily chores originate in and around the home. Women are responsible for all house work (i.e., laundry, washing dishes, etc.) Males are taught not assist with '*woman work*', even if they want to assist. Male children are teased and called derogatory terms such as '*sissy*' or '*fag*', if they help with any household cleaning. Even married men, who assist their wives, do so strictly in private. If a visitor comes by he will not allow any one to see him helping with any household chores.

### **Holding Down the Fort**

When men go off to work in the mines, sometimes they are gone for months at a time. While the men are working at the mines, women take care of the day-to-day operations. They care for the home, children, and extended family. They even handle business or legal matters that typically would have been handled by a man.

A good wife is expected to be productive. She must grow food for her family and attend to any cattle, goats, or chickens the family may have on their land. She assures that the animals are healthy, fed, and breeding. If a husband comes home and find that his wife has failed to produce for the family, he may accuse her of infidelity.

### **Women, Children, and Social Change**

Women must also bare the burden of caring for their children. Throughout South Africa, women are seen carrying babies, swaddled in blankets, on their backs. Yes, men father the children, but the women are the ones who nurture and raise the children. Not only do women care for their children, but they are also obligated to care for the children of their husband's extended family.

Women must also meet the needs of the in-laws. In South Africa, the parents of a man are highly respected. Therefore a daughter-in-law must respect and put their needs before her own. If the daughter cooks dinner and the in-laws come by, she must cook more food or give up her own plate so that they are fed.

A daughter-in-law must also dress respectfully in the presence of her in-laws and extended family. A traditional dress is a long skirt with a scarf tied around her waist and another tied around her head. This way of dressing shows submission to the husband and his family. If a woman wears pants or revealing clothes in front of her in-law, she will be chastised by the mother-in-law.

### **Role Play**

Many traditional customs and beliefs in South Africa may seem unrealistic to women in America today, but only 60 years ago, women in America also succumbed to many of the same sexist afflictions. American women were expected to stay home and care for the children, while the men worked. American women were also denied many rights, like the right to vote, work in certain career fields, or even join the military.

After the great feminist movement, America is now the land of freedom and opportunity for women of all races. Women are no longer bound by the many social challenges of the early 1950's. Women are now educated, hold key leadership roles, have careers, and own businesses. Some women even stay-at-home if they want to.

Unlike South African women, American women are not bound to extended family ties. Wives do not have to serve or reverence her in-laws like South African women. In America, married couples are expected to leave their mothers and fathers and cleave to each other. They

are no longer obligated to extended families. This does not mean that couples do not help extended families, but it is not expected.

Also in America, more and more couples are sharing household responsibilities. Some men are choosing to become stay-at-home dads. In this situation the husband and wife may switch traditional gender roles.

It is also becoming more widely acceptable for women to work. This does not mean that all women or races of women are receiving equal or fair benefits, but there are great strides in these efforts.

In South Africa, equality rights are currently being sought. Feminist acts have been passed to help, but woman still encounter many real life situations that oppose the advancements of those acts. The hope for this newly democratic country is for change and justice.

## **VI. Instructional Strategies**

Students may be taught by an array of instructional modes. Recommended instructions are face-to-face, interactive video, and online. Face-to-face classes will be taught by an instructor in the classroom during school hours. Interactive video must classes be scheduled at time that is convenient for both instructor and students. Teachers must also have a facilitator at remote locations. Lastly, online instruction should allow unlimited access to research materials. Any tests, discussions, or online chat session should be organized online at times when all students can participate.

## **VII. Unit Activities**

The following activities are recommended to ensure that students have learned the role of women in traditional South African cultures.

- A. Dedicate six weeks to studying social change of women, children, and families in South Africa.
- B. Read three books on women in South Africa and tribalism.
- C. Allow students to participate in class discussions.
- D. Assign a poster project that allows student to artistically represent women in South African culture.
- E. Assign a seven page research report on the role of women in South African culture. Research paper should include references and bibliography.
- F. Provide a comparative analysis between women in South Africa cultures and women in the United States.

### **VIII. Critical Thinking Activities**

- A. What role do women play in traditional South African cultures?
- B. How does tribalism affect the role of women in South Africa?
- C. Does race, socio-economics, or proximity affect the roles of women in South Africa?
- D. What are the differences and similarities between women in South Africa and women in America?
- E. What are women in South Africa taught as little girls?
- F. How are women taught to view men?
- G. What advancement have women made since South Africa became democratic?
- H. What contribution have women made in South African job industries?
- I. What are some recommended changes for women in South African cultures?

### **IX. Suggested Research Activities**



Students should further their research. Listed below are just a few recommended readings. Additional research may be found at local library or on the Internet. Student may also want to contact the University of Zululand or Fort Hare University for additional insight on women in South Africa.

## **Unit 4: Cultural Feminism in South Africa**

### **Sub-Unit Topic 3: Historical Roots of Patriarchy, Chauvinism and Tribalism as they Impact the Status of Women in South Africa**

**Scholar: Marisa Gamblin**

**Level: Secondary School**

#### **I. Introduction and Background**

In thinking about patriarchy, chauvinism and tribalism as they impact the status of women in South Africa one has to bear in mind that the South African society is diverse and therefore the roles of women differ in terms of their race and class, among other variables. However, this unit discusses the relegation of most women to a subservient role. This unit also infers that a transformation of the traditional conditions of women will not happen automatically and the essentialist view of differences between men and women is still impacting the lives of South African women.

#### **II. Research Methodology**

In order to develop this unit, the following research methodologies were applied:

1. online research, 2. lectures in South African Universities, 3. library research, 4. museums visits and cultural experiences throughout South Africa, 5. reading of local newspapers, 6. interviews with local women and men belonging to diverse social, racial, economical backgrounds, 7. interviews with South African professors and university students.

#### Research Questions:

1. How are conditions of women in South Africa socially determined?
2. Is violence against South African women due to patriarchal control?
3. How can South African women break free from male domination?

### **III. Unit Overview**

Patriarchy is the authority of men and fathers over the family. The rule of the father, and women follow male-oriented rules. In the patriarchal system women are regarded as second-class citizens. Their dreams and hopes are usually ignored in deference to men and the demands of their children and extended families. Under these circumstances, women are trained to internalize beliefs of inferiority and incapacity. Feelings that they are not good-looking enough, smart enough, or worthy enough outline the lives of many women, feelings that prevent them from pursuing a life of freedom and fulfillment.

### **IV. Unit Objectives**

The general objectives for students in completing this educational unit are to be achieved by the end of the semester that the unit is taught. Students will develop the ability to:

- A. define, compare and contrast the unit's major terms: chauvinism, tribalism, and patriarchy;
- B. identify which women most suffer from the impact of male domination;
- C. discuss alternative routes that could facilitate South African women's liberation; and
- D. discuss and debate critical thinking questions.

### **V. Unit Content**

#### **Patriarchy**

In South Africa, while there is the overwhelming system of patriarchy, different women experience different forms of male domination and oppression according to their class, status, religion, race and even ethnic and cultural backgrounds. For example, white, middle class women will experience patriarchy differently from rural African women.

Laure, a single white female, works as a hotel front desk clerk. She lives with her parents and is engaged. She and her fiancé are sharing the cost of their coming wedding. He will

pay a dowry. She expects to share the responsibility and rights of their household. She states that her mother is a housewife but is free to express herself, co-manage the house expenses with her father, and share the responsibilities of raising a family.

### **Chauvinism**

N. Zulu from the Zulu tribe is a twenty-one year old black female. She goes to a school of law and has high dreams to achieve financial and emotional freedom. Although she wants to be a mother in the future, she says she has no desire to get married for witnessing the hardships married women around her go through.

B. Mutsi and B. Chooremang are two female middle-age friends. They are seen selling items in their local street market. Mutsi states that she has children and lives with an abusive boyfriend who also cheats on her. When asked why she remains in the relationship, she states she is afraid of retaliation and that her money is not enough to support her and her children. Chooeremang, however, says that her status of a married woman allows her to have a more supportive partner.

The reality of the situation in South Africa regarding issues of race, class, privilege and power, which exemplified the old South Africa, is still very prevalent today.

### **Breaking free from patriarchy**

The main paths to break free from patriarchy, chauvinism, and tribalism are through information and financial stability. South African women constitute a large percentage of the informal economy. Home-based tasks, child care, collecting firewood and water, subsistence farming, taking care of older dependents are all tasks that are systematically omitted in the broad analysis of women's contribution to the economy. The multiple burdens of black African women excluded women from access to credit, ownership of

land, educational opportunities and skills development.

Dr. T. April from the University of Fort Hare, Alice, clarified that theoretically women do have access to credit, however banking institutions have biased view of women's potential, labeling them as high-risk, unstable and therefore, they are denied the opportunity to receive fair loans, discharged of abusive interested. Wendy Knowler, a journalist of the Cape Times newspaper reinforces this thinking by stating that poor women are not only considered high risk, hence inviting the highest rates. They are also less sophisticated and more easily duped than richer, more educated people.

Women who entered the competitive labor market are also subjected to poorer working conditions, bordering on the exploitation of cheap labor (Taylor, 2007).

Eurice and Leratofemale are hotel chambermaids in their early twenties. They are thankful they have a full-time job but admit their salaries of R1400 a month each afford them to only buy basic groceries. Despite their contribution to the household expenses they regard themselves as being disrespected and abused by their partners.

Five black hotel female cooks unanimously agreed that women suffer abuse from men. Zuleka is very verbal and emphasizes that abuse does not only come from men they are associated with: they can be assaulted on the streets by men willing to violate and rob them. She says that alcoholism plays a huge role in this behavior.

## **VI. Instructional Strategies**

The instructional strategies developed for this unit takes in consideration the students' diverse learning styles so that all students can participate and ultimately benefit from the instruction. The instruction will be delivered as follows:

### **A. Auditory Learners**

Short oral description of South African women's role in traditional African culture, historical roots of patriarchy, chauvinism, and tribalism as they impact on the status of women presented by the instructor.

**B. Visual Learners**

Presentation of videos that will illustrate women, family, and cultural changes. Students are motivated to make comments and ask questions as the Visual presentation is delivered.

**C. Kinesthetic Learners**

Passing around of pictures and craft items illustrating women's role and work in South Africa. Different groups of students receive different items (arts craft, photos). Groups exchange the items.

**D. All Learning Styles**

Debate about current issues involving the role of women in South Africa culture. Based on what was said, seen, and manipulated, students will be able to originate a debate with the instructor's guidance.

## **VII. Unit Activities**

The following activities will be used to ensure coverage of course objectives:

- A. Students will be introduced to the topic of historical roots of patriarchy, chauvinism, and tribalism in South Africa through a brief lecture
- B. delivered by the instructor.
- C. Students will watch and participate in a video presentation.
- D. Students will discuss and debate patriarchy, chauvinism, and tribalism in
- E. South Africa as they impact the status of women. Students will provide
- F. examples that reflect to their own culture.
- G. Students will develop a PowerPoint presentation to other classrooms'
- H. students and school administrators.

## **VIII. Critical Thinking Activities**

- A. Violence against women. Is it due to patriarchal control?

South Africa has the highest reported rape rates in the world. The statistics reveal that one woman is raped every twenty-six minutes. Some 50,000 women now report being raped in the country of 48 million people every year. South Africans still struggle to defend such basic rights as that of a woman to wear miniskirts without being harassed. May 31, 2009 Johannesburg newspaper reported that hundreds of women marched in the downtown capital city to protest against the rape of a young woman by five taxi drivers allegedly for showing “too much skin”. Her assailants allegedly molested the woman while pouring alcohol over her head and calling her names. The protesters claimed the right of a woman to wear miniskirts without being harassed. A male version sounds live: “As a person, men have to control their feelings. However, it is difficult when women are naked. That’s how some men end up raping women”. The fact is that it has nothing to do with clothes. It has everything to do with patriarchal control, a patriarchal entitlement to women’s bodies.

B. What to hope for in the near future?

The masculine visions of culture have been espoused not only by patriarchs who endorse or practice Sharia Law, by politicians who reprimand “their women” for capitulating to “western feminism”, or by threatened men demanding that African women return to their “rightful” place in the home. As Nana Wilvon-Tagoe demonstrates in her analysis of dominant narratives of the nation, the inventions are embedded in the African social imaginary and the repertoire of beliefs, images, and stories. We turn for imagining the past, present and future.

S. Nondwasi is a twenty-one year old male black computer science college

student. He states that he witnessed his mother being abused by his father until the day he

left her. He would come home drunk and pick any reason to argue and batter her. He believes she will not follow his father's path but when asked if the hundreds of other young black male students, studying in the same computer laboratory we were, would discontinue the pattern, he did not hesitate to say that from the environment that surrounds them all, the legacy of male domination and abuse will continue.

C. How to involve women in policy making that enables female South Africans to break free from male domination?

Women make up 30% of the national parliament and nearly half of the parliament. Women are competing in formerly male sports such as rugby and football. More and more women are becoming bus drivers and miners. Still about 50,000 women seek help for domestic violence every year.

Many believe progress is being reversed as men battle to come to terms with the female sex's new found role in society. The power of women in politics has enabled the creation of counseling centers to help women cope with their traumas, organizations and projects to empower women. However, Mrs. Montando Mesatywa, a black female professor at Fort Hare University, states that women face intimidation and not all women have access to these support groups. A woman, for example, does not have the support of the community if she reports her husband to the police authorities. Police are aware of the violence and abuse in the communities but are usually short-staffed with no adequate transportation.

The rates of HIV/AIDS infection are higher among women. Despite the best intentions of the government, the figure is constantly increasing. She states that an HIV



husband has the right to refuse to use the condom and there is nothing much the woman can do. Police ask if the woman screamed during the rape, if they did not, it infers they consented. Mrs. Mesatywa also states that women still feel unworthy and that society is not making enough effort to change the mindset of men.

#### **IX. Suggested Research Activities**

Students are advised to focus on the following sources for further exploration and research upon the topic of historical roots of patriarchy, chauvinism, and tribalism as they impact the status of women in South Africa.

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