

# Orality as a mechanism of preserving SeMoshoeshoe Basotho History

Keneuoe Anacletta Motšoene<sup>1</sup>

ak.motsoene@nul.ls ORCID: 0000-0003-2382-294X

Received: 10 October 2024

Accepted: 9 January 2026

*This paper examines the preservation of SeMoshoeshoe, which encompasses the legacy, traditions, beliefs, and practices of Morena Moshoeshoe I, founder of the Basotho nation. It highlights the importance of preserving these oral traditions to ensure cultural continuity and transmit knowledge to future generations. This study relied on qualitative explorative research where desk research was conducted to find information to ascertain whether SeMoshoeshoe oral traditions are of value to future generations. The study found that the SeMoshoeshoe oral histories provide vital insights into Basotho traditions, historical events, societal norms, and cultural practices, thereby fostering a strong sense of identity among the Basotho people. The study also found that oral traditions serve as dynamic and adaptable mediums for conveying Basotho heritage and that Moshoeshoe I's legacy continues to inspire peace and unity within the nation. The main conclusion was that the preservation of the SeMoshoeshoe oral traditions is essential for upholding Basotho cultural heritage, empowering future generations with knowledge of their history and identity, and honouring the enduring contributions of Morena Moshoeshoe I. The paper recommends prioritising targeted efforts such as comprehensive documentation projects, integrating SeMoshoeshoe history into educational curricula, fostering community participation in oral history preservation, and leveraging technology to archive and disseminate these cultural narratives broadly to ensure continued relevance and accessibility. This approach will enable Lesotho to maintain a robust cultural legacy, enhance social cohesion, and inspire innovation rooted in traditional Basotho values and history, thereby enriching the nation's cultural fabric and legacy for generations to come.*

**Keywords:** SeMoshoeshoe, oral histories, heritage, preservation

## 1 Introduction

This article focuses on SeMoshoeshoe as a tradition of cultural and national identity of the Basotho. It comes at a time when researchers in Africa have long expanded their methodological field beyond written texts. As Vansina (2007) argues, both oral and written sources are now canons of historical writing (Newbury & College 2007:214). Unlike before the 1950s, oral sources have become the method in researching communities which historically lacked a culture of writing. Africa is a theatre where orality plays a big role. For European medievalists before the 1960s, method and text were everything, hence it was often argued that the absence of written texts implied that there was no knowable past. Such an approach tended to disregard orality, which is the main source of history in Africa. Moshoeshoe I, the main figure in this study, lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when most African societies did not have a culture of writing. Even after the introduction of schools by missionaries in Lesotho, orality remained a major source of passing down history from one generation to the next.

Orality as a form of narrative history and testimony plays an important role in understanding indigenous histories and cultures (Gwatkin-Higson 2017:1). It adds another layer to the understanding of history because 'the content is grounded in reflections on the past as opposed to the commentary on purely contemporary events' (Oral History Association, 2009 cited in Gwatkin-Higson 2017:1). It relies on storytelling of events of the past for present and future generations to learn and understand their past and also to construct their own identity from these events. However, this indigenously constructed knowledge is often criticised for being unreliable and incorrect because it is history that comes from the narratives of ordinary people and therefore considered a lower form of history (Beard 2017:1458). Despite the criticism, the past traditions and cultural practices and beliefs would not be transferred easily without these narratives.

SeMoshoeshoe entails the Basotho cultural heritage as espoused by Morena Moshoeshoe I, the founder of the Basotho nation. These narratives define Basotho culture, traditions, beliefs, practices and lived experiences as they navigated through their environment. These memories of the time should be documented and preserved for future generations, as they are valuable for national identity and distinctiveness. This study sought to highlight the importance of oral traditions by underscoring SeMoshoeshoe among such histories, to influence the change needed for the future generations.

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1. Keneuoe Anacletta Motšoene is Associate Professor and Director of the Moshoeshoe I, Institute of Peace and Leadership at the National University of Lesotho, Roma

## 2 Research objectives

The study aimed to explore the preservation of SeMoshoeshoe oral traditions, which embody the legacy, beliefs, practices, and historical contributions of Morena Moshoeshoe I, founder of the Basotho nation. The study sought to determine how SeMoshoeshoe provides insights into Basotho traditions, societal norms, historical events, and cultural practices; examine the significance of SeMoshoeshoe oral histories in maintaining Basotho cultural continuity, identity, and knowledge transmission across generations; assess the value and relevance of SeMoshoeshoe oral traditions for future Basotho generations; and identify effective preservation strategies of SeMoshoeshoe oral histories.

## 3 Methodology

This study on preserving SeMoshoeshoe oral traditions involved a qualitative explorative approach primarily through desk research, where existing literature, historical records, and oral accounts were systematically reviewed and analysed. Conducting a literature review was guided by Indigenous Wholistic Theory (IWT), which supports understanding SeMoshoeshoe as an indigenous knowledge resource. The study utilised content analysis to interpret qualitative data from oral traditions, documented narratives, archival materials, and scholarly writings about Morena Moshoeshoe I and Basotho cultural heritage.

## 4 Conceptual framework

Coined by the Moshoeshoe I Institute of Peace and Leadership (MIPL) of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in 2018, SeMoshoeshoe is a philosophical framework founded on the promotion of peace, ethical, servant, and transformative leadership, patriotism, social justice, and national unity (MIPL 2022:1). It was defined as a home-grown philosophy of peace, non-violence and ethical leadership (Lephoto & Mochekele 2024:85). It is a recent philosophy born out of concerns with deteriorating morals among the Basotho. These concerns have manifested through many forms of violence, increasing divorce and absent solidarity. Citing Mokuku (2017), Lephoto and Mochekele (2024:85) point out that SeMoshoeshoe is constructed around a vision for development and sustainability, life preservation, courage, critical thinking, conscience, respect for human rights, love for peace, non-violence, compassion, empathy, humility, solidarity, altruism, trust, honesty, participation, diplomacy, dialogue, social justice, tolerance, courage, self-discipline, and empowerment, which are all expressions of humanity. These attributes were derived from the exemplary leadership of Moshoeshoe I as a 19<sup>th</sup>-century leader of a number of chiefdoms that later formed the Basotho nation. His desire for peace constitutes the root of the development of this philosophy.

The philosophy of SeMoshoeshoe is about inclusion and co-existence. Rakolobe (2023:96) aligns SeMoshoeshoe philosophy to inclusiveness, which was evidenced through Moshoeshoe I's principles of *mafisa* (livestock loan system) and *matsema* (cooperatives). He rose to power during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century period of *lifaqane*, a term which roughly means plunder or, according to Mothibe (2002:15), violent upheavals, which unleashed a train of refugee chiefdoms attacking and fleeing from one another. This was an era of untold suffering caused by warfare among African chiefdoms. It was fuelled by the British and Afrikaners. Moshoeshoe I was able to build a kingdom by bringing various scattered people under his leadership. SeMoshoeshoe is used in this study as a fundamental component of Basotho humanism. It is a critical pillar for conflict resolution, peacebuilding and ultimately, creating ethical leadership.

## 5 Background to orality and Moshoeshoe I

The rise of African nationalism revolutionised orality as history. However, Western Europe was slow to accept orality as a source of history. The work of Jan Vansina in the 1950s and 1960s was a turning point. He strongly argued that the tools of analysis used for written sources can apply to oral sources. Therefore, Africa's past could be unearthed through orality, given that most societies on the continent were illiterate. They could not keep the records through the art of writing. Vansina was led to the conclusion that Africa had a knowable past by a Kuba elder, Mbop Louis, who told him that 'we know our past because we carry our newspapers in our heads' (Newbury & College 2007:215). This statement puts African history at the same level as that of Europe. At that time, Europe was obsessed with the method and text in the study of history. For Vansina, oral traditions are documents of the present because they are told in the present. The past in them can either be denied or accepted.

Orality has been challenged because of its reliance on memory, which makes it susceptible to misinformation and manipulation from a variety of sources (Jesse 2011:307). Orality is therefore good for communities that lack a culture of writing or those that lack appropriate spaces to air their experiences. Lesotho cannot be defined as a nation deficient in the culture of writing. The missionaries came to stay among the Basotho as far back as 1833. Casalis (1861), a missionary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) wrote extensively on the Basotho. Most of his views concentrated on the crown, and even here, as an outsider, he did not fully appreciate the African culture. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

there was growing interest in uncovering more of Moshoeshoe's history and deeds. Today, orality is still one major way of reconstructing Lesotho's history. Although the Basotho rely heavily on the oral mode of thought and have been literate for more than a century, for example, there has been no serious effort to record clan praise poems (Tsiu 2002:1), yet this is a form of identity that every Mosotho must know.

- Following the incorporation of Basutoland as a High Commissioner's territory in 1868, the Basotho lived in fear that one day, the British might renege on their promise and make Lesotho part of South Africa. Such fears became more apparent following the First World War. Against this background, the Basotho found it appropriate to look up to their founder as a symbol of unity and identity. Using oral traditions and history, a hero image was built around Moshoeshoe I. Poems were recited depicting the founder of the Basotho nation as the great nation-builder, the champion, and father who gathered around his father's relatively small clan of the Bamokoteli and all the neighbouring clans, which were dislocated and dispersed by *lifaqane* (Swanepoel 1997:114). He was viewed as the source of peace, rain, and prosperity to the nation. The history, traditions, and beliefs of the Basotho were associated with Moshoeshoe I, who ruled his people from the 1820s until his death in 1870.

## 6 Custodians of oral traditions in Lesotho

The custodians of oral traditions and oral history in Lesotho are primarily the community elders. They are recognised as experts in family histories, folklore, legends and spiritual beliefs. They pass down oral traditions such as praise poems (*lithoko*), family odes, and folk stories to younger generations, thus ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage. In traditional Basotho culture, oral traditions were often shared around fires or in communal gatherings, where elders recounted the narratives that preserve history, morals, and the spiritual worldview of the people. Initiation schools have remained a major mode of transmitting oral traditions and history to the younger Basotho generations.

There are also institutions that play a vital role in preserving the oral traditions and history of Basotho. The Morija Museum and Archives (MMA), is the official repository of the oldest documents in Lesotho. The collections that are available there include oral traditions, customs, genealogies and oral history materials. It also holds the Ellenberger archive, comprising manuscripts, interview notes, genealogies and other historic documents based on extensive nineteenth-century Basotho oral histories. The MMA is notable for its longstanding effort to preserve the oral histories recorded since the 19th century.

The Lesotho National Archives (State Archives), which was established in 1958, is supposed to be yet another custodian of the Lesotho oral history. It has preserved the biographies of chiefs and the oral testimonies related to indigenous peoples. In addition, the National University of Lesotho Institutional Repository (NULIR), has a digital archive that collects and preserves scholarly materials, which includes oral history research and related documents. These institutions play a key role in collecting, preserving, and providing access to the oral history records and precious cultural heritage materials in Lesotho. The archive does not have collections of oral histories, but a few books on the culture and practices of the Basotho. The archive is financially incapacitated to undertake oral history projects. This limitation leaves a yawning gap in trying to conduct serious research on Moshoeshoe I, which would contribute to SeMoshoeshoe. The lived experiences, myths, and legends need to be recorded alongside the memories from the other parts of the present-day Lesotho and beyond, which at one time were under the overall leadership of Moshoeshoe I. So far, the government and institutional resources allocated to state archives and to the Lesotho national heritage institutions are limited and there is ongoing advocacy for increased funding and resources to properly preserve and provide access to oral and archival materials.

## 7 Importance of orality in preserving history

History is more than an account of the past as it happened. The past is remembered, understood, and interpreted by a number of different actors, including the participants, witnesses, and historians. Oral history does not shy away from these differences and multiple interpretations; rather, it allows the various memories and understandings to be explored and examined in detail. Nyhan and Flinn (2016:21) reiterated that,

“...the differing personal narratives and varying memories offer unrivalled opportunities to explore and understand communities and their relationship to the past; something that would simply not be possible when relying on other more traditional text-based historical sources. Oral history can be the basis for a different type of history more dynamic, more direct and sometimes confrontational, dependent on the relationship between the interviewer, the interviewee and the past, but creating a space wherein history is made to listen and take account of (but not necessarily accept uncritically) the perspectives of those who were there.”

Orality has the potential to transform both the content and purpose of history by giving back a central place to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words (Thompson 2000:3). As such, oral history recording is an essential part of cultural heritage work because 'the communities...in all their diversity are a vital source of living history' (Veale & Schilling 2004:1).

The importance of oral history is also tied to the environmental, economic, political dimensions. The narratives from people provide their experiences as they interacted with their environment and the economy around them. These are the factors that shaped their lives. As Oelofse and Du Bruyn (2012:157) argue, 'details of what happened, as well as the emotional responses of individuals to the event itself, provide a human dimension to accounts of historical occurrences. For example, in South Africa, oral history played a pivotal role in revealing the hidden stories of apartheid through the experiences of ordinary people in many instances. These stories could not be found in documented official history, as the state had the authority to decide which histories to publish and which ones to exclude (Oelofse & Du Bruyn 2012). It is evident that oral history is a unique form of history that conveys the unknown cultural heritage to the generations which were not part of it.

Through the lens provided by oral history, future generations are able to understand why certain things have changed and, if need be, they can restore some of the ideologies to build progressive societies. Oral history allows people to express their personal experiences with change from the simple things of life, such as from 'wood stove to microwave, from a dial phone to a cell phone' (Baylor University Institute for Oral History 2012). It is oral history that allows narrators to reflect on the observed changes in their lives and how their lives remained the same despite these changes. Narrators are able to reflect through placing values, traditions and beliefs at the centre of their reflection. It is inevitable for future generations to enjoy the shared stories if they are documented.

## 8 Preservation of oral histories

Most societies recognise the benefit of preserving and passing on the community-based knowledge of the past as well as protecting and accumulating their heritage. Organisations such as the Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) have been engaged in the systematic collection of oral testimonies for some time. Oelofse and Du Bruyn (2012) note that searching for historical evidence from the source and fully documenting and preserving this important information have limitations. Malokotha (2024:116) adds that meeting challenges, such as the need for resources, fragility of materials, a lack of standardisation, legal and ethical issues, access barriers and technology obsolescence, has an impact on the preservation and accessibility of oral history records in archival settings. Despite these challenges, oral history presents a reflection of the local history because it is derived from the grassroots level that informs its wider historical content. Thus, oral history from a local perspective has a higher potential to influence the scope of history to be learnt by future generations. Thompson (2000) reiterates that oral history is a process that leads to transformation through historical awareness and cultural continuity from generation to generation.

The role played by indigenous knowledge (IK) cannot be underestimated. Besides IK firming the individual and community distinctiveness, its beliefs and practices are credited with holding strong cultural and social obligations on its members to promote their well-being. Oral histories form part of the IK system (Sergon, Akoth & Dzinekou 2022:45). IK is transmitted between generations through stories, songs, dances, carvings, paintings, and performance. In and of itself, oral history as a narrative storytelling or an interview based on where information is obtained from, closes the gap on the information obtained in the past by augmenting such information through the public records, statistical data, photographs, maps, letters, diaries and other historical materials. It relies on eyewitnesses (to the events) who provide their viewpoints and perspectives to the documented history, sometimes correcting or even contradicting the written record (Baylor University Institute for Oral History 2012). However, global histories of colonialism, exploitation, and dispossession continue to undermine and undervalue the significance of this form of history. In many countries, indigenous children and youth are not connected to their indigenous community and the culture, beliefs, and practices that are inextricably linked to their lands, territories, and natural resources (United Nations 2019:20). UNESCO observed that formal education also plays a role in exacerbating this disconnection, and reiterates that,

"Education programmes provide important tools for human development, but they may also compromise the transmission of indigenous knowledge. With formal education, children spend much time learning passively in classroom settings, rather than engaged in hands-on learning on the land. Teachers replace parents and elders as the holders of knowledge and authority. National languages become the medium of instruction, while vernacular languages are sidelined. Formal education may, therefore, contribute to an erosion of cultural diversity, a loss of social cohesion and the alienation and disorientation of indigenous youth" (UNESCO:2024).

This disconnection has created some challenges, such as moral decay among youth and children in contemporary societies. In the African context, oral traditions are regarded as an education system that is holistic in nature and in which storytelling, proverbs, and myths also play an important role. They are collective testimonies and recollections of the past and are inherited from earlier generations. Oral tradition continues to be a reservoir of inexhaustible wisdom where Africans learn about their origins, history, culture, and religion; they also learn about meaning and the reality of life as well as about morals, norms and survival techniques (Omolewa 2007:593). The village chiefs, older men and women, serve as the repositories and custodians of their oral traditions, practices, and beliefs. Through oral traditions, the younger generations are able to understand the past and expose themselves to the various values, ideals, and aspirations of the society (Anene & Njoku 2021:36). Oral tradition remains an indispensable cultural heritage in contemporary and future societies in Africa. It is the basis for people to comprehend their roots as defined by cultural beliefs, traditions, and practices; ultimately, it defines one's identity, cultural outlook, and national conscience. The SeMoshoeshoe preservation of oral histories is key to resuscitating the Basotho identity as derived from their past. It is imperative to preserve this IK for future generations.

## 9 SeMoshoeshoe as an oral history

Much of the information about SeMoshoeshoe is an undocumented oral history pertaining to the lived experiences of Morena Moshoeshoe I and his people during their time, more than a century ago. However, these are covered through storytelling, folklore, dances, and performances by those who have become conversant with these, either through contact with those who are knowledgeable of the traditions or researchers who may want to deepen their understanding of the legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe I to his people. Documented history has proven to be inconclusive in capturing the real-life situation pertaining to the culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices of the indigenous Basotho because the writers were white people whose understanding of Africans was sometimes faulty. They used the epic as opposed to the emic approach to the study of African societies. Casalis deployed his Western and Christian understanding of society to write on the Basotho and therefore ended up castigating practices such as polygamy and the payment of bride-price and *lebollo* (circumcision). Ilongo (2021: 477) stated that by educating the young people for *botho* through Basotho indigenous education, *lebollo* has the potential to contribute towards the ideal of creating citizens who are inclined to treat others with fairness, dignity and justice at all times. This important tradition, which was used to mould a male youth into becoming a steadfast head of the family, a leader in community affairs and becoming a warrior at the time, remains a hidden story and is protected from those who have not been participants in such practices.

Traditional healing practices such as *Bothuoela* and *Bongaka chitja* also remain grey and underresearched areas. The Basotho survived with traditional herbs for curing various ailments. They had traditional healers (*Mathuoela*) whom they relied on for survival. This practice was mainly characterised by rituals that were performed during the healing process. *Mathuoela* were regarded as spiritual healers connected to the ancestors. They were rain predictors, and they assisted in providing medicine for a series of other activities, including the protection of the warriors during war. Though this practice was often associated with witchcraft, it stands to date as a practice and is gaining momentum among the Basotho. Nevertheless, it remains a protected area by those involved. They are the only ones who know many of the details about it. No researchers have attempted to break the barriers to gain access to this valuable information. The seeming rise in the number of *Mathuoela* nowadays, where the youth seem to join in large numbers, is evidence that this practice is becoming important to Basotho and can be documented for future generations to access.

*Bongaka chitja* is another type of Basotho traditional healing. It involves healing with herbs. Similarly, Basotho used medicine for activities such as protecting households from attacks. However, this type of healing is not associated with the ancestral existence, and neither is any ritual performed during the process. Further research is necessary to unravel the details pertaining to this practice, to preserve it for future generations as one of the practices that need to gain momentum in contemporary Lesotho.

In order to enhance the economy and sustenance among his people, Morena Moshoeshoe I engaged *matsema* and *mafisa* strategies so that the Basotho could assist each other in food production. *Matsema* refer to communal labour where household members became part of the communal labour during ploughing and harvesting periods. Even those who did not own any land benefitted because their labour was compensated with food. *Matsema* brought a sustainable livelihood to the households because they were not exposed to poverty. This was a pillar that sustained the Basotho economy in the historic past; now it only remains in the memories of people who experienced *matsema*. These people are slowly ageing and fading away. Preserving this heritage is not only important for future generations, but it is also still relevant in the current Lesotho economic landscape in enhancing food production, which is continually declining because of the individualistic rather than the communal approach to cultivation and food production. The former has left many households vulnerable to poverty.

In the same way, *mafisa* enhanced food production and sustenance in households; in this practice, those who had cattle temporarily loaned them for breeding purposes to those who did not. Those who were loaned the cattle would nurture

the calves and later share them with the original owner of the cattle. This is how wealth was accumulated among the Basotho. It also enhanced the sustainability of food availability, thus eventually improving the well-being of households. Some practices and beliefs shaped the behaviour of children and youth to become responsible persons in their communities. By virtue of his position, Morena Moshoeshoe I was a great cattle owner. His cattle were distributed throughout his kingdom and therefore rescued the poor from starvation and, in return, gained him loyalty among his followers. The intricacies of this process and its effects on the poor can be unearthed through the traditions of the various groups under his authority. Praise poems are one way of understanding the utility of *mafisa* better, as they have been passed on from one generation to the next for a long period of time.

In raising children, the Basotho had some taboos and beliefs that moulded morally abiding citizens. As advanced by Qhala and Thetso (2014:199), some taboos are meant to guide the behaviour of children, because education starts at an early age, while others are meant to secure their future as men and women according to the saying, "*thupa e otolloa e sa le metsi*" (a stick is shaped while it is still moist). Some taboos may change at a particular age or stage of an individual's life. A girl child was not allowed to eat chicken eggs and ovals of sheep or cattle, particularly when she reached puberty, because these were believed to interfere with the reproductive system by making such a child fertile and prone to unplanned pregnancy. The practice was believed to protect the girl child from bearing children before marriage (Qhala & Thetso 2014:199-200). Those who grew up during this period could rarely bear children before getting married, partly because of such prohibitions. In addition, a girl child was also protected from playing with boys once she reached puberty. Girls also had a separate place (*thakaneng*) to sleep. *Thakaneng* also served as a strategy in protecting them from boys. Many of those who experienced this lifestyle are aged and dying. It is important for their memories of these traditions to be documented and preserved for future generations.

Furthermore, neither male nor female children were allowed to get out of bed after sunrise. This restriction was meant to shape their lives so that they would become responsible citizens in future. Like her mother, a girl child was expected to wake up early to cook and clean the dwellings, while a male child was expected to wake up early to take the animals to the grazing area. The practice is known as *Lephola*. He would come back later to perform other duties. These practices were believed to also promote participation, collaboration, and social cohesion among the household members and the community. The current generation hardly hears these stories but is a very important component of SeMoshoeshoe. They need to be preserved for future generations. They represent only a tip of the iceberg. Further fieldwork, particularly in rural areas, has the potential to yield more useful information on Basotho traditions. Many of the SeMoshoeshoe practices, cultures, and beliefs are slowly fading away in the Basotho contemporary society. Some pieces of information can be heard from those who managed to gain access to these narratives or the elderly who lived these experiences. To a large extent, most of these practices remain undocumented and inaccessible to the present generation. This implies that more work needs to be done to preserve this information for future generations.

## 10 Conclusion

There is a wide acknowledgement from society today that reinstituting Basotho IK through SeMoshoeshoe has the potential to serve as an anchor for behavioural change, thus regaining Basotho as a distinct identity and restoring the national image. Lesotho was based on Morena Moshoeshoe I's principles, values, virtues, and ethos, grounded in culture and traditions. More research is required to collect these traditions both within and outside the Lesotho borders. Documenting this important information will not serve only as a literature for academic endeavours but also as a guide to future generation to mould their lives for a better society.

Preserving the oral histories of SeMoshoeshoe is crucial for maintaining cultural identity, fostering intergenerational connections, and ensuring the continuity of valuable knowledge and traditions. As these histories encompass collective wisdom, values, and experiences of a community, their preservation is not merely an act of safeguarding the past, but it is also a proactive step towards empowering future generations. By understanding and appreciating their heritage, younger generations can develop a stronger sense of belonging and identity, which in turn can inspire them to contribute positively to their community and beyond. The oral histories of SeMoshoeshoe as an IK is at the core of securing sustainable livelihoods of the Basotho nation and should be protected and preserved for future generations.

## 11 Recommendations

The following recommendations serve as pointers to the successful preservation of SeMoshoeshoe:

Research has played a pivotal role in bringing unknown information to the fore. Conducting thorough research to unpack the hidden histories related to culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices of the Basotho will ensure that this information creates the knowledge required by future generations.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, utilising modern technology to digitally record and archive oral histories is crucial. This not only ensures their longevity but also makes them more accessible to a wider audience, mainly the younger generations, who do not know about their past. Digitised archives, websites, social media, and online databases can be used to share these stories globally. The organisations and institutions that keep this valuable information need to keep up with the digital revolution and provide access to the appropriate digital tools that can help researchers to access indigenous languages.

Communities that have rich untold histories form the basis for preserving this information. The relationships with these communities are key factors not only in providing details of what happened but also in providing resources for the archives in preserving community stories, with institutional archives providing valuable support, resources, and engagement beyond mere preservation platforms. This collaboration builds trust between communities and institutional archives so that these institutions are seen as relevant in the societies they are meant to serve.

Oral tradition is an important component of history, which needs careful consideration mainly because it lies in people with experience. This implies that to collect and preserve it, researchers need to be well-versed with knowledge and skills in handling this information. Organising workshops within the community to train individuals in oral traditions, history collection, and preservation techniques is important in that these are the stakeholders in the preservation of heritage knowledge. Research can empower local people to actively participate in the preservation process and ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the narratives. Institutional capacity building for those dealing with the preservation of this information serves to guarantee that, beyond the communities, the custodianship and stewardship are maintained. Roeschley and Byun (2024:1458) affirm that fruitful collaboration between communities and archives in preserving community stories is a fundamental requirement for these memories to be shared. Partnering with museums, libraries, and universities to support research and preservation efforts is the bedrock to ensure the preservation of heritage. These institutions can provide resources, expertise, and platforms for showcasing the oral histories.

The transmission of oral traditions and histories has become a matter of urgency today within the realms of both formal and informal education. The young generation needs IK narratives to corroborate the knowledge they gain from conventional education, with their past histories to help them develop the inner self grounded in moral values. Therefore, incorporating the SeMoshoeshoe oral histories into the educational curriculum at various levels is necessary. It may help young people to learn about their heritage in a structured manner, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of their culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices that shape a human to become a better 'being'. UNESCO (2021) highlights that,

"There is an urgent need to enhance the intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge, as a complement to mainstream education by bringing indigenous language and knowledge into the school curricula and to move learning back into the community, thus reaffirming the status of the elders as knowledge holders" (UNESCO 2021).

Intergenerational transmission of heritage knowledge can also be enhanced by creating platforms that enable interaction between the elders who hold these stories and the younger generation. Activities such as storytelling sessions, cultural festivals, and mentorship programmes can facilitate the transfer of knowledge and strengthen community bonds.

The collecting and preserving of SeMoshoeshoe oral traditions and histories need serious academic attention and support in terms of resources. Financial backing is essential for acquiring the necessary equipment, training, and other resources. It is essential to mobilise funding from governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as the private sector. Funding can also be used to support documentation and the publication of this valuable information. Publishing the collected oral histories in various formats, such as books, documentaries, and audio recordings for easy access, cannot be overemphasised. This may not only preserve this cultural heritage, but it may also raise awareness and appreciation of SeMoshoeshoe. By implementing these recommendations, the oral histories of SeMoshoeshoe can be effectively preserved, celebrated and utilised as a vital resource for educating and inspiring future generations.

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