THE SOCIO-RECREATIONAL AND DISPUTES RESOLUTION VALUES OF NATIVE ALCOHOLIC BEERS IN CHIKOMBA DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Since time immemorial, African societies have had conflicts at various levels and of varying magnitudes. However, these communities brewed traditional alcoholic drinks including native beers which have served the purposes of pastime drinks and recreational values supposedly to overcome challenges and to restore soured relations. This paper seeks to analyse the role of traditional beer as a peacemaking facility within the Zezuru people of Chikomba district in Zimbabwe. This analysis is coming against the backdrop of a long held belief that beer is primarily meant to intoxicate and to suppress stress and anger. The paper concludes that the utility of native alcoholic brews for peaceful settlement of internal conflicts among the Zezuru people of Chikomba district in Zimbabwe deserves further exploration and encouragement.

**Keywords:** Zimbabwe, Peacemaking, Zezuru People, Conflict Management.

1. INTRODUCTION: Zimbabwe, Peacemaking, Zezuru People, Conflict Management.

Historically, the Shona people have always posses some traditional mechanisms for conflict management, peacemaking and peace building which were acceptable to everyone. These peacemaking systems had stood the test of time given the fact that the communities had always experienced conflicts either with the other tribes or amongst themselves. The systems had principles which regulated their application. One of these mechanisms was the traditional Shona brew called 'ndari', 'muchaiwa', 'hwematanda' or 'ngoto'. This is porridge-like brew made out of either sorghum or rapoko and was brewed in a period of 7 days in-order to allow enough fermentation. The common name for all the above brews is ‘doro’ for beer¹.

Traditionally, beer was brewed by women who were experienced and who could ascertain its maturation by either way of smelling or simply tasting. This brew is almost similar in all the areas in the Mashonaland region except the slight differences that were characteristic of different totems, climate and the main ingredients. This paper is an extract from a research that was conducted to establish the role of traditional African brews in conflict management in the Zezuru communities.

The research was heavily motivated by the Pacifist theory (Caedal 1987 and Norman 1995) which argues that conflicts can best be resolved by non-violent means. The theory posits

¹ In this paper, ‘doro’ will refer to all traditional African brews.
that all institutions of violence including physical violence should be done away with so that peaceful strategies can be adopted.

1. METHODOLOGY

The information in this paper was extracted from a research that sought to analyse the role of traditional African beer in peacemaking and peace building processes with particular reference to the Shona people of Chikomba and Uzumba- Maramba -Pfungwe districts, of the Mashonaland East province. The research employed qualitative survey tools; interviews and observation in villages that were considered representative of the entire districts and archival data as data collection methods. These villages were selected on the basis of their accessibility, sparse location and the availability of knowledgeable elders. More could have been selected had it not been of the prohibitive costs and the condition of the roads that made most of the villages inaccessible. All the tools used solicited respondents to furnish on the following themes amongst others:

- Understanding traditional beer.
- Other traditional modes of peacekeeping and peace building mechanisms.
- How traditional beer brought people together.
- Understanding of traditional beer by the Zezuru people of Zimbabwe.

The research was conducted between August 2011 and February 2012. Precisely, that period was selected for the following reasons:

- During the August to October period, people in these districts are not involved in any productive activity and therefore tend to engage in traditional beer drinking more than any other time of the year.
- During the August month, most people are involved in traditional appeasements of the spirits and performing rituals for the dead (*kurova makuva*), activities that require traditional beer.
- The August to October period is traditionally the hottest time of the year and so people tend to want more of beer than any other time of the year.
- During the November to February period, farmers in the rural areas are involved in land preparation, planting, weeding and in some cases, early farmers already harvesting.
- During the December festive period, people brew more of it for celebration purposes.
- During the February to March period, most rural people are harvesting their crops.

The respondents were selected for their knowledge of traditional rituals and customs while some were selected for their official social positions and level of literacy. The five chiefs were selected for their wisdom in traditional affairs and rituals and the fact that they are the official custodians of traditional customs and traditional laws. They are also in-charge of traditional courts. The 29 village heads from each of the villages and the other 58 elders, two from each of the 29 selected villages were also selected for their wisdom in traditional matters and the fact that they are involved in traditional beer gatherings where pertinent village issues are discussed. Forty women were selected for their knowledge of brewing the beer and the fact that they witness what happens during these beer drinks including how men discuss and sometimes resolve matters. Civil servants were selected for their modern knowledge and official positions regarding peacemaking and peace building traditionally and how they are conducted in the present day. These were selected from the District Administrators’ office, Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture and Ministry of Youth Development.

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2 This is a Shona traditional practice conducted for the dead at least a year after burial and is meant to return the spirit of the dead from the wilderness back into the village.
2.1 DELIMITATION

The research was specifically carried out in the administrative districts of Chikomba, about 140 kilometres to the Southeast of Harare and Uzumba-Maramba–Pfungwe, about 169 kilometres northeast of Harare. Chikomba district lies at the heart of the province, with Buhera to the south-east, Wedza to the east, Chihota to the north, Mhondoro to the north-west and Gutu to the south. The district is largely inhabited by people of the Sinyoro totem popularly called VaNjanja hence the title Njanja area. Uzumba-Maramba–Pfungwe district borders with Murehwa to the west, Mutoko to the east and Shamva to the north. Data was collected from amongst others the following 29 villages; firstly in Chikomba; Dodo-Tavaziva, Mwerenga, Masvaure, Mugwenhi, Mtekedza, Masasa, Warikandwa, Nharira, Magamba, Manyene, Maronda-Mashanu, Sadza, Masasa, Gandami, Mupatsi, Daramombe, Mushipe, Zvamatobwe, Kwenda and Munyoro; and in Uzumba-Maramba–Pfungwe; Tamutsa, Nyaitenga, Munyuki, Muswe, Muzengeza, Manyika, Matambanadzo Kanotangudza and Karumazondo.

2. DISCUSSIONS

3.1 THE SHONA ETHNIC PEOPLE

The Zezuru people are a sub-ethnic group of the Shona people who occupy the Mashonaland region in Zimbabwe covering; Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Manicaland, Masvingo, and part of Midlands province. The Zezuru people are mainly found at the intersection of the three Mashonaland provinces in the following districts; Chikomba, Wedza, Murewa, Chihota, Seke, Chimanimani, Bindura, Madziva, Chiweshe, Zvimba, Goromonzi, Mhondoro, and part of Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe. According to Asante (1985), the other sub-ethnic groups are; Karanga in Masvingo province and some parts of the Midlands province, and Manyika in the Manicaland province. It is these three major ethnic groups that form the central dialects around which Standard Shona is based. It is the language that is taught in most of Zimbabwe’s schools. In addition to these major dialects, there are also the Ndau who reside in some parts of Manicaland province, especially around Chipinge area extending into Mozambique, Korekore who resides to the north-west of the Zeruru area, up to the Zambian border of Kanyemba and the Kalanga people who occupy the western part of the country extending into Botswana.

The Shona speaking people use cultural markers to identify a person’s origin. The most important cultural marker is the use of totems ‘mutupo’ and honorific titles called ‘chidawo’ these markers are highly valued so much so that people of the same totem are not encouraged to marry since they are considered cousins.

The Shona culture is endowed with a wealth of cultural systems and values some of which are portrayed through song and dance. It is through song and dance that most of its valuable history, wisdom and cultural values and morals are transmitted and stored. Some of the most prominent dances are; Muchongoyo, Mbakumba found in Mutoko, Jerusarema and mbende mainly found in Murewa, Jiti and pfonda found in Wedza and Chikomba, katekwe found in Mt Darwin and majukwa mainly found in Mberengwa and jikinya. The Jerusarema dance is a popular dance practiced by the Zezuru people in the Murewa and Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe districts. It is characterized by acrobatic and sexual movements by women and men, following a rhythmic drum and women clapping hands and blowing whistles. In Chikomba, the most common type of dance is the pfonda and to some extent, mbakumba. Pfonda is a popular dance for social occasions like holding night vigils ahead of a cultural ritual of appeasing the dead or kurova guva in the Zezuru culture. Mbakumba is also popular during beer drinks when people are merrying
and celebrating a good harvest. However, this dance has been commercialized and now popular in urban areas.

Within the Zezuru people, there is also a musical instrument called *mbira*, (Matiure 2011) which is usually used to call or invite the spirits of the ‘dead’ as per the Shona belief that the dead begin another life in the third sphere. Accompanying *mbira* beat will be the African traditional brew. There is a very strong and permanent relationship between *mbira* and spirit possession and the equally strong relationship between *mbira* and the traditional brew. It is from this relationship that *mbira* music draws the power to evoke spirits in spirit mediums (*masvikiro*) during all-night ceremonies (*mapira*) where the living will be ‘meeting and conversing’ with the long dead.

3.2 THE TRADITIONAL BREW

The brewing of traditional beer is a common practice among Africans in rural areas. While only old women brew beer for the ancestors, because they follow certain rules of not sleeping with men and they will have stopped menstruating, there is now a general belief that tasty beer is brewed by women especially elderly ones. Traditionally, ancestors want hygiene and very clean persons to take up the assignment. However, there are different types of beer that are served for different purposes. Normally, the ingredients, the rituals involved in brewing and the types of beer pots used tell the nature of the function that each brew is intended.

In Chikomba and Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe fermented beers are commonly prepared at home from locally grown grains like sorghum or rapoko. Traditionally, these homemade beers are used during special cultural events such as weddings, funerals and spirit-appeasing ceremonies amongst others. These beers are still used in traditional ceremonies, though in some instances they are sold for subsistence purposes and as part of regular social gatherings. The most common of these traditional beers is a seven-day brew called *rematanda, ndari* or *ngoto*. These terms could mean different beers as some respondents indicated that *rematanda* is a collective term for any traditional brew that would have taken some days and some amount of firewood (*matanda*) to brew while *ndari* is the same brew but specifically meant for either subsistence or leisure purposes. *Ngoto* was also defined as any traditional brew whose specific purpose was to perform strict traditional rituals like appeasement of the spirits, *kurova guva* or *kuripa ngozi*. There is also a by-product of the seven day beer called *muchaiwa* and *masvusvu*, and a one-day beer called *chikokiyana*. According to Gadaga (1999), the mean alcohol concentration in these traditional beers was found to be 4.1 g/100 ml compared to 2.8 g/100 ml in the *muchaiwa* and 3.6 g/100 ml in the one day brew, *chikokiyana*.

When *doro* is prepared, normally rapoko or sorghum is soaked in water for 2 to 3 days to allow germination after which it is added into a porridge-like maize meal that would have been allowed to boil for at least 4 to 6 hours. The new mixture is also allowed to boil for another 1 to 2 hours for thorough mixture. The brew is then stored for 3 days in some African clay pots to pave way for fermentation. The pots are preferred since they maintain some favourable temperature consistently. On the fourth day, the brew is again boiled for at least 5 hours before it is taken back into the clay pots for another day for more fermentation to take place. It is at this stage that *masvusvu* and *muchaiwa* are extracted and normally these brews are alcohol-free and are good for children. On the fifth day, the brew is thoroughly sieved to remove all the chaff and particles. A whitish brew is produced and allowed to simmer and chill for 2 days before served. At this stage, the brew would have fermented enough and producing a foam and some sweet scent. However, the colour of *doro* is determined by the fermentation agent that is used; rapoko produces a white

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3 This refers to sexual abstinence.

4 In Zezuru, the collective term is hari. Pfuko is for smaller one (about 5-10 litres) while the bigger one (above 20 litres) is called gate.
brew while sorghum produces a reddish brew. The brew is generally stored in clay pots but these differ depending on the type of the occasion for which it would have been prepared for.

3.3 THE DISTRICTS

Chikomba district is wholly occupied by the Zezuru people who believe in peace and respect for the leadership both political and religious. The district has 4 chiefdoms whose boundaries are clearly marked. The present chiefs are, Chief Mutekedza who is based in Mutekedza area, some 14 kilometres from Sadza Growth point, Musarurwa (Pfungwa Masakwa) who is based at Nharira-Masakwa village, Neshangwe who is located at Red Hills, some 20 kilometres away from Sadza Growth Point and Nyoka (Cyprian Tazvivinga Muringa) who is based around Shumba area almost 30 kilometres away from Sadza Growth Point.

Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP) is a conglomerate of three districts, namely the Uzumba, Maramba and Pfungwe areas. They all fall under one administration and happen to be the biggest district in Zimbabwe. UMP, as it affectionately known, has a mixture of various people with dialectical differences. There are Korekore, Buja, and Zezuru speaking people. These people, regardless of their dialectical differences, live in peace and harmony. To a great extend the process of acculturation has eroded and diluted their cultures such that they literally have one common culture. Interestingly, they are all following the Zezurus’ way of living, who occupy the greater part of the Uzumba area, which borders with Murewa and Mutoko. Maramba and Pfungwe are very remote areas.

The Zezuru people believe that dreams mediate between the spirits and the living and make connections between the present and the past. They strongly believe that dreams can call, inform, guide, permit, correct, and heal, as well as reach the community and direct the actions of its members. Chikomba district is however one area that has since lost its cultural values largely because of Christian religion that has become popular and literally taken over the people’s belief system. Rennie (1973) argues that these changes in culture have to do with colonialism, religion and modern education that have become part of the live of the Zezuru people.

3.4 TRADITIONAL PEACEMAKING AND PEACEBUILDING METHODS

Traditional methods of resolving conflict are inherent in African communal life since time immemorial. Different ethnic groups, traditional leaders and various other sectors of the community used to fight and or quarrel over pastures, land, water, women, and leadership amongst others. However, they had their own peculiar ways of attending to the problems. Some of the conflict resolution methods that were in use include dialogue, mediation, relationship and community-based approaches. These means were acceptable to all communities so much so that whenever they were applied, everyone involved would be satisfied. Besides, the Shona especially the Zezurus were peaceful people. Like it has been noted that various tribal groups had their own ways of attending to crises, the Acholi of northern Uganda employed the Mato Oput or ‘drinking of bitter herbs made from the oput tree’. This is a traditional Acholi voluntary peace and justice process involving mediation, trust-building, acknowledgement of wrong-doing, compensation, reconciliation and restoration. According to the Banyarwanda community in Rwanda, the Gacaca concept, an intricate system of customs and traditions is founded on dialogue, reconciliation and reparation as a means of peacemaking while in Botswana there is Mokgwa Le Molao literally meaning "law and custom," and expresses the character of a system of law that prescribes moral behaviour, (Mutisi 2009 and Wasonga 2009). Like in other African traditions, rituals and taboos have been put in place within the Zezuru culture to protect the sanctity of life and dignity of human beings. However, to perfectly achieve that, they (Zezuru) ensured that there is traditional beer to accompany whatever course of action that was taken towards peace building.
3.5 TABOOS

Taboos are social beliefs that are strongly adhered to by Africans especially those who believe in traditional religion, that's an infringement of one custom can harm another custom. In the Zezuru culture, taboos were put in place by traditional leaders as a way of controlling people’s lives and regulating their behaviours. Gelfand (1979) calls taboos ‘avoidance rules’ put in place to control, guide and regulate the behaviour of its members. Similarly, Tatira (2000) and Pfukwa (2001) concur that taboos are in various categories for different purposes, some of which are particularized by Pfukwa as those that were used during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe by the freedom fighters. Taboos differ with regions and cultures and that the intensity of its beliefs is determined by the region’s level of development. With taboos, crime is not a violation of a state rule, but a disruption of the spiritual harmony of the community so much so that any corrective measure requires that the same community be involved. In the Zimbabwean tradition, taboos have preserved the culture and several other activities that could have been destroyed by the coming of modernity and European doctrines. Taboos have been used to control people’s behaviour and these are some of the beliefs that that were upheld as traditional Zimbabwean taboos.

- Beating up a wife: One would be inflicted by the spirits of the wife’s family (Kuita ngozi) and never be able to marry again. Corrective measures demanded that one paid huge sums of money or several cattle to the family of the wife.
- The killing of an innocent person: That would anger the spirits of the dead and invite misfortunes (Kuita ngozi). Corrective measures also demanded that the perpetrator’s family paid a virgin girl to the family of the victim so that a new family could be initiated.
- Taking one’s property without permission (stealing): That one continued to see the stolen goods in visions until they were returned to the owner.
- Assaulting your mother: You face serious misfortunes and have to wear old sack-bags around the villages begging for forgiveness (kutanda botso).

3.6 COMPENSATION (KURIPA)

In the Zimbabwean customs, compensation or reparation is a common method of settling disputes especially where one or the perpetrator would have caused the victim to lose his/her valuables. In such cases, negotiations are held before an agreement is reached as to how much is supposed to be paid as appropriate repayment or compensation. In Shona culture, it is called kuripa and is highly recognized as a long-term cultural method of healing. Traditionally, this method has been used to deter or keep cases of murder low as people feared to compensate through appeasing the spirits of the dead. This is a tedious and expensive process that in some cases requires the family of the perpetrator to surrender a virgin girl as compensation to the family of the victim. Compensation as a form of restorative justice can sometimes come in the form of public testimony and apology. In other situations, it involves monetary exchanges in addition to public acknowledgement of responsibility for the crimes committed.

According to Wormer (2004), restorative justice very closely relates to social justice or fairness in that the victims and offenders each have their interests represented in the proceedings. Restorative initiatives are not limited to work with individuals and families but can also be successfully applied to the unjust treatment of whole populations. Wartime persecutions, rape of the people, slave labor, and mass murder are forms of crimes against humanity that demand some form of compensation for survivors and their families, even generations later, as long as the wounds are palpable, (Wormer 2004). This simply indicates that whenever a society decides to ignore post-conflict disturbances especially where human blood is lost and humanity is maimed,
the memories will not easily erase from the victims’ minds and the offence will not also fall away till some form of justice is delivered.

3.7 NEGOTIATIONS AND MEDIATIONS

In the Zezuru culture, people attend to social conflicts in their respective villages before they seek higher intervention from the Headmen and Chiefs. At village level, there are societal structures that are respected and maintained for various social, political, economic and administrative purposes. Whenever there is a conflict or some problem, it is taken to the village head who, in consultation with his/her council of elders, talked over the matter. In most cases, village heads are appointed or selected because of their age, wisdom and integrity. As such, most of them are respectable elderly personalities who find it easy to make fair decisions and judgments. However, in the discussions, both the complainant and the accused are afforded opportunities to air their sides of the stories so that an impartial position is reached. Besides, whatever verdict is made will be acceptable to both parties.

The negotiation concepts that are applied in this mode of peacemaking and peace building are similar to the Eurocentric approaches that have been written widely about. All the parties in this type of negotiation are allowed to present their concerns and are also expected to input their ideas in the final verdict.

In the event that a satisfactory verdict has not been reached, the matter can then be referred to a higher platform like the Headmen or Chief. These are believed to be wiser and therefore bound to make more appealing decisions. Besides approaching these structures for help the families also have their social structures that can be used like the uncles and aunts who can always intervene at the family nuclei level.

3.8 TRADITIONAL COURT SYSTEMS

The contemporary world now believes that the use of the law is the best way to deal with all social problems, especially crime and delinquency. It is believed that without law, the people would not control themselves and a state of anarchy would exist. According to Jenkins (2004), the rule of law concept lies in the Eurocentric paradigm that assumes that the state, rather than the community, carries the responsibility of dealing with crime and other social problems. This approach, which is derived from English common law, uses the state as the primary agent in dealing with the behaviour of individuals, treatment of offenders, and compensation for victims. However, prior to that, there was the traditional court system that operated effectively and efficiently.

Traditional leaders are hereditary local community leaders who are selected through rules of succession. These have been in existence since time immemorial as they have been the governing structures on the ground that were solemnized by the spirit mediums of the local areas in consultation with the local elders and the generality of the community. Resultantly, they commanded profound respect among rural communities. Traditional leaders’ role in the pre-colonial period was to administer all the resources, human and natural and to adjudicate over any disputes within their area of jurisdiction.

In Zimbabwe, traditional authorities were incorporated into a government system based on the Westminster model. They exist through the Traditional Leaders Act No. 29 of 1982. Traditional courts are also deemed to be fair, cheap and by the community’s doorstep, are culturally bound and take more lenient and fair way of dispute resolution which is preferred by the communities rather than going to the modern and elitist courts. This system is people-centred.

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5 www.mlgpwud.gov.zw
and allows participatory governance. The Chief’s policies are reviewed through general meetings, village councils and by other interested special groups.

3.9 TRADITIONAL BREW GATHERINGS

Basically, traditional beer is used differently in-order to achieve peacemaking and peace building agenda. In the Zezuru culture in Chikomba and UMP, beer is used for socialization purpose. It has for some time now managed to bring different people together and in some instances discussing the same issue. Through this, friendships have been built while strangers have also made new contacts. At most of the business centres in Chikomba, almost throughout the day, there are men and boys either loitering or whiling up time through drinking doro. It has almost become a culture that these people take doro daily and in most cases failing to undertake other productive activities. Besides taking doro, there is another type of traditional brew that was commercialized and is sold in modern containers and is called chibuku. The recipe for producing chibuku is almost the same for doro except that the former is produced in a shorter time courtesy of modern technology.

Doro is also used to mobilise people for some field work to be undertaken communally called jakwara. As people carry-out the work, they will be served with doro and that way people can spend the whole day working without realizing the amount of time that they would have spent working and without feeling any hunger. Jakwara or cooperation was designed to cut on labour costs, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness and keeping people interacting in the rural areas. When someone has excelled in some activity, in the Zezuru culture, the celebration is characterised by the availability of doro though there may be other modern beverages like clear beer. According to Chief Musarurwa, the essence of doro in such instances is to open an avenue to the ancestral spirits before the elders’ converse thanking God for the achievement and asking for more blessings. The use of any other type of beer is not acceptable in the Zezuru culture as the ancestors do not condone modern technology.

In the Zezuru community of Chikonba and UMP, traditional beer is a vital component in almost all traditional rituals; kurova guva (returning the spirit of the dead into the village), kuripa ngozi (compensating for a murder offence), mukwerera (rain-making ceremony), chenura (cleansing), muchato (wedding) and thanksgiving ceremonies. During these ceremonies, different people are brought together so that collectively, some decision can be reached and where necessary, broken relations are reconstructed. During these ceremonies, especially kurova guva, kuripa ngozi and chenura, it is believed that the spirits do not allow disputes or conflicts lest they will not be successful. As a result, the ceremonies are conducted peacefully and collectively. The fact that two or more parties have come together and shared doro is significant and a symbol or the first steps towards reconciliation. The night of these ceremonies, will be spent drinking beer, singing, and dancing and dedicating some doro to the spirits and the long dead ancestors. What is dedicated to the spirits and ancestors will be drunk by clan elders and appropriate representatives. During these ceremonies, it has been observed that even if some people crave for modern beer, they will not have it till after the ceremony. According to chief Musarurwa, most of the beer prepared for such rituals is tasty and appetizing on account of the fact that it will be in small quantities leaving people wanting some more. The mukwerera ceremony is conducted by several villages as it seeks to ask for rains in the area from God. Therefore, all the villages that participate will have been brought together and strengthening their relations.

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\(^6\) Data gathered through an interview in 2011 during a kurova guva ceremony.

\(^7\) Interviews with village elders.
There are also cases when people brew doro for subsistence purposes. The traditional beer is prepared in large quantities for rural commercial purposes where one can make profits and be able to send dependents to school and possibly earn a decent life out of that business. That type of beer in called ndari as it has no cultural attachments. The village at which ndari is sold can sometimes serve as a point where people make relations; widows meet widowers and get attached. Ndari beer is sometimes exchanged for labour thereby alleviating both parties’ problems.

In situations that involve young people, traditional beer can be used as an intoxicating agent. In such cases, these imbibers simply take beer for pleasure and get drunk. Others take beer as a suppressant and the behaviour control mechanism whereby after getting drunk, they simply sleep and forget about the day’s worries. However, what is important to note is the fact that rarely is beer taken by a lone person, it is shared. Closely akin to the above is that there are also women who brew ndari simply as a hobby; a show of competence and this is where most drinkers go to get the best brew.

Traditional beer in the Zezuru context, according to Cyprian Muringa (Chief Nyoka) and Chief Nyajina of UMP also helps in the development and strengthening of existing peace. The Chiefs indicated that most alliances and development groups that were created in their areas of jurisdiction were either mooted during a drink or were based on the availability of beer in the surroundings. Members of most community groups were observed to be members of the same drinking place and that would have provided them with a rendezvous. The chiefs indicated that they saw nothing wrong with beer intake provided it did not lead drinkers into trouble. It was revealed that most people get social and moral advice during these beer gatherings, (ibid).

There are instances when beer by-products like masvusvu serves as a drink. This therefore means that beer would have alleviated food poverty from communities. It is important to mention the fact that traditional brew is consumed from traditional gourds that have a wide opening. It is also believed that it is not appetizing for one to drink alone. Therefore, people tend to drink the traditional brew collectively sharing the same gourd and never considering issues to do with health or hygiene. Regardless of a person’s dirty or pluck on his/her teeth, people who take the traditional brew are not concerned about that; all they are worried about is sharing the available brew and maintain relationships. There is actually a traditional saying in Shona within the Zezuru people that, “hari yemadzisahwira” meaning that the traditional beer pot is for friends. However, traditional beer can also have negative implications for the society and these can range from promotion of laziness, influences prostitution, leads to violent behaviour and that it is an expense that costs the rest of the family.

4. CONCLUSION

The research made several observations from its analysis of the available data. First and foremost, it was revealed by all the sources that the Zezuru people are a peaceful community who rarely engage in conflicts. It was also noted that this society is endowed with various modes of peacemaking and peace building so much so that even the slightest conflict has been attended to well before inception. All the Zezuru modes of peacemaking were noted to be relatively effective and efficient in resolving conflicts. Although there are all these effective methods within the society, the research made an interesting observation regarding traditional beer.

Within the Zezuru people, traditional beer was observed to be playing an important role in as far as peacemaking and peace building efforts are concerned. The study established that the traditional brew brings people together for both celebrations and traditional rituals, which are part of the shone people. Both the old and young people are brought together. Even villages with a history of hostilities are brought together during beer drinks. Actually, rivals take advantage of the drink either to explain their positions or to apologise so that there can be new beginnings. The
Traditional brew is also taken as a pastime beverage besides the fact that it is used as a coolant by people in a negotiation forum.

Most of the Zezuru rituals depend on the traditional brew for their success. All the other social activities except funerals where people are not given time to prepare, requires this brew for their completion and fruition. Besides that it is consumed, it is also used to solemnize most of these traditional rituals and activities. It can be poured on the graves; on people being appointed to leadership positions; and, to property as a way of celebrating and on the ground as a way of passing it on to the long gone ancestors. Unlike other modern beers which are associated with the worst in society, traditional beer was taken as part of the society so much so that both men and women could share it without any problems. This is unlike the modern beers where women can be considered immoral or prostitutes once they are seen drinking beer.

Whenever there is a marriage or wedding, traditional beer is provided as a beverage for celebrating the coming together of two families. The study also established that at almost every business centre in the two districts, there are bottle-stores where liquor is sold. In each of those liquor outlets, opaque beer is sold as a modern substitute for the traditional brew. It was also established that at those beer outlets, whenever people are drinking, they are in groups and in most cases discussing pertinent issues. It is through these discussions that relationships are built and decisions are made on important issues in the villages. Generally, the research, amongst some of its findings established that indeed, traditional beer is an important facet in facilitating peacemaking and peace building efforts within the Zezuru people in Chikomba and UMP districts.

While it is generally believed that beer is not good for economic and social development, respondents in Chikomba and UMP districts showed the other side of the coin. The entire sample of respondents did point out that beer is a social necessity especially for positive development. It was indicated that in most of the situations within the Zezuru people in Chikomba and UMP, whenever they gather for the traditional beer, the local leadership such as the village head or kraal heads take time to address drinkers on various issues chief amongst them, development. It was also established that it is usually during these beer forums where relations are either built or in cases where they would have long existed, they are strengthened. One of the ways that strengthen relations is through the use of totems in addressing fellow drinkers. From the discussion above it was pointed out that totems bring people together thereby building peace and promoting development.

REFERENCES


