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Socio-Economic, Political and Religious Realities: Semiotic Interpretation of selected Kivumba Oral Narratives

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Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing specific Kivumba oral narratives in the quest to portray that they depict glaring truths of socio-economic, political and religious status of Kivumba society. The study seeks to explore the interpretations of various signs and meanings as depicted in the five Kivumba oral narratives under scrutiny. In our discussions, examples shall be based on five oral narratives; four from the field by Sanja (2020) and one by Lambert (1962). The paper shows that oral narratives are essential and act as a vital alternative 'school' on matters tradition, culture, development as well as society's socio-economic, political and religious state for the young generations. It is however argued that Kivumba oral narratives go beyond being an alternative source of knowledge for the society's upcoming generations. The reality shows that her inevitable interaction with the outside world on socio-economic and religious front has gone a long way to affect her status and worldview beyond the contents therein. In a situation where the society lacks grip over institutions that are vital in its daily operations like religious freedoms, economic independence and free political choices of leaders then the society is under captivity. Although our reference is drawn from Kivumba oral narratives, it is a fact one cannot interpret signs and meanings in literature independent of the very society that is the custodian of the same in terms of time, space and place.

Key words: Oral narratives, semiotic, signs, meaning, Kivumba

1.0 Introduction

Oral narratives and society are intertwined and influence each other in many fronts. More often or not they depict how the members of the society see and interpret their worldview (Senkoro 2012:123). Wamitila (2003) and indeed Wellek and Warren ((1949:94-5) state that literature is an institution that uses language creatively to mirror the society. Though Kivumba oral narratives is a genre of many oral items, the signs and meanings explored by this paper as is the case of *Jahazi Jiwe** and *Mbiu ya Sultan** point out the glaring truth in regard to the religious state of Kivumba society and effects on the socio-economic and political life before and after independence. Wellek na Warren and indeed Wamitila confirm that though a work of literature can point to some truth, likely it might not be the entire truth. As correctly observed by Leech (1969:57), literature uses symbols and signs a lot with inner meanings that if correctly interpreted, shows the correct portrayal of the state of things.

Finnegan (1970) states that oral narratives are about a people's lives and what they hold dear to their hearts. She goes on to say that this genre conspicuously uses signs and symbolism a great deal. Indeed Wamitila (2003:25) observes that although oral narratives use simple lines of narration, the use of signs and symbolism give them deeper underlying meanings requiring serious interpretation for one to un-earth the message being propagated. According to Arege and Matei (2005:103) oral narratives play key roles in enlightening the society of its progress and short-comings and prepare it for any eventualities. Wamitila (2003:39) notes that, characters in the oral narratives form part of those signs and symbolism that one has to carefully interpret.

That Kivumba oral narratives play the role of an alternative voice of reason in the society is in no doubt. The objective of oral literature is pegged on the wider values of the society in which they are formed. However, they don't do so in the ignorance of their surroundings.

The paper seeks to answer the following question: What is the interpretation of socio- political, economic and religious situations of the Kivumba society from a post-independence perspective as seen from her oral narrative. The aim of this study is to bring forth the true interpretations of the realities of Kivumba socio-economic, political and religious situation via interpretations of signs and meanings in the Kivumba oral narratives. This paper intends to portray via the selected oral narratives that oral narratives play an important role in portraying the correct position of the society and how it is dealing with its challenges there in. The Kivumba oral narratives typically portray that trend in its genre as depicted in the use of non- human characters (Birds) in the *Mume, Mkewe na Ndege** animals as in the case of (*Uchaguzi wa Kiongozi* and magics as in the case of (*Jiwe Jahazi*). Semiotic theory states that signs as used in a work of literature all carry meanings (Peirce 1906).

The characters in the oral narratives mirror on the truths in the society (Wamitila 2003:68). *Jiwe Jahazi** for instance portrays that this is a case of a review of a historical activity that is factual in the Kivumba society. The narrative is an account of the interaction of the Wavumba and Arabs that brought with them the Islamic religion that was forcefully introduced in the Island. With time however, the locals accepted its way of life. So is the case in the *Mbiu ya Sultani*.

2.0 Literature Review

The subject of Kivumba oral narratives and interpretations of signs and meanings has not been given due attention to date by researchers (Sanja 2020). Many researchers have mentioned in passing or merely tried to re-write their own experiences in the local dialect like the case of Lambert (1962). Among researchers who never got involved in the Kivumba oral narratives include; McKay (1975) Chiraghdin and Mnyampla (1977), Amana (1982) and Kipacha (2003). Most of their works evolved around poetry, songs, proverbs and dialect as the case of Kipacha (2003). As is the case of all other forms of communication, members of society use oral literature to to express

their ideas beliefs, values and ideas (Finnegan 1970). Indeed, she adds that oral literature forms a network of social relationships via which the members of a society relate with the wider world.

Chiraghdin and Mnyampala (1977:35-7) asserts that oral literature is synonymous with Wavumba life since immemorial. They base their arguments on the knowledge of Kivumba poetry, proverbs and dialect. This is to say, that what is expressed in the Kivumba oral narratives carry a whole lot of society's experiences and lifestyle. The only way to unravel the true state of things is to interpret Kivumba's oral narratives.

Lambert (1962) who lived amongst Wavumba between years 1923-1924 noticed that Kivumba oral narratives carry deeper meanings and act as a gallery that house knowledge on traditions and history. His experience is drawn from Shimoi, which is a home to Wavumba. Other areas where Kivumba is spoken widely and Wavumba live in the present Kenya and Kwale count is Wasini Island Vanga (Mckay 1975, Chiraghdin and Mnyampala 1977 and Kipacha 2003, Sanja 2020). Lambert used his interactions with the locals and his knowledge of Kivumba oral narratives to re-write one of them in order to express the political situation of the time: for the purpose of our study, we called his Kivumba narrative; *Uchaguzi wa Kiongozi*.

The political wind blowing around East Africa had hit hard the region and its neighbours. DRC Congo witnessed the execution of Patrice Lumumba in January 17th 1970. By the time Lambert was deconstructing the Kivumba narrative in 1962, closer home, Tanzania was gearing towards internal self-rule. The narrative uses allegory to tell the story of leadership and political systems that was popular with the Wavumba and probably pinpoint where the weaknesses were. This was symbolic of the East African situation at the time. Senkoro (2012) observes the notable silence and lack of activeness in the local researchers and visitors alike and sums up his thoughts as follows,

Inashangaza kwamba tangu mkusanyiko uliofanywa na Steere (1970 miaka mingi iliyopita hakuna kazi zozote za kufana ambazo zimekusanywa na kuchapishwa zinazoweza kurejelewa kufafanua masimulizi (ya Unguja) katika hali yake ya sasa licha ya wingi wa masimulizi (ngano) yake. (Senkoro 2012: 56).

It is surprising to note that since the collections by Steere (1970) (of oral narratives from Zanzibar) many years back, no efforts have been realized locally henceforth to collect, analyze and publish oral narratives that scholars can refer to in its current state besides the presence of many (oral narratives). (The translation is ours)

Senkoro is merely stating a fact. Whereas other forms of oral literature are exploited so much for their abilities to express matters society, hardly are oral narratives thought of. They are largely viewed as a form of entertainment (Finnegan 1970). The educative side of oral narratives needs to be checked and especially signs and symbolism interpretations in order for their true meanings and social functions to be understood. Traditionally and even in the contemporary, oral narratives act as a guide on many important values of the society emanating from one generation to the other. All societies have a way of guiding her own (Mulokozi 1999: 112-3, Chiraghdin 1974:39).

3.0 Theoretical Perspectives

This paper uses the semiotic theory based on the discussions of Peirce (Short 2007), Jakobson (Kucera 1983) and Barthes (Barry 2007, Elmer 1993). This theory recognizes the fact that signs carry two edged meanings; the intended and the signified. Eco (1976) defines a symbol or sign as anything that can be interpreted to stand represents a different meaning. According to him, signs or symbols carry another meaning beneath them and that

meaning is determined by the object or sign representing it and to which it refers. And as Barthes (Barry 2007) argues, the meaning of symbols or signs is not particularly determined by what is symbolized in reality but may correspond to other meanings. To illustrate his semiotic signs, Barthes (Ali 2013) came up with different codes namely: hermeneutic code, symbolic code, semic code, proairetic code and referential code.

Littlejohn and Foss (2008:36) say that semiotics addresses itself on how symbols or signs come to represent or carry meanings for objects, represent ideas, situations, feeling and meanings outside of themselves. And as Barthes (Barry 2007) infers, representation is often mediated by the conscious interpretation of the person and his experiences and the meaning for which the sign symbolizes. Accordingly, meanings or interpretations vary from situations to the other and this can interfere with how we come to the conclusion of what is signified. Peirce (Atkins 2006) asserts that signs consists of three inter-related bodies he names as; a sign, an object and an interpretant. The sign can be anything like a spoken word or written. The object on the hand can be anything taken as being referred to by the sign. The interpretation is the understanding that one makes of the sign in relation with the object. What Peirce is stating is that, the meaning of the sign is only understood depending on the interpretation of the person reading the text. Peirce almost concludes that every word is a sign or symbol if meaning can be interpreted. The context in this case is necessary for proper interpretations of any signs to be successful.

Semiotic theory asserts that we cannot interpret a work of literature outside the paradigms of the very society that originated it (Peirce Short 2007). As Wafula (2004) notes, interpretation of literary works are meant to be executed in the context of time and space the society is in at the given time. This should not be construed to mean all the analysis are correct and lead to credible analysis. Wafula (2004) is of the view that, for proper interpretation, the interpreter should look back in time to see what the text meant then in order to synthesize the current interpretation of meaning. This is so because signs and symbols undergo metamorphosis. Kivumba superstitions routinely use the symbolism of a pregnant woman and an infant.

4.0 Discussion and Results

In discussing issues of socio-economic, political and religious depictions in the Kivumba oral literature using semiotic theory, this paper will concentrate on key areas namely: interpretation of signs, symbolism and meanings as seen through the selected Kivumba oral narratives.

4.1.1 Various Interpretations of Signs, Symbolism and Meanings

There are various interpretations of signs, symbolism and meanings in the Kivumba oral narratives depending on the parameters employed and at times depending on the historical events surrounding the narrative under scrutiny. Indeed, the interpretation in this paper is drawn from an analysis the four narratives collected from the field by Sanja (2019-2020) and one from the library (Lambert 1962).

4.1.2 Socio-Economic Realities of Kivumba Society

There are numerous signs and symbols in the Kivumba narratives to suggest that over dependence on the ocean for lack of alternative economic activities, lack of infrastructure and cultural ties have hampered societal change. As observed by Chiraghdin (1974), the Kivumba institution of marriage like other coastal societies is matriachial though not necessarily a woman's domain (McKay 1975). That is evident in the *Mvuvi na Ambari* and *Mume, Mke na Ndege* (Sanja 2020).

4.1.3 Marriage is a responsibility for both Spouses

This is evident in the Kivumba oral narratives cited in this paper in the *Kisa cha Mume, Mke na Ndege*. The narrative uses similes to tell a story of how spouse ought to build their home on the basis of love, unity and trust as evidenced by the sign of the male bird and female bird constructing their nest. As correctly observed by (McKay 1975), the Wavumba respected the institution of marriage and a woman's role was vital in making marriage last.

...Mtu mke yule akafuatilia mphaka hatima ya ujenzi ule. Ndege mume kaviphamoja na mkewe kama kichwa na nywele kari kamuachi hapha na phale lile jike likaanza kuyaalia mayai yale phamoja na kidume kye, mphaka mayai yakatotoa.

The woman observed daily as the two birds made their nest. The male bird worked hand in hand with the female bird till she laid her eggs. They both took care of the eggs till they hatched.

The birds and a nest are signs and symbols of couples and their home or the institution of marriage respectively. According to Barthes (1973) signs and symbols carry extra meanings. That meaning is determined by the object or sign representing it and to which it infers. Eggs and hatchling are signs and symbols of human children. A marriage is tasked with creating love, unity and bringing up children. It's also a message that amongst the Wavumba, it's only in marriage that children are allowed to be born. Divorce was discouraged (McKay 1975). Senkoro (1988:6-8) notes that effective communication in any literary work is the author's ability to use proper symbolisms in the name of literary stylistics.

4.1.4 Marriage is Meant to Last for Ever

Amongst Wavumba, marriage is permanent and divorce is not an option (McKay 1975) even in death. We read:

Kauliphira muda mrefu ye ndege wa kike akafa.Siku ya ratu kaliphira chena kwa njaa kali kind mmoja akabwa na kufa. Siku iliofuataia phili likafuata mwenziwe.

Not long, the mother bird died. ..In the third day, the hatchlings were unable to feed that they died of hunger. That was how they met their fate.

Wamitila's sentiments probably bring out to the fore the underlying emotions in the changes taking place in Kivumba marriage (Wamitila 2002). He observes that matters happening in marriage might be beyond the couples and not of society's control especially in the contemporary world where co-habiting exist side by side with church marriages that are bound by religion. Littlejohn and Foss (2008:36) say that semiotics addresses itself on how symbols or signs come to represent or carry meanings for objects, represent ideas, situations, feeling and meanings outside of themselves. The death of hatchlings is a sign that a woman is very central in a marriage. Single parenthood is discouraged as is symbolic of the death of the institution of marriage. And as Barthes (Barry 2007) infers, representation is often mediated by the conscious interpretation of the person and his experiences and the meaning for which the sign symbolizes. The story of the birds is a story within a story that allegorically tells the story of humans. The death of the mother bird is a forecast of the death of a woman and a sign of what to come in their own marriage. The permanence of marriage amongst the Wavumba is illustrated by the dream that the man receives in the sleep from his late wife questioning why his concubine was mistreating their children:

Usingizini baba alimjia mfaruku wakwe, "Jee, sikukuambia waroro uchawatesa kamalile dume la ndege ukanikatalia. Jee, wayaona unayoyafanya?"

In his sleep, the man saw his dead wife in a dream. “Why do you allow her to mistreat children? Didn’t I tell you children will die if I died?”

Signs and symbols often carry deeper meanings (Barry 2002:151, Selden, Widdow na Brooker 2005:2005:152). Peirce (Atkins 2006) asserts that signs consist of three inter-related bodies he names as; a sign, an object and an interpretant. Traditionally, one of the roles of a woman was to nurture children. The dream however is in contrast of what Mainer at el (2012) observed. They state that the ratio of Christianity to Islam was fifty to fifty almost ten years ago. Conservatism portrayed in the dream depicts a sign of non-religious beliefs from within. Wafula (2004) is of the view that, for proper interpretation, the interpreter should look back in time to see what the text signified in order to synthesize the resultant meaning. This is so because signs and symbols undergo metamorphosis.

4.1.5 State of Poverty

In pursuit of this subject, we have drawn our samples from the *Kisa cha Mvuvi na Ambari*. Majority of Wavumba live in abject poverty and starved of development. Over-reliance on the Indian Ocean as the main economic source has but left them crippled economically to date:

Hapho zamani za kale phanondokea mvuvi na mkewe katika kijiji kya Mkunguni wakakaa maisha yao yavi ya dhiki ilioje...

Long time ago, there lived a fisherman and his wife in abject poverty in the village of Mkunguni...

Fish was meant to provide for daily food and an income. Peirce (Atkins 2006), says that the meaning of a sign is only understood depending on the interpretation of the person reading the text. The context is necessary for proper interpretations of signs. Mkunguni is a sign of abject poverty. Indeed, the act of going to fish in the dawn hours for the morning is symbolic of poverty. ‘*Maisha ya dhiki*’, abject poverty is very much magnified in the narrative by the fisherman’s inability to catch more fish that morning.

Alipofika pwani, akaanza uvuvi. Ghafla mvuvi alivuta nyavu na humo ndani mulikuwa na samaki mmoja tu.

When he reached the shores, he started to fish. He quickly cast his nets in the ocean. Unfortunately he managed to catch a small fish.

The above demonstrates poverty is rife amongst Wavumba due to poor economic strategies or lack of them. And as Barthes (Barry 2007) infers, representation is often mediated by the conscious interpretation of the person and his experiences and the meaning for which the sign symbolizes. One small fish is a sign that illustrates the state of despair.

...Kalikufa moyo hajui Mungu kamchuphi mfawee akafunganya kafize na pondo kuelekea pwani na kuingia ndani ya dau akaanza kuvura lemale kwa unyonge mno.....

He was heartbroken though and even questioned God over his fate. He steered his vessel in the water and cast his nets half hearted.

According to Barthes (1980), a work of literature uses symbolism a lot. Similes and metaphors are necessarily used to give emphasis (Burks na Atkin 2005:161-188) and use of signs is synonymous with that kind of writing. ‘*lemale kwa unyonge mno*’ (*heartbroken he cast his nets...*) is a sign of having no otherwise. Littlejohn and Foss (2008:36) say that semiotics addresses itself on how symbols or signs come to represent or carry meanings for

objects, ideas, situations and feelings. Resigning to God is a sign of surrendering to fate. It calls for immediate resolution to socio-economic situation of the Kivumba society.

4.1.6 Wind of Socio-Economic change

Wind of change is demonstrated in the fisherman's catch of ambari- Ishara ya Ambari (embergris). As late as 2019 a section of the Kivumba society had not seen a modern road (Sanja 2020). Vanga is yet to be opened up by tarmac.

Kea bahati mbaya ama nzuri alivura lema likawa tupu bila ya swii isipokuwa mvuvi na kiphande kya ambari

Unfortunately when the fisherman pulled out his nets, there was no catch but a piece of ambergris

Barthes (Barry 2007:151, Elmer 1993) says semiotic theory recognizes the fact that signs carry two edged meanings; the intended and the signified. The fisherman getting embergris instead of fish is a sign of an alternative economic front as realized in the narrative *Mvuvi na Ambari* (Sanja 2020). The delight that the fisherman expresses suggests that change was overdue. *Mvuvi huyo alijawa na furaha ilioje: The fisherman was so delighted.* The wind of change becomes apparent when the fisherman and his wife board a vehicle for the first time. This is only after long duel with the boat on the sea.

Safari ikaanza kwenenda mjini walipho kupandana gari wakapanda dau waliphoabiri gari nakuelekea mjini. Wakapanda dau lau kuelekea Shimoni... mara ya kwanza mvuvi akipanda gari na mkewe.

The long journey to town started with the sailing in the boat before boarding a vehicle to Shimoni. For the first time, the fisherman and his wife boards a vehicle.

'Gari' n and 'mji(ni)' symbolizes change of socio-economic life for the fisherman. Dau, 'Boat' is a sign of poor infrastructure that for a long time has crippled Kivumba society.

4.2.1 Religious Realities

The subject of religion and its implications on Kivumba society is evident in the *Mbiu ya Sultani* and *Jahazi Jiwe*. In the exploits of the content in the mentioned oral narratives, the discussion seeks to state that Islamic religion forms the basis of the lifestyle of the Kivumba society (Sanja 2020).

4.2.2 The History of Wasini and Religious Conquests

This is evident in the *Jahazi Jiwe*. The story is set on an Island called Wasini and the only means of communication to the Island is sea vessels. As notes MaKay (1975), Wasin Island interacted with Arabs and whites at various moments but the beginning was not easy.

Hapho zamani za kale phaliondokea mfalme na wanakijiji waliokuwa wakaishi katika kijiji kya Wasini. Wanakijiji hao waviwasifika wakubwa wakumcha Mungu wao na wavi na imani kubwa ya dini ya Kiislamu.

Long time ago, there wa a famous king and his subjects. They lived in a village called Wasini. They were great believers of Islamic religion and worshipped God.

Indeed, the Arabs religiously influenced the locals of Wasini and so were other regions where the Wavumba live in their current establishments of Shimoni, Vanga and Wasini Island (Sanja 2019). Hermeneutics, Barthes (1980) is the act of making the reader understands the text or a sign. It goes beyond mere logical analysis and general interpretive principles and brings to fore the deeper meaning. The locals were forced to adapt new religion (Mainer et al (2012).

4.2.3 Culture vs Islamic Religion

Islamic religion changed the way the locals worshipped. Before acquiring new faith, they are described as pagans practicing jinis and witchcraft.

Siku moja kavi na mama moja kuuya kijiji jirani kavi na wanawe loswibiwa na majini na maphepho alietanga kwa miaka mingi pasi na kufua dafu kumtatua mwanawe.

One day, a woman from the neighbouring village arrived with his son who was obsessed with jinis and demons. The son had been haunted for a long time.

Barthes, (Littlejohn na Foss (2008:36) came up with the proairetic code. It applies to any action that implies a further narrative action. Being obsessed is a sign of paganism. Coming to seek religious healing is a sign of acceptance of the new faith.

4.2.4 Religious violence

Wasini like other coastal towns experienced religious violence and was subdued. In the *Jahazi Jiwe* we read:

Baada ya miezi miwili kisiwa kilikubwa lilojaa watu weufi na weupe wakawa wanabebwa na silaha watu hao yamkini waliawa mwao kuja kuwadhuru watu wa kisiwani. Kimya kikatanda kwenye jahazi na ghafla bin vuu watu weusi na wale weupe wakageuka kuwa ndege weupe najahazi nalo likawa jiwe.

After two months had past (after the woman and her son had gone back), white people in the company of black mercenaries came to attack the Island of Wasini. There was total silence in the vessel they had sailed in. Immediately they turned into white and black bird as the vessel turned into a solid rock.

According to Barthes, (Whitehead 1992:41-64) a sign is anything that signifies an underneath meaning not directly or indirectly. 'White people are symbolic of Arabs' while 'black men are symbolic of African. Ironically, the rebels Arabs who attacked their Muslim brothers are portrayed positively as those who aided them are condemned into oblivion. The Kuran classifies angels according to their missions. There are however good angels and evil angels. Good angels are normally send by Allah to give protection to his faithful (Fatir 35:1, (Al Ra'd (13:11). They can even perform miracles (Al Hijir 15:22). Jini are bad angels.

4.3.1 Political Realities

Senkoro (2012) notes that narratives have a social function thus the reason for deeper analysis. One such is to educate the societal members on matters leadership.

4.3.2 Ishara za Mashindano ya mbio na Kupiga Utepe

As the above review indicates, Kivumba leadership was marred with propaganda, cheating and falsehood underneath making democracy a mockery. McKay (1975) suggests that leaders were political kingpins and reigned with the help of their tribal gurus and close friends. In the *Uchaguzi wa Kiongozi* we read:

Lumbwi akawaza, 'mimi ufalume huno sičauvara, maana sičadabua kwenda mbio'. Kešaa kawaza akanena moyonimwe, 'Niča mšika mkia jibwa, khwenda ikanifaa aqili hii'. Basi Lumbwi akenda mkiani kwa Jibwa.

The Chameleon said to himself “There is no chance for me to win the race.” He said reasoned. “I will hold the Dog’s tail to win.” He thus clung on the Dog’s tail.

The same code, Barthes 1980) points to any element in a text that suggests a particular, often additional meaning by way of connotation. Holding on the effort of the character Dog is a sign of cheating and hypocrisy on the side of Chameleon. It defeats the democratic process that election commissions put in place in many developing nations as witnessed of what Simba had put in place.

Simba akawambia 'Haya, ručamwikani?' Wakawaza wakeša wakamwambia simba 'Ola wewe mthu ya kupewa ufalume.' Simba yakanena, 'Rukeni mri hukule mbali, kešaruaweni mbio mara tahatu; ačaeфика mbele hukule kuliko mri, ufalume rumpeni yeye'.

Simba told them, “Let us elect one of us to be our leader.” The animals thought and said, “That person is you!” they said. Then Simba said, “Let us put a tape and compete, whoever wins will be the leader.”

Simba wished for a democratic election of the new leader had cheating not existed. Lambert wrote this episode in an environment that had been poisoned by the death of Patrice Lumumba in DRC and long after Kwame Nkrumah had suffered a similar fate. The running competition was a sign of taking part in a democratic process devoid of violence and lawlessness. That is also symbolized by the tape at the end of the race. Earlier on, Hollis (1900) and McKay (1975) had erred by stating that Leadership elections in the Kivumba society were democratically done as demonstrated by the character of Chameleon. Lumbwi is a sign of fraudulence.

4.3.3 The fraudulent Leaders and Human Suffering

Deceptive leadership and undemocratic manouvres find solance in lies by claiming it's God who installed them into leadership. In the Uchaguzi wa Kiongozi we read:

“Utaniumiza ukinalia!” Mbwa akanena kwa mshangao “Aa! Umekujaje wewe Lumbwi?” Basi Lumbwi akawaambia wanyama, “Nimekuja kwa nguvu za Mungu.”

The fraudingly he had the Chameleon shouting, “Don't sit on me!” All animals were taken a back. “How did you arrive here?” they asked. “By the grace of God.” He answered.

The true winner of the democratic race is rigged out by the sly leader setting ground for dictatorial tendencies as witnessed the the *Mbiu ya Sultani*. National institutions such as hospitals are privatized by the leader at the expense of the people. That notwithstanding, expectant woman is forced to deliver in bushes and others forced to become refugees. And all female children are massacred Herodean way.

4.3.4 Peoples Power

According to Wafula, R. M (2004) most stories hold back details in order to increase the effect of the final revelation of the sign or symbol (Barthes 1980). In the *Mbiu ya Sultani* however, peoples desire to topple bad leadership is apparent.

Sultan kaingiwi na bughudhaa na asijue atendalo wanakijiji wasi walimsakize amzike mwanawe kama alivyowazika wa wenziwe pasi nakuwaonea huruma.

The Sultan was under pressure to excute his own child the same way he had done to his citizens. Sensing danger, he ordered for constitutional change.

The power belongs to people and this is what the entire Kivumba society needs to change the state of things in that region.

Conclusion

Our interpretations of signs and symbols in the Kivumba narratives content that socio-economic, political and religious reality in Kivumba society paint a picture of want. Poverty, dominance by a single religious faith, poor leadership and scarcity of alternative economic sources continue to haunt her since time immemorial. Elections are usually fraught by cheating and violence and ultimately unpopular leaders ascend to power –mainly from outside the locality.

(Sanja 2020).

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