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# SHEMBE PHILOSOPHY: THE DECOLONISATION OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

*Ngugi Emmanuel Mahaye*

*Faculty of Theology and Religion*

*University of Pretoria, South Africa*

*ORCID ID: 0009-0009-5668-111X*

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## KEYWORDS

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Christianity, Religious Rights.

## ABSTRACT

This piece of scholarly work in the sight of the public is crafted to drive or to win any theological debate or argument but I simple seek to advance the understanding of Shembe in the specific area of His philosophy not the holistic Shembe. This I say because no one on earth can claim in totality that he or she has a better understanding of Shembe, hence choosing the concept of philosophy which is the critical examination of ground fundamental beliefs and analysis of concept, doctrines, and practices was relevant.

The process of decolonization has been a significant area of scholarly inquiry in various fields, including religion and spirituality. Shembe philosophy placed a strong emphasis on cultural revival and the restoration of African spiritual practices. The movement sought to reclaim African spirituality while accommodating certain aspects of organic Christianity. Central to Shembe philosophy was to reconnect the so-called lost generation of Abantu in the ancestral connection, the veneration of ancestors, and the preservation of African traditions (Wababa, 2018). The complexity of such role from Jehovah was delicate and crucial. Isaiah Shembe known as Umqaliwendlela would hear a voice singing new unexpected words.

A qualitative study method was employed in this study to enable a comprehensive exploration of the experiences, perspectives, and practices within Shembe communities

The study findings revealed that the key principles and teachings of Shembe philosophy have now a massive influence and understanding of decolonization in guiding the community's beliefs and practices. The community have incorporation of Shembe philosophy into their daily lives for decolonial transformation. The findings further revealed although numerous challenges faced by the Shembe community in their pursuit of decolonization and cultural heritage preservation, but the post-colonial era in South Africa has made much better to defend His philosophy using the current constitution chapter 2 which clearly stipulates in the Bill of Rights, which states that everyone has right to freedom of religion, belief, and opinion. Section 9, the equality clause, prohibits unfair discrimination on various grounds including religion. Shembe fought spiritual the above religious right from as early as 1900 until the formation of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), later known as the African National Congress (ANC) on the 08 January 1912.

In conclusion, the Shembe philosophy has lightning influence in guiding the community's beliefs and practices. The post-colonial role of Shembe philosophy in the decolonization of religion and spirituality requires further exploration and development.

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*“Why the hidden powerful force of the black African is hidden to obliterate factitious distinctions in society. The sense of purpose and passion to reveal the hidden truth about Africans and the corridor of tribal discrimination that segregated further will one day ascend to the universe and explore the untold manifestation of supernatural strength and cosmic connection” Ngugi Mahaye*

## **1 Introduction.**

The process of decolonization has been a significant area of scholarly inquiry in various fields, including religion and spirituality. The aftereffects of colonialism are far-reaching, impacting not only political and economic structures but also cultural and religious practices. As societies grapple with the legacy of colonialism, there is a growing recognition of the need to re-examine and decolonize religious and spiritual frameworks (Mkhize, 2010). Laenui (2006) postulates stages of decolonisation as 1) rediscovery where colonised people live in inferiority complex relative to their historical background, 2) mourning in which the nation lamenting victimization, 3) dreaming by expressing possibilities, consultation, debate, building dreams, 4) commitment to become ready for a single direction and commit to it, and 5) action – responsive action for survival. God descended Himself to rescue His people from the bandages of the oppressive apartheid regime using foreign religions to conquer His chosen nation. The Prayer of the Sabbath, verse 16 “Ekushawukeleni kuka Jehova ekwedukeni kwethu emthethweni wakhe wasibuyisela kuye ukuba sibuyeke sibe ngabantwana bakhe, njengoba sasingabantwana bakhe kakade”. (In His Mercy, Jehovah retrieved us from our straying away from His laws, so that we could resume our places as His children. After all, we are His children). Verse four and five further says that “4) He scattered them with the arm, that is omnipotent. Because His mercy Endures forever. 5) He led us in the face of our enemies. Because His mercy Endures forever.)

Colonialism, particularly in the African context, exerted a profound influence on religious and spiritual practices. European colonial powers imposed their own religious beliefs and practices on indigenous populations, denigrating and suppressing native traditions. This cultural hegemony resulted in the erosion of indigenous knowledge systems and the adoption of foreign religious frameworks (Mkhize, 2010). In response to this colonization of religion, various movements arose that sought to reassert African spiritual and religious identity. But unique one was Shembe philosophy, founded by Isaiah Shembe in 1910. The movement blended elements of organic Christianity with traditional Zulu beliefs, presenting a synthesis that challenged the hegemony of Western Christianity (Nxele, 2014).

Shembe philosophy placed a strong emphasis on cultural revival and the restoration of African spiritual practices. The movement sought to reclaim African spirituality while accommodating certain aspects of Christianity. Central to Shembe philosophy is the belief in the ancestral connection, the veneration of ancestors, and the preservation of African traditions (Wababa, 2018).

The advent of post-colonialism has increased the interest in the decolonization of religious and spiritual frameworks. Scholars argue that decolonization involves disentangling religious and spiritual practices from their colonial legacies, enabling individuals and communities to reconnect with their pre-colonial roots (Mkhize, 2010). The post-colonial role of Shembe philosophy in decolonization lies in its potential to provide a counter-narrative to Western Christian frameworks. Shembe philosophy offers an indigenous perspective that challenges the dominance of Eurocentric religious ideologies. It provides a space for the reclamation of African spirituality and the revitalization of cultural practices that were marginalized during the colonial era (Wababa, 2018).

This study aims to investigate the post-colonial role of Shembe philosophy in the decolonization of religious and spiritual practices.

## **2.0 Methodology.**

A qualitative study method was employed in this study to enable a comprehensive exploration of the experiences, perspectives, and practices within Shembe communities. Qualitative methods such as interviews, participant observations, and document analysis were utilized to gather rich, contextual data that encourages in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). These methods enabled the principal investigator(s) to delve into the complex beliefs, values, and traditions associated with Shembe philosophy, as well as the ways in which decolonization is perceived and enacted within the community.

### **2.1 Sampling and Population.**

The study employed purposive sampling, specifically selecting participants who possess in-depth knowledge and lived experience of Shembe philosophy and its intersection with decolonization. The target population consisted of Shembe community members, including leaders, spiritual practitioners, and followers who actively engage with decolonization efforts within the community (Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2022). The sample size was determined through saturation, where data collection continues until no new information or insights emerge from the participants' perspectives. Ensuring diversity within the sample, such as capturing a range of ages, genders, and roles, was used to enhance the representativeness of the findings.

### **2.2 Research Analysis.**

Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the qualitative data collected throughout the study. This approach involves identifying and exploring patterns, themes, and categories within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The analysis process involved multiple iterative stages, including data coding, theme development, and interpretation. By systematically examining the data for recurring ideas, perspectives, and experiences related to Shembe philosophy and decolonization, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

### **2.3 Validity and Reliability.**

Different strategies were employed to ensure the validity of the study. These included the employment of triangulation using multiple data sources and methods, member checking to validate interpretations with participants, and employing an iterative process of data collection and analysis to refine the research findings (Creswell, 2013). A detailed description of the study methods, clear and well-defined criteria for data analysis, and documenting the decision-making process throughout the study was employed to increase the reliability and consistency (Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2022).

### **3.0 Findings and discussion.**

This study aimed to investigate the post-colonial role of Shembe philosophy in the decolonization of religion and spirituality and the ways in which Shembe philosophy is enacted and the potential challenges and opportunities faced by the community in their pursuit of decolonization and the preservation of their cultural heritage. Through an analysis of data collected from the Shembe community, this study sought to understand the perceptions and experiences of community members regarding decolonization efforts within their religious and spiritual beliefs. Findings.

#### **3.1 Principles and Teachings of Shembe Philosophy.**

The study findings revealed that the key principles and teachings of Shembe philosophy have tremendous influence in guiding the community's beliefs and practices. Many community members expressed a lack of familiarity with these principles and teachings, suggesting a potential disconnect between the philosophical underpinnings of Shembe and their everyday spiritual and cultural practices.

Like in Islam, the word Allah generally refers to God. The word Shembe came from heaven from His High Most Jehovah bringing His spiritual part on earth to liberate His people, so, the word Shembe generally refers to God. Shembe mainly used the Sabbath to decolonise western school thought which lambasted the day of Jehovah by changing it to Sunday, which was also the mimic of it not the real one. His spiritual philosophy or teachings incorporated religious and esoteric themes (it includes any belief or thought system that embrace the existence of a reality that cannot be physically perceived) which was eroded by our oppressors. Shembe community is mandatory that every Sabbath they recite with the whole world both living and those no longer in their physical being the following selective principles from the Sabbath Prayer:

1. Great congregation of the Creator of heaven and earth, we have now entered the rite of paying respect to the great day that was honoured by our Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, when he had finished creating the heaven, the earth, and all things. Praise him who is worthy to be praised. (Genesis 2:1–3; Deuteronomy 5:12.).

3. Fear Jehovah, oh generations upon generations, and observe his laws which he, Jehovah, wrote through his Servant, Moses, so that your worship may be acceptable to the Lord of hosts. (Malachi

4:4.) 4. Because if you do not worship him as he decrees, he will not accept your prayers. He can never pour his blessings down upon you if you do not obey his laws and observe them.

16. In his mercy, Jehovah retrieved us from our straying away from his law, so that we could resume our places as his children. After all, we are his children. He retrieved us from our straying from his law, through these words of the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:7–8; Deuteronomy 5:12; Luke 23:54).

11. Remember that today you made an agreement with Jehovah your God, that you will stay in Jehovah's house until the end of your days. (Deuteronomy 23:23).

17. There is no father that created us, and no mother who breast-fed us, it is Jehovah alone.

18. He retrieved us from our straying from his law, through these words of the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:7–8; Deuteronomy 5:12; Luke 23:54.)

19. Today is the Sabbath for all you people who fear Jehovah. You and your children must heed the law of the Sabbath because it is a great joy to God when the Sabbath is observed. As for me, I beg you, Nazaretha, in the name of the Lord Jehovah, do not harden your hearts, children of Senzangakhona.

20. I am pleading with you, in the name of the Lord Jehovah, observe Jehovah's Sabbath, it is Jehovah's Holy ceremony.

26. The seventh day is the day of rest for you and those of your household. It is the ceremony of Jehovah the Holy One. It is only for praising him, Jehovah.

27 God is greatly pleased with those who observe the seventh day. God loves those who observe the Sabbath. Observe it then, together with those of your household.

### **3.2 Perceptions and Experiences of Shembe Community Members.**

The study found that the majority of Shembe community members had a limited understanding of decolonization within the context of their religious and spiritual beliefs. Their definitions of decolonization often differed from established academic perspectives, indicating a unique interpretation within the community. Additionally, the significance of decolonization varied among community members, with some expressing minimal interest or awareness of its importance in their religious and spiritual lives. In the post-colonial era, it has evolved in a myriad of ways such as the introduction of piano or organ for leading the congregational worship (this accompaniment brought about jolly and jovial mood to the youth, the formation of the Nazareth Baptist Church Youth for Shembe (NABACHUYOFOSHE) famously known as NABACHU, and recent few years ago the Isiqabetho Senhlalamafini Critical Thinkers (ISCT). Remember, Isaiah Shembe (1865-1935) re-established if not resuscitated Jehovah first on earth religion 'Nazareth'. It became the first of its kind with the quest to restore the dignity of the natives, Ngunis and Zuluness in its real axiological and ontological sense and lens. To restore the Zulu or Nguni people to their glorious past (Khumalo & Mujinga, 2017 & Masondo, 2004 and Dube, 1936).

Furthermore, while there was a general recognition of the impact of colonialism on their religious and spiritual practices, community members demonstrated diverse perceptions of how colonialism has influenced their traditions. Some acknowledged the negative consequences of colonialism, including the erasure of indigenous beliefs and the imposition of Western ideologies, while others downplayed its effects, emphasizing the resilience of Shembe philosophy in preserving their cultural heritage.

### **3.3 Enactment of Shembe Philosophy for Decolonial Transformation.**

The below figure 1.1 is evident on how the Shembe philosophy has evolved with the community and society it served in South Africa. It merely taps to human transformational capacity to reflect, change, and work together to break ineffective dynamics caused subtly misled mission that religion of what other theologians called "meritocracy". Meritocracy is a religion where right relationship with God is based on our merits. We were even instructed as converts not to wear our traditional regalia like Amabheshu nezidwaba because theirs does not want that evil character as their God proclaims. We don't deserve to be called people of God due to that we were not a chosen one and that we were barbarians, uncivilized, cultural embedded, illiterate, and inferior in their established hierarchy. Shembe in hymn 153 broke the cycle of spiritual poverty and racial discrimination by saying" 1) Here is the word of invitation, it invites all people. It does not discriminate against a single person, it invites all people [ Nanti Ilizwi elomemo....], 2) The brown, and Whites. It invites them likewise.....!" This him came to the Servant of suffering, on Tuesday June 26, 1928, at Phuzawanele. He was not using the imposed notion of the

so-called black people as we are not. So Shembe decolonised religion to be for everybody and everyone, which is agreement with McIntosh R, (2012) posit that “it is an unmerited favour that leads to an experiential intimacy with Jehovah. Out of that intimacy is an empowerment to find the life we were born to live. Organic Christianity is more about the exchange life than the changed life (see Gal. 2:20)”. The Inaugural lecture by ISCT prove the extent at which this spiritual philosophical endeavour has penetrated the grey and pia mater of the intellectuals in the advancement of Shembe teachings in Africa and the whole world and address challenges we face as the society.

**“THE POST-COLONIAL ROLE OF  
SHEMBE PHILOSOPHY ON THE  
DECOLONIZATION OF RELIGION  
AND SPIRITUALITY.”**

BY PROF. MBUSISENI C. DUBE

RETHINKING MANDATORY STATEMENT BY SHEMBE TO  
ADVANCE EDUCATION

**LAUNCH AND INAUGURAL  
LECTURE**

ISIQABETHO  
SENHLALAMAFINI  
Critical Thinkers

ISIQABETHO SENHLALAMAFINI CRITICAL THINKERS  
INVITES YOU TO JOIN THIS LAUNCH AND INAUGURAL  
LECTURE ON “ THE POST-COLONIAL ROLE OF SHEMBE  
PHILOSOPHY ON THE DECOLONIZATION OF RELIGION  
AND SPIRITUALITY. IT WILL TAKE PLACE ON

*Figure 1.*

Rev M.S Ngema      Rev P.S Mbeje      Rev D.H Hlabisa

## Messeges of Support

**Dr Yaa Ashantewaa K. Archer-Ngidi**

Dr. Yaa Ashantewaa K. Archer-Ngidi is a Pan-Afrikan Educator, Speaker, and Afrikologist. Dr. Archer-Ngidi is the founder and director of the Institute of Afrikology an educational non-governmental institute committed to reconstruction and practical implementation of African Renaissance initiatives based in Inkwali Village in the South of Durban. She received an honorary doctorate from the University of Zululand in 2017. She studied at the University of the West Indies, Kingston; Marcus Garvey University, Uganda; and Shibuya Language Institute, Japan.

Her key areas of specialisation include African Philosophy, African-centered Knowledge Systems, Community Stakeholder Management, Transformation Speaking, African-centered Curriculum, and African-based Business Innovation.

## Panelists

**ADV. T.H. MNYANDU**

Born at Greytown, attended Swayimane Secondary School and Dlangezwa High School  
 Qualifications : B. Iuris (SA) | LL. B (UNIZULU) | Diploma in Human Rights (Lund University - Sweden)

Work Experience : Admitted as Advocate of the High Court | Public Prosecutor : Magistrate (20 years) | Legal Advisor in Municipalities | currently - Consultant in Municipal Governance and Administration

Publications : Has published 6 (six) books: 1. IBANDLA LAMANAZARETHA: IZINTSHUMAYELO ZENKOSI ILANGA - (2016) | 2. INKOSI INYANGAYEZULU | 3. IMINYAKA EMIHLANU YONY AZILWEZULU -

*Figure 2.*



*Figure 3.*

The research findings indicated limited instances of community members incorporating Shembe philosophy into their daily lives for decolonial transformation during colonial period. While there were individual examples of practices and behaviours reflecting decolonization efforts, they did not represent a widespread trend within the community. Much improvement is depicted now as they can use infrastructure like stadiums, community halls, hotels, transport mode to congregate. Students has right to refuse cutting of hair policy to be imposed on them as per the Education Act 2 of 2000, section 27 of National Education Policy Act (NEPA) on Religion and Culture in South African schools. But a



perception still exist which suggests that a potential gap between the theoretical aspects of Shembe philosophy and its practical application for decolonial transformation.

### **3.4 Role of Shembe Leaders and Spiritual Practitioners.**

The study highlighted the critical role played by Shembe leaders and spiritual practitioners in promoting and guiding the process of decolonization within the community. These individuals were identified as key drivers in shaping the community's understanding and implementation of decolonization principles. However, there were also instances where the leadership lacked clear strategies or initiatives to effectively promote decolonial transformation, highlighting the need for enhanced leadership involvement and guidance. But figure 1.1 shows a positive move by church leaders which impact massively on the title of this academic paper under a research study.

### **3.5 Challenges and Opportunities in Decolonization and Cultural Heritage Preservation.**

The research findings revealed numerous challenges faced by the Shembe community in their pursuit of decolonization and cultural heritage preservation. These challenges included resistance to change, external socio-political pressures, and limited resources to enact meaningful decolonization efforts. Despite these obstacles, some opportunities for progress were identified, including increased community awareness, dialogue, and the potential for collaboration with like-minded organizations. Shembe created discourse of cultural truth which was to challenge the ideologies of the apartheid state and Christian missionaries in south Africa (Mullar,1994). According to his words from hym 17 which says in stanza 1 and 5 “the one punished is not forsake, let him not despair, awake, awake you Africans. “They now want to dethrone your ancient kingship, awake, awake you Africans”.

The colonial masters fought him servantly to an extent that a lot of statements by Shembe were burned and were not allowed to be published claimed to have subversive content and promote Nguni cultured beliefs. According to Hugh Tracy (1948), the most popular hym around 1960 was banned by the state in Radio Bantu now called uKhozi FM. Hym 183, ‘Lalela Zulu’ (Listen Zulu Nation! Listen, hear our people nagging me, about our land, we hear worst nations grumbling, they conspire against you like birds. We mean birds, we field of Dingaan and Senzangakhona”

He blended Christianity with acceptance of selected aspects of traditional African culture like use of vernacular Zulu to explain the scriptures and for singing religious hymns, use of Zulu music and dance, traditional Zulu clothing, ancestor remembrance not worshipping, polygamy dowry, ritual sacrifice, respect, praise songs. Most if not all these practices were not peculiar to the Zulu since it is way they lived before they were colonised. The blending of Christianity which his church manifest itself in his song number five in Hymn book. It became one of the post-colonial churches that offer an alternative worldview to that of the west based on reading texts. Magwaza (2004) argues that Shembe established the church basing it on the traditional Zulu religion and culture, Old Testament, and his own vision of God. He never downplayed traditions instead he fused church practices. For example, when Nazarite's dance, they wear traditional attire like amabheshu, izidwaba, imiqhele (tantamount to ungiyane that was worn by the Zulus), they use shields (amahawu) not to protect themselves when fighting but to praise God. Ten commandments dominate the church practice and his teachings. Shembe introduced a new symbolic and religious system that revitalised past Zulu customs and religious practice (Magwaza, 2004). He also says in the sabbath prayer, “He retrieved us from our straying from his law, through these words of the sabbath”. (Wasibuyisela kuye ekwedukeni kwethu emthethweni wakhe ngalawa mazwi eSabatha). The way we worshipped and praised God was contrary to the way we were taught about sabbath, to him we were lost, and God retrieved us through the revival of a forgotten sabbath. This church gained a momentum because it taught Africans that the Bible legitimated what they were already practising as Zulus (Cabrita, 2012). Sanctioning polygamy and incorporating ancestral spirits, which were both downplayed by missionaries, made the church more attractive to the Africans (Cabrita, 2012). He preached that these two were not only true to Zulu customs but were prescribed in the Old Testament (Cabrita, 2012).

### **3.6 Shembe Philosophy acted as a Catalyst for Liberation.**

It acted as catalyst for the liberation of the oppressed and destitute which resulted to other church leaders played a pivotal role in fighting colonisation openly. His relationship and proximity with the likes of Dr John Langalibalele Dube, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Mahatma Gandhi gazing from the

same area was not coincidence but a Gods plan. The Shembe spirit performed its first miracle politically when a historical anointment prayer at 04h00 at the dawn of the morning of the 08<sup>th</sup> of January 1912 to Dr JL Dube. Dr JL Dube was elected the first president of the SANNC in absentia. From Dube's letter of acceptance on being offered the position of President of the ANC, 1912 state that

***“While I believed that in education my race will find its greatest earthly blessing, I am forced to avow that at this present juncture of the reformation of the south African Commonwealth, it has a still more pressing need – the need of political vigilance and guidance, of political emancipation and rights”.***

Archbishop Dennis Hurley, an icon in the struggle for liberation, He openly opposed the group Areas Act and condemned the Sabotage Bill which introduced detention without trial. In 1964 he was appointed the President of south African Institute of a race. Relations. In his speech “apartheid: a crisis of Christian conscience”, he returned to his sermon of 1942. He emphasized the idea of a campaign for “crusaders and love”, he insisted that only Crusaders succeed in the field of social reforms. While Hurley and Desmond were transferred to other region, the letter was banned and deported to the United Kingdom, where he actively campaigned against forced removals and highlighted the injustice of apartheid. Amnesty international later appointed Desmond as their president working from their UK offices where he then published two books that soon became “the catalytic pathway towards apartheid the justification of the churches opposition to apartheid.” Dr Beyers Naude is another powerful example of how church leaders can influence and shape the course of history and the centenary celebrations pays tribute to this icon of the struggle, who former President Mandela regarded as one of the greatest “sons of Africa”, A founder of the Broederbund, an Afrikaner, and a revered son of the Dutch Reformed church, he suffered much personal trauma and isolation because of his faith in the struggle, Naude was an academic from Stellenbosch which served as the rockbed of Afrikaner nationalism. Reversed Beyers Naude Archbishop Dennis Hurley both established the Christian Institute in August 1963 helped the clergy develop a firm basis for critical thinking and a theological basis for non-racialism which later led Naude to be elected as the secretary of the SACC. When the first delegation was formed by the ANC after their unbanning in 1990, Oom Beyers, as he was affectionately known, ranked among the ANC group, and deeply influenced Church-based agencies like Diakonia, Pasca and Practical Ministries in their development programmes and directed the Ecumenical Movement.

3.6.1 At the onset it must be stressed that the “Muslim, contribution” to the liberation struggle in South Africa played was not made as a religious group. But as in India, Muslims in south Africa played their full role in opposing oppression throughout the history of liberation with persons of other faiths. In India, the Jamiat ul Ulema played its role in support of the All-India National congress, so too in south Africa, Muslim in the freedom struggle worked under the banner of liberation bodies and not on a sectional basis. But from time to time the question is raised as what role the Hindu or the Muslim played in the long walk to freedom. And in answer to this, President Nelson Mandela told a prominent in December 1998 in Saudi Arabia, that south African Muslim had been prominent in opposing race discrimination throughout the history of liberation. And he gave the names of Imam Haroon, Ahmed, Hassen Haffejee and Babia saloojee among our martyrs who died at the hands of the security police. To this list must be added the name martyr Rick Tuner, murdered by agents of apartheid, and whose grave is in the Muslim section of the Brook Street Cemetery in Durban. These are the following church leaders who followed the suit: Gandhi, Amnia Pahad and Fatima Meer.

3.6.2 The role of the Hindu Community in the liberation struggle.

It against the backdrop of African National Congress' Centennial year that the Arya Samaj decided to outline how it has been actively involved in the struggle. Pandit Nardev Vedalankar records that through the work of the Arya Samaj in East Africa, Lala Mockmchand Varman and others requested Mahatma Hansraj, principal of the Lahore Collage in India, to send a preacher to South Africa. Professor Bhai Parmanand arrived in Durban in 1905 and his visit was heralded as a great event for Hinduism. Interestingly, members of both Hindi and Tamil communities were involved in organizing the professor's itinerary. The importance of his visit underlined by none other Mahatma Gandhi (then Mohandas K Gandhi) serving as the Chairperson of the reception committee in Johannesburg. Professor, or Bhai Paramanand, as he was more popularly known, was a good orator and made a tremendous impact. He started the Hindu Reform Society to initiate reforms among all Hindus. He also established the Hindu Young Men's Association. His departure was followed by the visit of Swami Shankaranand in 1908. As a result of the Arya Samaj visit, Shankaranand established the South African Hindu Mahasabha as a

forum to unite Hindu interests. In 1912, he convened a major conference which culminated in the formation of the Hindu Mahasabha. By this time Gandhi's satyagraha which was launched in 1913 and the next important figure in Hinduism in South Africa emerges. The following church leaders who followed the suit: Swami Bhawani Dayal, Gopallal Hurbans, Sewsunker lalbahader Sineh, Dharam Kissoon Sineh, Jaydew Nasib Sineh, Dasarath Bundhoo, The Dookhran family and Vishwaprea Supersad.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS.**

##### **4.1 Enhancing Education and Awareness.**

Given the limited understanding of Shembe philosophy and decolonization principles among community members, it is crucial to prioritize education and awareness programs. Shembe leaders and spiritual practitioners should take an active role in educating the community about the key principles and teachings of Shembe philosophy. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and educational materials that explain the spiritual and cultural foundations of Shembe and how they relate to decolonization. By fostering greater knowledge and awareness, community members will be better equipped to incorporate Shembe philosophy into their daily lives for decolonial transformation.

##### **4.2 Strengthening Leadership Guidance.**

Shembe leaders and spiritual practitioners have a critical role to play in promoting and guiding the process of decolonization within the community. To strengthen this role, leadership training programs should be established to equip leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively advocate for decolonial transformation. These programs should focus on leadership strategies, community engagement, and developing a comprehensive understanding of decolonization principles. Furthermore, ongoing support and mentorship should be provided to leaders to ensure they are equipped to drive positive change within the community.

##### **4.3 Cultivating Dialogue and Community Engagement.**

Building a culture of open dialogue and community engagement is essential for fostering decolonization efforts within the Shembe community. Establishing platforms for community members to share their experiences, concerns, and ideas regarding decolonization can facilitate a deeper understanding and collective collaboration. Regular community gatherings, forums, or town hall meetings can be organized to allow for these discussions. This inclusive approach will empower community members to actively participate in the decolonial transformation process and contribute to its direction and outcomes.

##### **4.4 Collaborating with External Organizations.**

Recognizing that decolonial transformation is a broader societal issue, the Shembe community should seek opportunities to collaborate with external organizations that share similar goals. Partnering with academia, non-profit organizations, and government agencies can provide access to additional resources, expertise, and networks. These collaborations can support research initiatives, capacity building programs, and the sharing of best practices. By forging alliances, the Shembe community can amplify their efforts towards decolonization and cultural heritage preservation.

##### **4.5 Advocating for Policy Changes.**

To address the challenges faced by the Shembe community, advocacy for policy changes at local, regional, and national levels is necessary. Policy reforms that recognize and protect the cultural heritage of indigenous communities and promote decolonization can provide a supportive framework for the Shembe community's endeavours. Community leaders, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should actively engage policymakers, participate in policy-making forums, and advocate for the inclusion of decolonial principles in relevant legislation and policies.

##### **4.6 Supporting Economic Empowerment.**

Economic factors, such as limited resources and external socio-political pressures, can hinder the decolonization efforts of the Shembe community. To address these challenges, it is important to support economic empowerment initiatives within the community. This can include entrepreneurship

training, microfinance programs, and access to economic opportunities. By strengthening the economic resilience of community members, they will be better equipped to pursue and sustain decolonization and preserve their cultural heritage.

#### **4.7 Continual Evaluation and Adaptation.**

Decolonization is an ongoing process that requires constant evaluation, adaptation, and refinement. It is important for the Shembe community to regularly assess the outcomes and impact of their decolonization efforts. This can be achieved through periodic evaluations, community feedback mechanisms, and participatory monitoring and evaluation processes. Based on these findings, adjustments can be made to strategies and interventions to ensure their effectiveness and relevance.

#### **4.8 The Emergence of Shembe Philosophy as a Response to Colonial Legacies.**

Shembe philosophy emerged as a response to the colonial legacy and the marginalization of African spirituality. Led by influential figures such as Isaiah Mloyiswa Mudliwamafa Shembe, His Holiness JG Shembe, His Holiness AK Shembe, His Holiness MV Shembe, and His Holiness Dr MD Shembe (Mkhize, 2010), the Shembe movement sought to reclaim and revitalize indigenous knowledge systems within a framework that incorporated elements of Christianity.

The founders of Shembe philosophy aimed to create a religious and spiritual movement that would counteract the negative effects of colonialism. Drawing on African traditions and beliefs, Shembe philosophy promoted the preservation of cultural practices and the restoration of African spiritual identities. The movement sought to challenge the dominant narratives of Western Christianity by offering an alternative framework that integrated indigenous wisdom and rituals.

Shembe philosophy emphasized the importance of communal cohesion and cultural pride, fostering a sense of identity among its adherents (Wababa, 2018). This played a crucial role in the decolonization process, as the movement encouraged individuals to reclaim their cultural heritage and reject the imposed Eurocentric religious narratives.

Through their spiritual practices and cultural revival, the Shembe movement has become a significant force in challenging colonial legacies in religious and spiritual contexts. Their philosophy offers an alternative discourse that highlights the value and resilience of indigenous knowledge systems amid the ongoing struggles of decolonization.

#### **5.1 Conclusion.**

The recommendations provided aim to support the Shembe community in their pursuit of decolonization and the preservation of their cultural heritage. By enhancing education and awareness, strengthening leadership guidance, cultivating dialogue and community engagement, collaborating with external organizations, advocating for policy changes, supporting economic empowerment, and continually evaluating and adapting strategies, the community can advance their decolonization efforts. These recommendations should be viewed as a starting point for further action, with the understanding that the process of decolonization requires ongoing commitment, collaboration, and adaptation to achieve meaningful and sustainable change within the Shembe community.

In conclusion, the findings of the study indicates that Shembe philosophy has limited influence in guiding the community's beliefs and practices. The post-colonial role of Shembe philosophy in the decolonization of religion and spirituality requires further exploration and development.

Nonetheless, there are opportunities for progress through increased community engagement and the active involvement of Shembe leaders and spiritual practitioners. The findings of this study provide insights for future research and potential interventions aimed at advancing the decolonization of religion and spirituality within the Shembe.

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