JOURNAL OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change,
2026, 11(1), 3265-3271
ISSN: 2589-1316

Pastoral Therapy: Problematizing the Imbokodo Image through the Bosadi Theorization

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Citation: Phalatsi-Shilubana, M. (2026). Pastoral Therapy: Problematizing the Imbokodo Image through the Bosadi Theorization, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 11(1), 3265-3271. https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v11i1.4684

Published: March 16, 2026

ABSTRACT

"I am a rock" followed by the isiZulu expression "Wathinta abafazi, wathinta imbokodo" ("you strike a woman, you strike a rock") has historically functioned as a cultural metaphor affirming women's strength and resilience in African societies. However, within contemporary African contexts characterised by pervasive Gender-Based Violence (GBV), this imbokodo imagery warrants critical interrogation. While celebratory, the metaphor risks reinforcing gendered expectations that normalise women's suffering, silence vulnerability, and valorise endurance in ways that sustain patriarchal harm. Drawing on Bosadi theorisation and pastoral therapeutic discourse, this paper problematises the imbokodo image as a cultural and theological narrative that may inadvertently contribute to the persistence of GBV against women and girls. Through a critical literature-based approach, the study demonstrates how Bosadi theorisation offers an African feminist epistemological framework that disrupts essentialised constructions of womanhood and reclaims women's embodied agency, dignity, and right to care. The paper argues that pastoral therapy informed by Bosadi theorisation can generate liberative counter-narratives that centre women's lived experiences, affirm vulnerability as human rather than pathological, and promote self-care as an ethical and spiritual imperative. In doing so, the study contributes to African-centred scholarly conversations on gender, culture, and religion by advancing a decolonial pastoral praxis responsive to GBV in African contexts.

Keywords: Pastoral therapy, Imbokodo, Bosadi, gender stereotypes, GBV.

INTRODUCTION

The declaration *"I am a rock,"* echoed in the isiZulu expression *Wathinta abafazi, wathinta imbokodo* ("you strike a woman, you strike a rock"), occupies a significant place in African historical memory and religious-cultural discourse. Emerging most prominently from women's resistance to apartheid-era pass laws, the imbokodo metaphor has functioned as a symbol of women's strength, resilience, and collective agency in the face of systemic oppression (Walker, 1991; Gasa, 2007). This is because *"Imbokodo"* (an isiZulu/ word that refers to *grinding stone*) also occupies a significant place in South African women's political and theological imagination. Historically, the symbol gained prominence during the 1956 Women's March, organised by the Federation of South African Women, where women mobilised against pass laws and racialised patriarchy (Walker 1991:186–200). In this context, Imbokodo functioned as a counter-symbol to colonial and patriarchal representations of African women as passive or dependent.

Within African church and community contexts, this imagery continues to be invoked pastorally and theologically to affirm women's endurance amid social, economic, and political marginalisation. In contemporary African societies, however, the pastoral implications of such metaphors require renewed critical scrutiny. South

Africa and many other African contexts continue to experience alarmingly high levels of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls, a reality that constitutes not only a social crisis but also a profound pastoral and theological concern (Ratele, 2013; Vetten, 2014). Practical theology, with its attentiveness to lived experience, social context, and embodied suffering, is therefore compelled to interrogate the cultural narratives that shape pastoral meaning-making and caregiving practices (Osmer, 2008). Within this frame, the uncritical celebration of Imbokodo imagery risks reinforcing gendered expectations that normalise women's suffering, silence vulnerability, and sanctify endurance as an ethical or spiritual ideal.

Feminist scholars have cautioned that cultural narratives of female strength, while affirming on the surface, can function ambivalently by masking structural violence and shifting the burden of survival onto women themselves (Oduyoye, 2001; Phiri, 2004). Bosadi theology insists that African women's experiences of suffering particularly within intimate relationships and family structures must be understood as theologically significant (Masenya 2005). Accordingly, African feminist theologians have consistently argued that cultural practices and biblical texts must be critically engaged through the lens of women's lived realities (Oduyoye 1995; Dube 2006). In addition, Bosadi theorisation offers an African-rooted feminist epistemological framework that affirms women's full humanity, embodied dignity, and moral agency while critically engaging culture, Scripture, and religion. By bringing Bosadi theorisation into dialogue with pastoral therapeutic discourse, this study explores how dominant cultural metaphors such as imbokodo function within pastoral care practices and how they may inadvertently collude with patriarchal harm. Drawing on practical theological methodology and a critical literature-based approach, the paper argues that pastoral therapy informed by Bosadi theorisation can generate liberative counter-narratives that affirm vulnerability as a shared human condition rather than a gendered failure (Louw, 2016). Such an approach reframes self-care not as selfishness or spiritual weakness, but as an ethical and pastoral imperative integral to healing and human flourishing. In advancing a decolonial pastoral praxis responsive to GBV, this paper contributes to African-centred practical theological scholarship by challenging romanticised cultural narratives of endurance and proposing alternative pastoral frameworks that prioritise safety, dignity, and restorative care for women and girls in African contexts.

METHODOLOGY: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL AND CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

This study is situated within the discipline of Practical Theology, understood as a critically reflective and contextually embedded theological enterprise that attends to lived experience, social location, and practices of faith (Lee 2025:2; Swinton and Mowat, 2006). The methodology follows a qualitative, critical, literature-based approach, drawing on interdisciplinary sources from African feminist theology, pastoral care, trauma studies, and gender studies to interrogate the cultural and pastoral meanings of the imbokodo metaphor within contemporary African contexts. Guided by Osmer's (2008) fourfold task of practical theological interpretation—descriptive–empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic—the study first attends to the descriptive task by naming the persistence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls in South Africa as a lived pastoral reality.

The interpretive task explores how cultural metaphors such as *imbokodo* function symbolically within African religious and ecclesial spaces, shaping women's self-understanding, pastoral expectations, and responses to suffering. Here, Bosadi theorisation provides the primary interpretive lens, enabling a critical reading of cultural narratives that appear affirming yet may operate oppressively by essentialising women as resilient bearers of pain (Masenya, 1998, 2016). The normative task draws on African feminist theology, pastoral theology, and trauma-informed ethics to evaluate the theological adequacy of endurance-centred narratives within contexts of violence. Scripture, culture, and pastoral tradition are engaged dialogically rather than prescriptively, allowing for critical discernment that prioritises human dignity, justice, and healing (Oduyoye, 2001; Rakoczy, 2004).

Finally, the pragmatic task proposes a decolonial pastoral praxis informed by Bosadi theorisation and trauma-informed care principles. This praxis is oriented toward concrete pastoral implications for South African churches, chaplaincy contexts, and faith-based counselling practices responding to GBV. Rather than offering prescriptive interventions, the study advances conceptual and ethical guidelines that can inform pastoral caregiving, preaching, and counselling.

THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF IMBOKODO

Within theological and pastoral discourse, Imbokodo has been appropriated to affirm African women's resilience, endurance, and capacity to sustain families, churches, and communities under conditions of poverty, political violence, and social fragmentation (Oduyoye 1995:170–173). Whilst Imbokodo affirms strength, it can simultaneously operate as a disciplinary metaphor, placing a disproportionate burden of endurance on women. African women theologians argue that resilience discourse often becomes a mechanism through which women's suffering is normalised, spiritualised, or rendered invisible (Masenya 2004:158–160). Consequently, Ackermann

(1998) cautions that symbols of strength must be approached critically, especially when they are detached from questions of justice, power, and embodiment (Ackermann 1998:94–96).

Pastoral narratives frequently celebrate women as moral anchors and spiritual carriers of communal life. In fact, within pastoral contexts, women are frequently encouraged to "be strong," "endure," or "pray harder," particularly in abusive marriages or relationships. Ackermann (2001:31–33) describes this dynamic as a form of theological betrayal, where women's faith is used against their bodies. In addition, according to Phiri (2002) such counsel, implicitly constructs women's capacity to survive violence as a moral virtue, while absolving communities, churches, and perpetrators of responsibility (Phiri 2002:22–24). This in turn unfortunately perpetuates GBV as women try to live up to the expected moral levels of portraying strength at all cost.

Invoking Imbokodo uncritically in GBV contexts risks perpetuating theological violence, where women are implicitly expected to absorb harm because they are perceived as "strong enough" to do so (Haddad 2016:87–90). Bosadi theorisation provides a critical framework for interrogating the Imbokodo symbol within contexts of gender-based violence (GBV). The framework rebut the popular narrative and instead assert the following:

- Endurance in the face of violence is not holiness
- Strength is not measured by tolerance of abuse
- Silence is not a spiritual virtue

Taking the above into consideration, Bosadi theorisation therefore, reframes strength as resistance, voice, and the pursuit of safety, rather than the capacity to endure harm (Masenya 2005:742–744). In pastoral therapy, this requires a shift away from praising women's resilience toward protecting women's lives and agency. Thus, strength is no longer located in endurance, but in the collective dismantling of conditions that necessitate such endurance.

PASTORAL THERAPY, COMMUNAL PERSONHOOD, AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN AFRICAN CONTEXTS

As a system of counseling or psychotherapy, pastoral therapy engages deep understandings and propositions acquired from theology and the behavioral sciences to help individuals, couples, families, and groups achieve healing and growth. Magezi (2016) mentions that pastoral care has been consistently concerned with the caring ministry of religious communities (Magezi, 2016:1). In like manner Chisale and Buffel (2014:297) describe the purpose of pastoral care as the Christian response to the needs of all members of God's community, so that all will enjoy a full and abundant life. This is also mentioned by Magezi (2019) who notes that the total human being (soul – Hebrew *nephesh*) and his or her needs for care and cure (healing) is the central concern of pastoral care (Magezi, 2019:2). The practice of pastoral care according Phalatsi-Shilubana (2024) is anchored on knowing God and ability to relate to Him as a supreme being. Consequently, the word of God as written in the Bible, and in prayers are in most instances part of the process when providing pastoral care (Phalatsi-Shilubana, 2024:4). Unlike lay pastors who focus mainly on the spiritual aspects and provide care through the utilisation of biblical principles, pastoral therapy necessitates the assimilation and integration of the principles and precepts contained in Scriptures and applied Psychology (Carter, 1986:148). In addition, the effectiveness of pastoral therapy must be evaluated through a holistic and contextual lens that recognises the person as an embodied, relational, and culturally situated being.

Within African pastoral theology, personhood is understood communally rather than individualistically, shaped by interconnected relationships with family, community, ancestors, the spiritual realm, and the natural environment (Mbiti, 1969; Magezi, 2016). Consequently, pastoral care that neglects cultural worldview, social location, and lived environment risks misinterpreting both suffering and healing. Louw (2008; 2016) argues that pastoral therapy is fundamentally concerned with *cura vitae*—the care of life in its totality—requiring attentiveness to existential meaning, spiritual orientation, and contextual realities. Similarly, Magezi (2017) emphasises a contextual pastoral praxis that engages African cosmologies and communal epistemologies as integral to effective caregiving. From a practical theological perspective, Osmer's (2008) interpretive and pragmatic tasks further underscore the necessity of situating pastoral intervention within concrete social and cultural contexts. Thus, effective pastoral therapy within African contexts must adopt a holistic, culturally embedded approach that honours the inseparability of person, community, culture, and spirituality.

African philosophical and theological perspectives affirm personhood as relational and communal; therefore, gender-based violence represents a violation not only of bodily integrity but also of communal harmony, human dignity, and moral order (Mbiti, 1969: 108-109). Violence against women and gender-diverse persons disrupts the ethical fabric of community life and contradicts life-affirming values such as *ubuntu*, mutuality, and care (Forster 2010:7–9; Koopman 2008:248–250). According to the World Health Organisation, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) refers to any harmful act directed at an individual or group on the basis of gender, rooted in unequal power relations, structural inequality, and socially constructed norms that legitimise domination and control (WHO, 2013:2). Within African contexts, GBV must be understood not merely as individual pathology but as a

manifestation of systemic injustice embedded in patriarchal social structures, cultural practices, and historical power asymmetries. From a pastoral and practical theological perspective, GBV is both a social sin and a theological crisis, particularly where religious language, doctrines, or pastoral counsel have been misused to normalise abuse, sanctify suffering, or silence victims (Oduyoye 2001: 92-91; Nadar 2009: 136-139). Consequently, addressing GBV requires critical engagement with cultural norms, theological interpretations, and ecclesial practices that perpetuate gender inequality. In African pastoral theology, GBV calls for a response that integrates care, justice, protection, and transformation, recognising the inseparability of personal healing and social change.

PASTORAL THERAPY, TRAUMA, AND BOSADI THEORISATION

Pastoral therapy within contexts of pervasive GBV must be attentive to trauma as both an individual and structural reality. Trauma-informed care literature emphasises that trauma is not merely a psychological event but an embodied, relational, and spiritual disruption that affects meaning-making, trust, and agency (Herman, 1997; van der Kolk, 2014). In South African ecclesial contexts, where women often seek help first from clergy or pastoral caregivers, the absence of trauma-informed awareness can result in spiritualised advice that unintentionally retraumatises survivors (Louw, 2016; Magezi, 2019).Common pastoral responses such as exhortations to forgive, endure, pray harder, or preserve family unity at all costs may reflect deeply ingrained theological and cultural assumptions about women's strength and sacrificial responsibility. When coupled with *imbokodo* imagery, such responses risk reinforcing harmful narratives that valorise silence and resilience while minimising fear, pain, and the need for safety.

Trauma has many types, and it is variously defined according to differences in discipline and context. Definitions of trauma are intended to describe a phenomenon or lived experience, yet they also inform how humans experience the self, relationships, events, and the world (Holton and Snodgrass, 2023:337). Due to the prevalence of unfortunate life's events and experiences, Wendel (2022) argues that the trauma of this world is one of the primary mission fields of the twenty first century. Furthermore, notes that it is one of the supreme opportunities before the church today (Wendel, 2022:6). Trauma scholars caution that narratives demanding endurance without agency can exacerbate shame, dissociation, and self-blame among survivors (Herman, 1997). Thus for Christianity to continue being relevant, it must address the issue of trauma and provide understanding and resources for living in the midst of a trauma-torn world (Wendel, 2022:8).

Bosadi theorisation offers a critical corrective to such pastoral practices by foregrounding women's embodied experiences and ethical agency within African contexts. Masenya (2016) argues that African women must be recognised not merely as cultural symbols or moral exemplars, but as full human subjects whose well-being matters intrinsically. Within pastoral therapy, this implies a shift from endurance-centred care toward agency-affirming, safety-oriented, and relationally accountable practices. Integrating Bosadi with trauma-informed pastoral care allows vulnerability to be reinterpreted not as weakness or spiritual failure, but as a truthful human response to violation. Trauma-informed principles such as prioritising safety, restoring choice, validating survivors' narratives, and resisting coercive spiritual interpretations resonate strongly with Bosadi's insistence on dignity, voice, and relational justice (van der Kolk, 2014; Masenya, 1998). In South African church contexts, this approach calls for pastoral caregivers to critically examine how sermons, counselling language, and cultural metaphors shape women's capacity to name abuse and seek help.

CULTURAL PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Cultural practices play a complex and ambivalent role in shaping gender relations in African societies. Within South Africa, culture is often invoked as a source of identity, moral order, and communal belonging. However, when cultural practices are insulated from critical ethical reflection, they may function to legitimise unequal power relations and inadvertently sustain Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls. Practices such as *lobola* (bride price), ukuhlonipha (which is an IsiZulu word that refers to "respect" and polite avoidance, often requiring married women and youth to avoid using the names of senior male relatives), are frequently cited in GBV scholarship as sites of tension rather than as direct causes of violence. This include the privileging of male authority within extended family systems. While these practices are not inherently violent, their patriarchal interpretations can contribute to women's economic dependency, constrained agency, and social silencing conditions that heighten vulnerability to abuse (Haddad, 2017; Ratele, 2013). Cultural expectations that valorise female endurance and male authority may discourage women from disclosing abuse or exiting unsafe relationships, particularly when such actions are framed as bringing shame upon the family or community. These are articulated in expressions such as *"mosadi o ngalla motsheo"* which is a Sesotho idiom that simply means "a woman sulks at the fireplace". This phrase implies that a married woman may express her unhappiness or protest within the home, rather than leaving and exposing her unhappiness to the community.

Narratives of idealised African womanhood, articulated through metaphors of resilience, sacrifice, and moral fortitude, significantly complicate women's ability to seek protection, care, and justice in contexts of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). While such narratives are often mobilised to affirm women's dignity, they function ambivalently by obscuring the psychological, spiritual, and bodily costs of violence borne by women within patriarchal social structures. The *imbokodo* image, historically rooted in resistance and collective solidarity, is frequently reappropriated in contemporary cultural, ecclesial, and pastoral discourses to normalise suffering and frame abuse as something women are culturally and spiritually equipped to endure. In GBV contexts, violence is thus reframed not as an injustice demanding urgent intervention, but as an expected dimension of virtuous or faithful womanhood. African feminist theologians caution that when suffering is moralised or spiritualised, responsibility is displaced from perpetrators and structural injustices onto women themselves, legitimising oppressive social arrangements and rendering women's pain theologically meaningful yet pastorally unattended (Oduyoye, 2001, pp. 9–15; Phiri, 2004, pp. 20–22). Moreover, the moral elevation of strength delegitimises vulnerability, silencing disclosure and casting fear, dependency, and trauma as spiritual failure rather than as legitimate human responses to violence (Ackermann, 1998, pp. 92–95; Dube, 2003, pp. 23–27). From a trauma-informed pastoral therapy perspective, such narratives are particularly harmful, as they discourage lament, help-seeking, and survivor-centred care, thereby perpetuating cycles of abuse (Nadar, 2014, pp. 20–22; Pui-lan, 2005, pp. 64–68).

Bosadi theorisation offers a critical lens through which cultural practices can be reclaimed without being absolutized. Rather than rejecting culture wholesale, Bosadi interrogates how culture is lived, by whom, and at what cost particularly to women's bodies and dignity (Masenya, 2016). This approach affirms culture as dynamic and contestable, insisting that practices incompatible with justice, safety, and human flourishing must be transformed. From a Bosadi-informed pastoral perspective, culture cannot be invoked to justify harm, silence survivors, or excuse violence. The implication for pastoral theology is clear: cultural sensitivity must never override ethical responsibility. Pastoral caregivers are called to discern when cultural narratives function as resources for healing and when they operate as mechanisms of control. In contexts of GBV, this discernment requires centring women's lived experiences, prioritising safety, and resisting theological or cultural rationalisations of suffering. By engaging culture critically and compassionately, pastoral therapy can contribute to the transformation of harmful norms while affirming women's right to protection, care, and dignity within both cultural and faith communities.

BOSADI AND THE RESHAPING OF BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

Biblical hermeneutics generally relates to the correct interpretation of scripture by understanding context, history and language amongst other thing. In line with this, Bosadi reshapes biblical hermeneutics by relocating the interpretive centre from abstract textual authority to the lived ethical consequences of interpretation in African women's embodied realities. Rather than treating Scripture as a timeless and neutral repository of meaning, Bosadi approaches the biblical text as historically produced within androcentric and patriarchal power structures whose ideological assumptions continue to shape contemporary theological interpretation and ecclesial practice (Masenya 1998:20–24; Fiorenza 2001:66–69). This methodological shift foregrounds women's social location as a legitimate epistemological lens through which the Bible is read, critiqued, and reconstructed.

Within this hermeneutical framework, the central interpretive question is not merely *what the text says*, but *what the text does* when received and mobilised within contexts marked by gender inequality, intimate partner violence, and cultural-religious sanctioning of women's suffering. Bosadi thus subjects biblical interpretations that normalise women's silence, submission, or endurance of abuse particularly within marriage and family structures to rigorous hermeneutical suspicion (Dube 2000:11–13; West 2016:43–45). Such readings are exposed as complicit in sustaining theological discourses that legitimise domination rather than liberation. Within South African ecclesial contexts, cultural practices often intersect with theological interpretations in ways that intensify harm. Selective readings of Scripture combined with cultural norms of submission, forgiveness, and marital permanence may produce pastoral responses that prioritise reconciliation over safety and endurance over healing consequently increasing the risk of the church becoming spaces where violence is spiritualised rather than confronted.

Consequently, Bosadi reframes biblical interpretation as a morally accountable and justice-oriented practice in which theological meaning is evaluated according to its capacity to affirm women's dignity, agency, and bodily integrity. Masenya's insistence that Scripture must be read in ways that promote *botho/ubuntu*, mutuality, relational justice, and life-giving community renders interpretations that perpetuate harm theologically indefensible (Masenya, 2004:156–158; Oduyoye 2001:87–90). In this sense, Bosadi does not discard the biblical text but engages it critically and redemptively, insisting that faithful interpretation must resist patriarchal violence and contribute to transformative praxis for African women.

REFRAMING PASTORAL THERAPY THROUGH GBV AND BOSADI THEORISATION

Bosadi theorisation provides a critical hermeneutical and pastoral lens that centres African women's lived experiences as legitimate sources of theological knowledge (Masenya 1998; 2004). This framework in turn, challenges pastoral therapy to move toward gender-conscious, justice-oriented healing that names patriarchy, theological violence, and cultural silencing as pastoral concerns. In addition, this challenges pastoral approaches that spiritualise abuse or prioritise institutional stability over women's lives. Therefore, pastoral therapy cannot be regarded as contextually adequate unless it explicitly engages gender based violence (GBV) as a pervasive socio-theological reality shaping women's suffering, spirituality, and embodied existence (Vetten 2014; Jewkes et al. 2015). GBV is not merely a social concern external to pastoral care; it constitutes a theological and pastoral crisis that directly implicates church teachings, cultural norms, and pastoral praxis (Ackermann 1998; Haddad 2016). Within pastoral therapy, this requires rejecting the assumption that silence, submission, or suffering are inherently virtuous. Consequently naming violence as sin, and thus restoring women's agency, and resisting theological interpretations that sacralise suffering (Masenya 2012; Phiri 2002).

Bosadi reshapes GBV theology by naming violence against women as a theological crisis that implicates biblical interpretation, cultural practice, and ecclesial response. GBV is understood not only as physical harm, but as theological violence when scripture and doctrine are misused to sanctify abuse, silence survivors, or prioritise institutional reputation over women's lives (Oduyoye 1995:174–176). From a Bosadi perspective, reconciliation without justice, forgiveness without accountability, and submission without safety are theologically indefensible. Suffering produced by injustice is never redemptive, and any theology that demands endurance from violated bodies is rendered ethically and pastorally deficient (Masenya 2012:210–212). Bosadi theorisation thus reframes salvation and healing as the recovery of life, dignity, and relational justice, rather than the spiritualisation of pain.

Applied to pastoral therapy, Bosadi fundamentally redefines what constitutes *effective pastoral care*. Traditional pastoral approaches in African church contexts have often emphasised endurance, reconciliation, forgiveness, and marital preservation, frequently without sufficient attention to gendered power relations or women's bodily safety (Ackermann 1998:95–98). Pastoral therapy informed by Bosadi theorisation challenges churches to become sites of refuge rather than endurance-training spaces. Self-care, boundary-setting, and help-seeking are reframed as ethically responsible and theologically grounded acts rather than signs of diminished faith. By generating counter-narratives that resist romanticised suffering and affirm women's right to care and protection, Bosadi-informed pastoral therapy contributes to a decolonial, justice-oriented pastoral praxis. Such a praxis is urgently needed within South African ecclesial landscapes where faith continues to hold profound influence over gender norms, moral authority, and responses to GBV. Within this framework, pastoral caregivers are called to hold together therapeutic accompaniment and prophetic resistance, ensuring that pastoral practices do not collude—implicitly or explicitly—with structures that normalise women's suffering (Ackermann 2001:33–35).

CONCLUSION

When critically engaged through Bosadi theorisation, Imbokodo is transformed from a burden-bearing metaphor into a symbol of active resistance, restored dignity, and communal accountability. It ceases to justify women's suffering and instead exposes violence against women as a theological, pastoral, and moral failure (Masenya 2004:160–162; Phiri 2002:27). Reclaiming Imbokodo as a prophetic theological symbol demands that churches and pastoral caregivers confront their own complicity in sustaining harmful endurance narratives. Praising women's strength while remaining silent about violence constitutes a failure of pastoral responsibility (Haddad 2016:92–94). In this reframing, Imbokodo becomes not a demand placed upon women, but an ethical demand placed upon communities: if women are "the rock," then the community must ensure they are not continually struck. Through a critical literature-based approach, the study demonstrated how Bosadi theorisation offers an African feminist epistemological framework that disrupts essentialised constructions of womanhood and reclaims women's embodied agency, dignity, and right to care. The paper demonstrates how pastoral therapy that informed by Bosadi theorisation can generate liberative counter-narratives that centre women's lived experiences, affirm vulnerability as human rather than pathological, and promote self-care as an ethical and spiritual imperative.

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