

Purpose of a Kitchen Party

Swahili transcript:

Ningependa kuzungumzia sherehe ya tunaita sherehe ya kitchen party, ninashindwa kupata neno zuri la Kiswahili kwa sababu tumezoea kusema kitchen party, *kitchen party*. Aah! sherehe hii ya kitchen party mara nyingi ni sherehe ambayo inafanyika katika kumwandaa binti ambaye anatarajia kuolewa. Kwa miaka mingi sasa kwa Tanzania tumekuwa na sherehe hizi za kitchen party, kwamba inamsaidia yule dada ambaye anatarajia kuolewa kuweza kumwandaa vyema ili aweze kuwa mama mzuri katika familia. Aam! kama ambavyo tunafahamu kwamba kabla ya binti kuolewa, kuna kuwa na taratibu zinafanyika, kwamba binti amechumbiwa, aah! yule mchumba ambaye amemchumbia mara nyingi anawatuma tunaita washenga katika kwa wazazi wa yule binti, na wataongea na wazazi wa binti na wakisha kubaliana na mambo yote wakishaongea kuhusu mahari, na hapo ndipo sherehe ya harusi inaanza kuandaliwa. Sasa kabla ya kufikia siku ile ya harusi, kuna kuwa na hii sherehe ambayo nimesema tunaita kitchen party. Na kitchen party katika Tanzania kama nilivyosema kwamba ni sherehe ambayo mahususi kwa ajili ya kumwandaa binti anapotarajia kuanza nyumba yake, yaani anapotarajia kuolewa. Aaah!, mara nyingi sherehe hii inahusisha wakina mama, mara nyingi ni wakina mama ndio ambao wanaandaa sherehe hii, na kwa nini tanaita kitchen party? tunaita kitchen party kwa sababu imedhamiria kumwandaa binti hasa katika vyombo vya jikoni. Ndio maana tunasema kitchen, kitchen ni kwa lugha ya kiingereza, kwa maana hiyo ni jiko, katika Kiswahili kitchen ni jiko. Kwa hiyo ukisema kitchen party ni kama sikukuu ya jikoni, kwa hiyo ndio maana nasema haileti maana nzuri katika Kiswahili, lakini ni sherehe ambayo wamama wanajiandaa, wananunua vyombo vya jikoni vya kuweza kumsaidia yule binti anapojiandaa kuanza maisha ya ndoa. Kwa hiyo mara nyingi wananunua vyombo, kwa mfano sahani, aah! watanunua vikombe, watanunua sufuria, watanunua aah! vifaa vya usafi, watanunua vitu mbalimbali ambavyo watampa binti huyu ambaye anatarajia kuanza maisha yake ya ndoa pamoja na mume wake. Na sherehe hizi za kitchen party mara nyingi zimefanyika katika miji mikubwa, kwa mfano Dar es salaam, mimi nimeishi Dar es salaam na nimehudhuria sherehe nyingi za kitchen

party. Na mara nyingi huwa kama nilivyosema ni wakina mama ndio ambao wanahusika katika kuiandaa sherehe hii, kwa hiyo wananunua vitu mbalimbali, au wengine huwa wanaandika labda binti atahitaji nini, labda atahitaji sufuria, atahitaji sahani, atahitaji vifaa vya usafi, pengine atahitaji labda meza ya chakula, au atahitaji... inategemea sasa na wale wakina mama ambao wanaiandaa, na yule binti anatoka katika labda familia gani. Kwa mfano wale ambao wanatoka katika familia wazazi wake wana uwezo labda wa kifedha, mara nyingi sherehe inakuwa ni kubwa na binti ananunuliwa vitu vingi sana vya thamani, pengine ananunuliwa hata friji au ananunuliwa kabati la nguo, labda kabati la vyombo, pamoja na vyombo pamoja na vitu vya jinsi hiyo.

English translation:

I would like to talk about kitchen parties. We don't have a good name for this celebration in Swahili because we have always said it in English, "kitchen party." This is a kind of celebration to prepare a young lady who is going to get married. We have had this kind of celebration in Tanzania for many years now. This celebration is intended to prepare a young lady to be a good mother to her family. As we know, before a young lady gets married, there is an official engagement between the young lady and the young man who wants to marry her. The parents of the young man have sent a middleman to the parents of her fiancé. In Swahili we call these people *washenga*. If the parents of the young lady agree to their daughter marrying that young man, they discuss the dowry. After that, wedding preparations begin. Before the wedding day, there is this kind of celebration, as I mentioned earlier, a kitchen party. Normally, this celebration is held by women. Even on the day of the kitchen party, men are not allowed to come. It is for women only. Why do we call it a kitchen party? It is because this celebration is intended to provide the young lady with kitchen utensils. Women buy kitchen utensils to help the young lady as she is preparing to start married life. They buy plates, cups, pots and pans, cleaning equipment and other things which will help this young lady take care of her family. Kitchen parties are usually held in big cities like Dar es Salaam. I lived in Dar es Salaam and I went to some of these parties. Some times, women write down some of the things which they know the young bride-to-be will need. For example maybe she will need

sauce pans, plates, or cleaning equipment or a dinner table, etcetera. It depends on the women who are having the kitchen party. Her family background also matters. If her parents are rich, the celebration will be big and she will get many expensive presents. They might even buy her a fridge, cupboards and other things.

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