

**Angelina Ribebe (right) is the traditional leader of the Sambiyu people in the Kavango in Namibia. A woman's magazine called *Sister Namibia*, visited her at her home in Vungu Vungu**



**"Women can do a very good job as traditional leaders of their communities."**

back a stolen animal to its owner. So we always give fines as part of the punishment.

**Sister Namibia: Are there any specific problems affecting women in your community, such as violence?**

**Ribebe:** Violence against women is not a particular problem here.

**Sister Namibia: Not even in connection with alcohol?**

**Ribebe:** No. We do not have a problem with alcohol — people make and drink a lot of traditional beer. But it does not often lead to violence.

**Sister Namibia: Do you think there should be more women chiefs in Namibia?**

**Ribebe:** Yes, definitely. We are having a lot of meetings between chiefs these days. Sometimes I am the only woman at such conferences, and I get left out of the "bed-room politics" of men. They share rooms and continue their debates into the night. I also think women can do a very good job as traditional leaders of their communities. ✪

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# Meet the chief

**Sister Namibia: How did you become a chief?**

**Ribebe:** My grandmother, Maria Mwengere, was our chief for many, many years. When I was a young girl, she took me with her wherever she went. I learnt all about her work, and after she died in 1987, I became the chief.

**Sister Namibia: Is it common to have women chiefs in your community?**

**Ribebe:** Not only in my community. In the whole of the Kavango we have a system where women can become chiefs.

**Sister Namibia: What do you think about your work?**

**Ribebe:** I really enjoy it. I like

to help solve the problems in the community. When something has been stolen or there is a dispute about land, I call all the people together to discuss the matter.

**Sister Namibia: Do you punish people?**

**Ribebe:** If necessary, we do. We have a small prison where they can be locked up for a few days. People are also given fines to pay in money or cattle.

**Sister Namibia: Do people prefer the traditional court or the magistrate's court?**

**Ribebe:** We prefer our traditional court because we believe in compensation. It is not enough to just send someone to prison — that does not give