

**UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF FEMALE-HEADED
HOUSEHOLDS: THE CASE OF RENOSTERBERG MUNICIPALITY, PIXLEY KA SEME
DISTRICT, NORTHERN CAPE**

BY

BONAKELE PHUZI

STUDENT NO: 2004117210

**“DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS IN
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Supervisor: Prof Lucius Botes

Co-supervisor: Ms Kholisa Rani

DECLARATION

“I, **Bonakele Phuzi (Student No: 2004117210)**, declare that the Master’s Degree research dissertation or interrelated, publishable manuscripts/published articles, or coursework Master’s Degree mini- dissertation that I herewith submit for the **Master’s Degree qualification in DEVELOPMENT STUDIES** at the University of the Free State is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.”

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late parents, Nyushu Kleinbooi and Notest Lucy Phuzi who passed away before I engaged myself in studies. My siblings and I were in elementary school when my mother was a domestic worker and my father a garden worker. Our parents worked so hard to raise us all with the little they got in their turbulent life. Without their constant support and uncountable sacrifices, we would have never reached the position that we are in today and words fall short to express our gratitude for them. I had promised to make my parents proud with my academic achievements and success. Even if they are no more with me, I know they appreciate this dedication as a lasting legacy.

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ABSTRACT

The population of female-headed households in South Africa has significantly risen. The Statistics SA General House Survey (GHS) of 2020 revealed an estimate of 7.2 million or 41.9 percent of these households are headed by women, an increase from 41.8 percent estimated in the 2019 GHS. Studies agree that FHHs are exposed to different livelihoods challenges and experiences. Through a qualitative interview with 22 female participants, this study engaged in an in-depth exploration to understand the challenges faced by female-headed households, investigate the existing livelihood strategies of FHHs, and reflect on relevant mechanisms that respond to difficulties and pressures experienced by female heads. This study utilised a sustainable livelihood approach to focus on a typical South African municipal setting of Renosterberg Local Municipality to explore the challenges and understand the livelihoods strategies used by females heading households to sustain their families. The study results revealed that a combination of factors such as deaths of husbands, husbands leaving families, unemployment and sickness of husbands, deaths of parents and females never marrying contribute to FHHs in Renosterberg Local Municipality. The study established that child support grants and part-time employment are the most significant sources of income in FHHs, and they are constantly experiencing shortages of money, food, clothing and school supplies. The study found that most FHHs are unemployed and often rely on informal jobs and rely on life skills such as hairdressing to earn money to feed their families. Despite these identified challenges, the study realised those female-headed households are eager to improve themselves and expand their sources of income through obtaining skills and further qualifications such as early childhood development certificates, computer training and completing their matric. Others are highly involved in community programmes that enhance their social skills and give them access to different programmes that earn them an income. This study established that FHHs have various coping mechanisms they rely on to sustain their livelihoods. Therefore, the study reflected on the need for more government mechanisms to enhance the skills capacity of female-headed households, increase their employment rate and expand their income support. Therefore, this study explored and discussed the sustainable livelihoods and the survival strategies of FHHs in Renosterberg Local Municipality.

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1. Introduction

The noted growing number of women heads has not missed the researcher's interest to better understand how these single-headed households cope with their daily life activities to sustain their livelihoods, especially in small semi-rural municipalities.

There is evidence of an increase of female heads in many regions in the world as well as developing countries (Schatz, Madhavan & Williams, 2011). The increase is because of HIV/AIDS, searching for employment (migration), increased divorce rates, death and abandonment (Oestergard, 1992). According to Chant (1997) and agreed by O'laughlin (1998), the increment of these female-headed households has been the result of their partners' death, migration or either by domestic conflicts, separations and ultimate divorce, and these findings were also noted by Horrel and Krishnan (2007). The settlement results in two types of arrangements where others will be *de jure* and others will be *de facto* (Chant, 2003; Horrel & Krishnan, 2007). It is also evident that this phenomenon is happening in the global world and change or accept this form of family headship out of the norm of a man regarded as head of a household in the customary gender (Chant, 2003).

These can result in the growing of feminisation of poverty, as households led by women heads can usually be 'poorest of the poor' (Chant, 2016). Women in FHHs often have to perform a dual role as the income earner and caregiver. In traditional African societies, due to its patriarchal nature, the oldest male, who provides economically for the household has been considered as the head. As suggested by Posel (2001), headships in South African households are those that are regarded as the oldest and in most cases those who earned an income and bring the most to the household. This concept is associated with assumptions of the reality of hierarchical relationship among members of the households. The head can also be a member of the household who contributes economically and has authority in decision-making. Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2018), in their censuses and surveys, identifies the head as either a male or female who undertakes economic responsibilities and makes most decisions in the household. In South Africa and other parts of Southern Africa, it becomes problematic to identify this because of polygamous and extended families and because of men who are often away to make a living for the household. In this situation, the female becomes the *de facto* head of household while the men are away (Armstrong, 2016). For instance, Wilshusen (2017) stated that the oldest male in a family becomes the primary source of financial support and becomes the head of the household. According to Islam *et al.* (2018), in Bangladesh, the female head has also become a common phenomenon because of many sources, as they become significant contributors to the financial well-being of households and overall economy. Asiedu-Amoako *et al.* (2016), suggest that women in Ghana also provide financial support to their families as well as the men in maintaining a

sustainable family. This is a clear indication that women can end up being heads of households. Separated women, widows, single mothers and married women with non-cooperative husbands, however, often experience poverty and economic distress. With these cases, women have to take the responsibility of earning to take care of their families; this forces them to go out from their home and to earn a living for their family (Modirwa & Oladele, 2012). This points to the fact that women taking up headship of families emanate not only from the demise of the male spouse, but also from various reasons, including internal household conflicts.

Clearly, male labour migration (even if transitory) led to female household-headship (Nwosu & Ndinda, 2018). There are many academic discussions that have established a close relationship between poverty and FHHs. These debates have mainly advanced the poverty burden of women in FHHs, identifying these women as more vulnerable to poverty than their male counterparts (Clark, 1984). Indeed, Horrel and Krishnan (2006) regarded poverty heterogeneity as more prevalent among FHHs, arguing that the poverty burden is disproportionate in these households. Other arguments present gender and poverty as controversial; yet, it is widely acknowledged that women bear an unequal share of poverty. According to Rogan (2016), there is multi-dimensional gendered poverty in South Africa, where women poverty is high because of shortcomings that women are confronted with in the employment marketplace. These studies link decades-long high poverty statistics to FHHs, making this group an appropriate target for poverty-alleviation measures (Chant, 1997; Horrell & Krishnan, 2006). In the Poverty Vulnerability Report released by Stats SA (2017), mentioned women as most affected and vulnerable to poverty compared to other majority South Africans living who are also subjected to poverty. It is believed that cultural beliefs and values are the contributors because it excludes women from decision-making and this results in their opinions not being heard. The report further mentioned that the rising inequalities are because of living standards that are uniform in the country. According to the World Bank (2015), South Africa's Gini coefficient was 0.59 in 2015. Scholars such as Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard (2012) mentioned 85% inequalities due to income in the labour market and those unemployed. It is further reported that poverty is thriving in many countries in the world where most people live on less than one US dollar per day and experience severe poverty, especially in African states (Soudien, Reddy & Woolard, 2019). However, some evidence has particularly shown that the families that are female-headed have shown greater resilience and willpower as compared to those that are led by male counterparts (Fuller & Lain, 2017).

Although the poverty phenomenon among FHHs is a widely researched issue, a gap exists in the literature concerning FHHs' livelihood strategies, as well as their resistance to poverty, especially in semi-rural areas. According to DFID (1999), livelihood strategies, also known as 'adaptive approaches', are all-embracing terms used to represent the variety and grouping of activities and adoptions that people assume in order to attain their livelihood goals or livelihood outcomes. Livelihood strategies can be classified into following domains: on-farm (Alemu, 2012; Neves & Du

Toit, 2013), which is alternatively referred to as agriculture and other land-based activities (Neves, 2017); non-farm (Alemu, 2012), including formal sector employment and informal economic activities (Neves, 2017), which may be waged or own account (Neves & Du Toit, 2013); and non-labour resources of income (Alemu, 2012), which is social welfare and grants (Neves, 2017), remittances transmitted through urban labour linkages (Neves, 2017) and non-income sources such as social reciprocity founded on mutuality (Neves & Du Toit, 2013; see also Neves, 2017).

Livelihood strategies or livelihood systems are not the same as ‘coping strategies’ adopted in times of crises. Livelihood strategies are determined to a large extent by the assets that the people possess as well as the converting structures and procedures, which include the establishments, procedures and laws that govern certain activities. Ideally, people should have a wide range of livelihood strategies from which to choose, in order to reduce their vulnerability. The livelihood approach posits that people’s choice of a livelihood strategy is to a great extent determined by the assets (human, financial, physical, social and natural) at their disposal. The poor come up with livelihood strategies such as informal trading of goods and services in order to try and escape from a situation of poverty and vulnerability.

To contribute to the academic knowledge and the researcher’s aim to comprehend the extent of poverty and sustainable living approaches employed by households of female heads within the Renosterberg Municipality, the study of the sustainability framework was employed using the sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) (Loison, 2015), which is made up of five components, i.e. the vulnerability context, livelihood assets, transforming structures and processes, livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes (Carney, 1998) to evaluate how the social, political, economic, environmental and institutional external environment determines people’s capitals and how they are converted into livelihood outcomes (Loison, 2015). The framework is modelled along Chambers and Conway’s definition of sustainable livelihoods. They define sustainable livelihoods as:

A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation (Chambers & Conway, 1991:6).

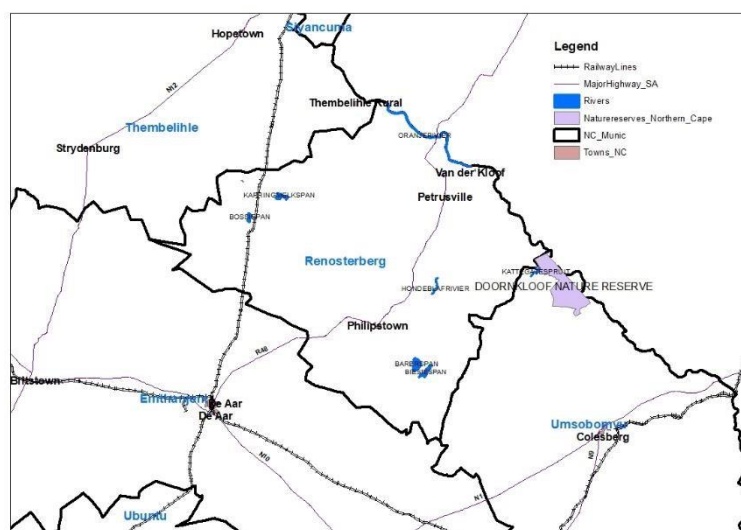
Therefore, this study examined and better understand the different categories of sustainable livelihoods to survival strategies of female-heads in Renosterberg Local Municipality, and make use of the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) because, it understands poverty in relations to income or consumption scarcity, it is proven that its analysis of livelihood has people approach and better assess their assets in a holistic framework to better understand how the disposal of these assets is linked to the strategies that they take up to achieve desired outcomes (Carney, 2002).

1.1. Study area

Renosterberg Local Municipality is a small town located in the district of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality. The area is characterised by unemployment and lack of development. It is about 250km away of Kimberley, which is the capital city of the Northern Cape Province, and 110km away from De Aar, where all government district offices are stationed. The municipality consists of three towns, namely Petrusville, Phillipstown and Vanderkloof.

The area is vast and about half million hectares (554 502,514 ha), according to the Renosterberg Municipality's Integrated Development Plan (Renosterberg IDP Report, 2019).

Figure 1: Locality map of Renosterberg Municipality



The Renosterberg Municipality covers an area of approximately 5 530km² and has a population of approximately 10 978 (StatsSA, 2011). The Renosterberg IDP Report (2019) shows that young and male persons are leaving the area to seek employment elsewhere to sustain their households or family livelihoods. This results in the growth of female-headed households, as it constitutes about 34.4% of the total number of households (Stats SA, 2018). In other words, one out of every three households is female-headed. The study focuses on how FHHs employed their livelihood strategies to survive their households and challenges that they experience.

1.2. Problem statement

South Africa has also experienced an increment in the population among the FHHs. The FHHs of South Africa, according to Statistics SA General Household Survey, were estimated at 37.9 percent in 2018 (Stats SA, 2018) and increased to 41.8 percent in 2019 (Stats SA GHS, 2019); another increase was experienced, with 41.9 percent in 2020 (Stats SA GHS, 2020). According to the same reports, the

Northern Cape Province, where Renosterberg Municipality is, has shown a growth in this population to 48.3 percent in 2020 and increased from the previous years – 44.5 percent in 2019 and 41.0 percent in 2018. The Renosterberg Municipality also saw an increase in these FHHs by 0.4 percent from 1 041 to 1 225 (Stats SA GHS 2018). This population growth in the Renosterberg Municipality has put pressure on the municipality, as it does not have proper means to provide basic services and create a conducive environment for job opportunities. These often can lead to unsustainable livelihoods among the residents, especially vulnerable women (Saul, 2020). It is not fully understood how female heads in the area survive hardship. For this reason, there appears to be a gap in the understanding of the sustainable livelihoods and the coping mechanisms used by the female heads in this municipality.

It is the interest of the researcher to understand better the coping mechanisms of these FHHs and call for urgent interventions.

Considering this background, the researcher decided to investigate and better understand the sustainable livelihoods and survival strategies and also to explore the coping mechanisms of FHHs in this municipality.

1.3. Broad aim of the study and research objectives

To investigate and better understand the different types of sustainable livelihoods and survival strategies of female-headed households in Renosterberg Municipality in Northern Cape.

Objectives are:

- i. Understand the challenges that are faced by female-headed households.
- ii. Investigate the existing livelihood strategies of FHHs.
- iii. Recommend provisioning mechanisms that respond to difficulties and pressures experienced by female heads in the area.

1.4. The significance of the study

With the adoption of more policies on gender equality and women empowerment as well as increased activism for women rights and against gender-based violence, a rise in FHHs has been observed worldwide. For decades, urban settings have been regarded as better off than rural areas (Lalthapersal-Pillay, 2002:38). Diverse studies engage poverty-reduction strategies and policies with the aim of fighting poverty and diversifying livelihood strategies in poor communities. Therefore, more studies have focused on poverty and livelihood strategies among FHHs in rural areas (Chant, 2003; Goebel & Dodson, 2011; Handa, 1994; Kpoor, 2015; Lalthapersal-Pillay, 2002; Mwawuda, 2013; Rogan, 2013;

Rusomyo, 2014). Consequently, this study examines the lived experiences and livelihood strategies of FHHs in the Renosterberg Local Municipality. The study seeks to contribute to the evolving academic debates on sustainable livelihoods by exploring experiences and recommendations on FHHs, their livelihood strategies, and their link to poverty. These recommendations could be useful to policymakers.

1.5. Research methodology

Research methodology states the systematic way of explaining an investigated problem (Kothari, 2004). Research methodology provides a blueprint or systematic way one follows to arrive at answers to a research question. Research methodology covers the whole spectrum of steps followed and measures applied in a piece of research and justification of such steps and measures (Kothari, 2004). Elements of research such as design, sampling, data collection, data analysis and presentation are all part of research methodology. Apart from guiding one's own study, the methodology also provides a framework within which other researchers can evaluate and replicate one's study (Kothari, 2004).

1.5.1. Research design

Bryman (2012:46) explains the research design as a framework to be able to do your data collection and analysis of that data. The method of qualitative data collection and the usage of thematic analysis was combined to do this research. This focuses in more details and deep understanding of a situation and allows the active involvement of the researcher in the study processes, and be able to study the respondents in their natural setting within the locality (Creswell, 2009; Silverman, 2010). All these interviews took place at the participants' dwelling units in Petrusville, which form part of the Renosterberg Local Municipality. All the characteristics of this research method convince the researcher that this method is appropriate to realise the objectives of this study.

The qualitative methodology uses words more than numbers in the collection and exploration of statistics (Bryman & Bell 2012). As mentioned earlier, those who experience poverty, in this case female-headed households, are the most suitable to define their own experiences and the livelihood strategies they use to alleviate poverty. The study therefore aims to unearth the experiences of FHHs in their natural setting. It is clear from other scholars that in the qualitative study, the researchers are having an effect on the process and they pay attention to the entire procedure, look into the development and joining of each stage, and care is exercised not to sway the study and finally the results (Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

During data collection, the researcher did all the information collection activities because he was familiar with the area and that presented a close partnership between the researcher and the

respondents resulting in sharing of their stories without restraints. Participants were be informed about the purpose of the study. The researcher strived to avoid bias or self-deception and put aside his personal views and record all aspects and observations as much as possible to avoid bias in data analysis, interpretation and in writing the findings. The methodology rendered comprehensive thoughtful of the livelihoods of FHHs and their experiences and perceptions.

1.5.2. Population of the study

This municipality has about 3 563 households, with more than 34.8% being female headed. The population, according to the General Household Survey 2018, was 11 818 (Stats SA GHS 2018). The population in this study can be regarded as the space of components from which the study group (a sample) were be drawn (Bryman, 2012). The study group refers to all FHHs that reside within the Renosterberg Municipality, but not all FHHs were visited and therefore a selected sample is necessary to study, as it would be impossible to study all FHHs due to lack of time of the academic year and money. Bryman (2012:187) described the listing of units in the population from which the sample is selected as a sampling frame. Renosterberg Municipality is administratively divided into three towns; Petrusville, Vanderkloof and Phillipstown.

1.5.3. Sampling technique and design

Bryman (2012) regards a sample as a subset of the population and can be defined as the segment of the population for research purposes. Within sampling, the probability method and non-probability sampling can be found (Bryman, 2012). This study made use a non-probability sampling method because it is more advantageous in the case study (Mouton, 2001).

In this study, the population of 20 FHHs aged 18 years old and older who reside within Renosterberg Municipality were sampled and were be visited using the qualitative method. A list of female-headed households were be sourced from the Department of Social Development. A gatekeeper letter has been sourced and approved by the department. The researcher focused on female-headed households in Petrusville; selecting a population from one town ensured the better understanding of the female-headed households' livelihood and minimise time lost to the study. The researcher purposively talked to 20 female-headed households until saturation has been reached. In qualitative research, this is a point where the respondents do not provide any other new information.

The importance of focusing on female headed household is because the government with basic services has the hope that it will help them improve or result in sustainable livelihood. The economic status of a family might improve over time. The researcher is aware that the numbered sample results cannot be generalised to the whole population and therefore it cannot be representative of the population of the area. According to Sandelowski (1996), "samples in qualitative research tend to be

small in order to support the depth of case-oriented analysis, and qualitative samples are purposive in nature and selected to provide rich-textured evidence towards the study.”

This method of sampling might not be the best and is criticised in regard to its findings that cannot be easily compared or representative to the whole population, but such a study as this is not interested in generalising to the entire communities, but sought to get deep and rich data that fully explain the situation and experience of female headed household in a particular location.

1.5.4. Data collection methods

This process only started after the approval from the Ethics Committee of the Free State University. This study was qualitative in nature and gave an opportunity for the researcher to understand the respondents’ experiences and perceptions about their living conditions. Furthermore, the advantage of conducting interviews was that it was a shared conversation with the respondents. It allowed the interviewer an opportunity to probe for answers and gave the interviewees an opportunity to ask questions where they did not understand something and to fully express themselves. An interview guide was used to collect data. Responses were recorded using a voice recording tape and not a video recording as they would compromise the confidentiality of the participant. The researcher also took field notes. The voice recordings and notes were then transcribed as told by the respondents.

The researcher developed the interview guide with questions in languages that are used in the area, which was stimulate in-depth discussions about FHHs’ livelihood strategies. The interviews took between 40 and 60 minutes and were conducted in the selected participants’ settings and in the privacy of their dwelling units. The participants were informed about the purpose of the visit and were allowed to opt for participation or not in the study. Permission in the form of a written consent form was attained from the participants and they were assured about confidentiality in all their personal information that was not be published. The interview guide included questions such as: Why do you consider your household as headed by a female? On average, how much money do you have to live from) per week, per month? Do you receive any support from elsewhere? What is the biggest challenge that you and your household is currently facing? What is the biggest livelihood challenge you and your household currently face? What activities do you engage in to maintain your household? Do you think there is anything those in power should do to support female-headed households?

Due to the sudden eruption of the epidemic called COVID-19, the researcher observed all the regulation protocols of wearing a mask, sanitising of hands, keeping a 1.5 m distance and the interview guide was not unnecessarily long.

1.5.5. Data analysis

For qualitative data, data analysis was done simultaneously with data collection to be able to do follow up on new developing issues that needed more clarity. The analysis of data was done through thematic content analysis. The qualitative method was followed, and interview guides were employed to collect data. Therefore, a process to incorporate the various elements, analytically breaking down of acquired research data into smaller manageable information, by applying analysis was the applied tool to present and interpret data by reading through transcripts, field notes and documents. Through the interviews, themes and sub-themes were generated by coding to evaluate them better and give names to be able to link and connect the concepts and write up the insights (Bryman, 2012). The researcher was aware that the thematic analysis method was used in qualitative methods and in its analysis of data, using identifying, analysing and reporting themes in one's data (Bryman, 2012). It marginally organised and described data-rich detail (Alhojailan, 2012). Advantages of this analysis were that it offered flexibility for beginning of data collection with combined analysis in the research process and assisted the researcher to recognise several references among the progressing themes and the complete data (Alhojailan, 2012).

1.6. Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was attained through the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management from the University of the Free State, because the study involved human subjects, even though it might not have posed any risk of physical harm to participants. The objectives of the study and the aims were described to the respondents, seeking permission to use an audio tape recorder; in addition, participants were notified that the research was for academic purposes to fulfil a university degree and therefore no rewards were given to anyone who partook in the research. The respondents were requested to sign a written consent form or verbally agree for voluntarism and had the right to refuse to be part of the study if they feel like it.

All respondents' personal information remained confidential during the study processes and privacy was ensured. The researcher at all times observed, and respondents were protected from any emotional and psychological harm by adhering to confidentiality and not disclosing any participants' identities (Bryman, 2012). Adding to the confidentiality, all information collected used pseudonyms to transcripts to achieve anonymity of participants in order to achieve and protect any harm.

The researcher was always honest and did not deceive the participants with false promises. Bryman (2012:143) mentioned that "deception occurs when researchers represent their work as something other than what it is."

Bryman (2012) cautioned against a disregard for ethical issues because of their connection with the reliability of the study. The researcher used a set of standards that assessed the conduct of the researcher (Strydom, 2002). The researcher ensured secrecy and confidentiality by signing a consent form that bound not to disclose any information collected, and that was kept safe in the lockable place.

Owing to the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing regulations were adhered to as well as following the provisions of health protocols, including sanitising of hands and the wearing of face shields or masks.

1.7. Limitations of the study

The data collected is only for the Northern Cape Province, particularly the Renosterberg Local Municipality due to budgetary constraints and the duration of the study to be completed. This research did not use a big sample and the findings were not generalised; however, the findings can be of help or indication of what can be found in other similar areas within the Municipality, but may not be relevant to any other municipalities in the Northern Cape. Another limitation can be the use of snowball sampling that can miss an opportunity to attend to wide diversity within the needed respondents. The identified households might withhold certain information due to a lack of trust or transparency; this could limit the study concerning the completeness of the information needed for the research. In order to establish a high degree of trust, in terms of transparency, with the participants, a sheet showing ethical provisions and the participants' protection of privacy and confidentiality of participants was prioritised as an important ethical component.

1.8. Organisation of the dissertation

This study is divided into six chapters:

- **Chapter 1** is the introductory chapter, which gives an overview of the whole research project. The FHHs are introduced from its development perspectives, basic definition and sustainable livelihood framework. Its importance, as well as challenges, is introduced. A background to the study in the form of a glimpse of the female-headed households in South Africa is provided with statistics. Background information on the study area, Renosterberg Local Municipality, together with the aim and objectives of the study is provided. This chapter also gives an overview of the methodological aspects of the study.
- **Chapter 2** gives a detailed examination of the literature, focusing on the development of female-headed households from a global perspective, definition and reasons for existence. Selected factors that are said to drive the growth of female-headed households are discussed. The chapter concludes by examining literature on the concepts and previous empirical studies

on sustainable livelihood strategies. The chapter also unpacks the theoretical approach that underpins the study and provides a definition of the individual concepts that make up the approach and how they are linked to this particular study. The chapter then descends on sustainable rural livelihoods in South Africa, at the same time bringing the concept of livelihood diversification into context.

- **Chapter 3** considers the various methodological concepts and positions in an effort to arrive at the methodology that was considered to be the most suitable for application in this study, which aims to understand and analyse the sustainable livelihoods of female-headed households at Petrusville, Renosterberg Municipality in the Northern Cape. This study was designed with the following objectives: understand the challenges that face female-headed households; investigate the existing livelihood strategies of FHHs; and provide recommendations based on the findings from the field, on how female-headed households can accomplish a sustainable livelihood.
- **Chapter 4** presents the key findings of the study. It reflects and identifies the recurring themes from the participant's responses.
- **Chapter 5** discusses the key findings related to the previous research, theories, and literature.
- **Chapter 6** provides a summary of the research study.

1.9. Chapter summary

This chapter explored the key debates on FHHs in the academic discourse. It defined the main concepts of the study, namely female-headed households, poverty burden, feminisation of poverty, and livelihood strategies. The chapter discussed the African origin of female-headed households' academic discourse in order to position women heads and their roles in society and to understand FHHs better. Moreover, the chapter explored the notion of sustainable livelihood strategies to establish linkages with female-headed households. This would help to make sense of FHHs and their specific livelihood strategies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

During previous literature, where the reasons for female-headed households have been discussed by considering their strategies to survive, especially in rural areas, it has been found to take a deep capture in this specific chapter. Defining the root causes, issues and survival strategies based on the livelihood styles regarding FHHs have been analysed over three different regional scenarios – the global, African and South African. The aim is to show the gendered nature of the evolution of FHHs, the vulnerability of females, and how their livelihood strategies have shaped their lived experiences over time. The discussion on South Africa was utilised to cover the case study.

2.1. Defining female-headed households

The literature suggests two categories of these households; one is *de facto*, and another is *de jure* households' activities headed by females. The female heads who are considered *de facto* are the lone partners because husbands are provisionally away or where the females play a leading economic role in the household where the husband is present (Zarhani, 2011). Ruwanpura (2003) states that this situation is because the male partners who have migrated to urban areas or cities for a more extended period are polygamous or refuse to support their families.

The *de jure* female heads are the unmarried female population who consider themselves as single but have children. The situation might be that their husbands passed away (widowed), those who have separated, or are divorced. According to Zarhani (2011), a female who has never married or is legally or permanently separated from her husband is classified as a *de jure* female head who becomes responsible for maintaining her family on her own.

2.2. Causes grounding for female-headed households

These include divorce, death of a husband, emigration or uncaring men. The following can serve or contribute to the causes of these female household heads:

2.2.1. Migration

This phenomenon can be because of seeking a better living elsewhere; and therefore it is regarded as an essential livelihood strategy in most rural areas, resulting in the deficiency of economic opportunity, land shortage and poor infrastructure in rural areas (FAO, IFAD & ILO, 2010). It has gender characteristics where men migrate more than women, except for countries such as Sri Lanka

and the Philippines that show opposite migration by females of about 74% and 55%, respectively (Foster, 2005).

In Zimbabwe, migration becomes a long-term strategy with remittance returns to rural families (Government of Zimbabwe, 2010). This migration creates an environment that compromises social security and political instability in urban areas and leaves a space that causes females to become the heads of households, as their partners are absent (CSO, 2010).

2.2.2. HIV and Aids

HIV and AIDS are a pivotal risk to development and are a significant cause of the humanitarian crises in African countries. This pandemic has reduced households' flexibility regarding livelihood activities that could have addressed malnutrition and diseases. During this situation, food shortages or not getting outside to collect food brought negative consequences in household operations in which economic declination added an extra burden (UNICEF, 2010).

2.2.3. Widowhood

When the male partner is no longer alive, that leaves the female partner promoted to the position of the household head. The social well-being of the females is stressed and also affected family relationships.

2.2.4. Divorce and separation

Horrell and Krishnan (2007) regard to divorce and separation of partners as the reasons that lead to the feminisation of poverty. Divorce eliminates the economic well-being of both partners and that of their children. Chant (2016) mentioned that divorces cause the wives and children to experience financial difficulties as most are dependent on the husband's income; on the other hand, the divorced husband's income becomes stable or even increases.

2.3. Development of FHHs: The global context

Female-headed households are not a new phenomenon but seem problematic, transitional and not neutral and much has been written and claimed about them. It is noted that since the 1970s, household activities have been found to be done by female partners in most cases, especially in developed countries. The worldwide scenario is found just the same that with the growing concern of handling the household works, female partners came forwards and took the maximum responsibilities (Buvinic & Gupta, 1997:264). According to Haney *et al.* (1975), in the early 1970s, women-headed around 30% of black households in the USA. Although FHHs were a clear minority among black people, they

persisted as stereotypes of the black family structure. Haney *et al.* (1975) noted that these figures were influenced by bias and stereotype. Scholars highlighted two different perspectives of the black female who are heading the households. Within the first context, a black woman category is found with those who have strictly believed in dominant matriarch society and considered themselves a result of social illness for managing all the household roles with responsibilities. In the second situation, the black woman found herself as the strength of the family who can play a distinctive role in any critical situation by acting as child-minder, caretaker, breadwinner and homemaker. However, the dynamics changed as the years progressed.

As of 2016, evidence has shown that, in the US, in lower-income families, women, especially single mothers, are found in the head position of a household (bread.org, 2016). The dynamics in the US also reveal class and racial differences. For example, FHHs, especially women preyed on by racism in society, have to face more insecurities regarding food and lead a poverty lifestyle. Research on single FHHs data revealed the intensity of FHHs is higher in Latinos, Americans and African due to poverty (40.2 percent and 40.4 percent, respectively) (bread.org, 2016). In developing countries, FHHs consist mostly of working-class women who contribute significantly to their families' incomes.

Moreover, the reasons for female-headship vary (Buvinic & Gupta, 1997:260). Female-heads in developed countries tend to be single, educated women who choose to be alone and raise their children on their own, whereas the majority of those in developing countries tend to be uneducated, never married, or widows (Rogan, 2012). While this research provides us with details on the gendered, classified and racialised nature of FHHs, it does very little to shed light on the existing livelihood strategies of these households.

The gendered nature and dynamics of FHHs are equally evident in the European experience in which males were perceived as the heads of households. During the post-war period (after 1999), women started to believe that families forced them to take maximum household responsibilities as men hardly found time to spend at home or many lost their lives during the war. The latter is the base of the families, and incorporated relationships were damaged, though some of the men were found to follow their traditional household practices in European countries (Smajic & Ermacora, 2017). The increasing rate of households headed by women leads to even more women joining the labour markets (Smajic & Ermacora, 2017:69). During the period of the Bosnian war (1992 to 1999), an estimated 42 percent of returnees of war lived in FHHs (United Nations, 2004). This change in trend led to the emergence of more FHHs in European countries.

During the period of 1980, a dual process had been noted in Latin America, as industrialisation and urbanisation were found with their enhanced mobility in labour that enforced FHHs to consider themselves a larger part of the 'urban phenomenon' (Brydon & Chant, 1989:145; Bradshaw, 1995). Furthermore, evidence shows that up to 60 percent more FHHs are found in urban areas compared to

the rural areas in Latin America during that period (Bradshaw, 1995). Datta and McIlwaine (2000) noted that various forms can be noted in households based on the geographical locations and another variable of social culture. The population and its development were found at a higher risk that can be affected easily by the attributes of women-headed households' formation such as "abuses after being drunk, infidelity abuses among men and women community, foreign migrations and violence due to intra-family culture" (Datta & McIlwaine, 2000:42). Moreover, the armed conflict of the 1980s influenced the development of FHHs with various factorial impacts. The systematic inhumane act of raping women and girls was conducted to demean the power of the female community and used as a war weapon to loosen the morale of the society along with mental strengths. It resulted in women falling pregnant and eventually giving birth to children they had to raise independently.

2.4. The African context

FHHs are considered the growing phenomenon in African regions that are maintained and controlled by numerous Third World governments and other international bodies. It helped in growing the socio-economic status of women. By considering it as a vital part of social development, many Third World regions face heavy migration that was affected by rural poverty. Continuation of this situation, therefore, created a huge number of FHHs (Kossoudji & Mueller, 1983:831). According to Van de Walle (2015), in Africa, around one-fourth of families are found with women-headed households. Beegle *et al.* (2016) observe that Africa has a large and rising share of FHHs. As per Milazzo and Van de Walle (2017), 26% of total households in Africa are conducted by women, which represents the value of 21 percent of Africa's population. The intensity of FHHs is comparatively low as the ratios promote nearly one out of every five households being headed by women and the amount is approximately 15% of the total African population. Reflection is noted in the polygamy practices in continuation and the high rate of remarriages for widows. The nature of FHHs reveals their gendered dynamics. For example, in past centuries, after the death of her husband, a widow had to be remarried to her brother-law. This practice aimed to keep the family's wealth and ensure that the widow and her dependents were maintained (Thomas, 2011). However, should the widow disagree with this practice, she was denied any inheritance and was often thrown out of the household.

Chingono (2015) observes the existence of matrilineal gender relations in pre-colonial Mozambique. The Mozambican war period (1997-1992) forced women into headship. During this war period, Mozambican women assumed household headship, although they were not permanent household heads. In other words, they headed households in the absence of their war veteran husbands (Chingono, 2015). Moreover, in cases where their husbands died during the war, they were forced to take over as the main providers within their households. Chingono (2015) contrasts that while the war may have exacerbated women's subjection and marginalisation, it also indirectly empowered them by

creating conditions that made it easy for them to break free from patriarchal control. Similarly, Hall (1990) argued that during the Second World War, women's roles changed as they took over the formerly male responsibilities of providing for their households financially.

A closer link exists among the socio-economic dynamics of FHHs. In the colonial period, FHHs in Southern Africa became more visible by introducing the regional colonial migrant labour system. Chitala (1987, as cited in Nedziwe, 2017) highlights that migrants (mostly males) travelled across national borders to work in the mines of countries such as Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia during the colonial era. Subsequently, they would send remittances to the families they had left behind; their wives would manage the households in their absence. Nedziwe (2017) indicates that the colonial migrant system was gendered because only men were recruited in the mines and plantations. Despite the strict immigration laws imposed on women based on a migrant labour system characterised by gendered marginalisation and discrimination, women resisted these colonial laws. Despite the harsh conditions they had to endure, women from the Southern African region crossed borders illegally to find work after being denied permits. This signals women's resistance against the gendered colonial policies, in an endeavour to ensure their livelihood. Likewise, Osei-Hwedie (1998) observes that in the early 1990s, in economies where migrant labour was predominant such as those of Botswana and Lesotho or economies undergoing a crisis such as those of Zambia and Zimbabwe, female heads emerged. This is because their husbands had migrated to neighbouring countries for employment, or had been retrenched, or had abandoned their families due to economic hardships. These assumptions link headship to the gendered notion that a man is naturally the head of a household.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the poorest of all African regions, with an equal share of FHHs across the continent. Southern Africa is reported to have 43% FHHs compared to the total population of those who are strategising to survive (Milazzo & Van de Walle, 2017). Research data from the World Bank (2014) showed that South Africa has the highest FHHs percentage of 42 percent, followed by Zimbabwe with 35 percent, Malawi with 27 percent, Mozambique and Swaziland with 21 percent, and Tanzania with 20 percent. Disparate proportions of FHHs may be attributed to labour migration as well as growing industrialisation and urbanisation (Chant, 2015). Women in Southern Africa represent over 50 percent of the population (World Bank, 2014). Many women often have children out of wedlock, or become widows and do not remarry. Several scholars have shown that the high incidence of FHHs may also be linked to a higher level of violence regarding gender discrimination, especially in South African regions (Evans, 2014; Klasen, Stephen, Lechtenfeld, Tobias, Povel & Felix, 2014; Chant, 2015). According to Preller (2016), most of the cases are filed where definitely one woman is found to be accused by her partner daily. Therefore, FHHs are a great option for those victimised women to leave such a partner and start a new journey by prioritising FHHs.

Furthermore, women are intended to concentrate on low-paying jobs because they have fewer educational attainments and skills than their male counterparts. However, FHHs in Botswana seem not to fit into the vulnerable group to which most FHHs in Africa are deemed to belong (Moepeng & Tisdell, 2008). The estimation revealed that 55 percent of households in Botswana are found with women-headed family cultures where the majority of whom fall between the middle and upper classes. This reveals the class nature of FHHs. Equally, in the case of Botswana, some influential factors relate to the population. Botswana has disparate proportions of males and females, due to gendered labour migration. For Kossoudji and Mueller (1983:832), “Botswana’s rural area is found with an extensive proximity of South African labour market, especially towards the male out-migration along with endowment in agriculture environment”. Some scholars have suggested the existence of more men than women in Botswana, because men often travelled to neighbouring South African countries, mostly to South Africa, to find work (Driel, 1994). According to Kossoudji and Mueller (1983), migration in Botswana is based on mostly sexual and age-oriented processes; and, as of 1971, among the total population of migrants, only 20% were female while males were recorded with around 80 percent. The biggest contributor to the high prevalence of FHHs in Southern African countries is the migrant labour system.

2.5. The South African context

Early academic literature about FHHs in South Africa is traceable from the 1930s (Walker, 1995). Pauw (1962), Bonner (1990), and Biettel (1992) suggest that it went back several decades in the 20th century. As in other parts of Southern Africa, FHHs emerged in the regions of South Africa during the colonial labour system on behalf of migrants, when most of those males were intended to leave their families in rural areas. Conversely, in the colonial era, women of rural areas started to involve themselves in agricultural activities for survival. According to the Department of Health’s Medical Research Council (2007), the South African female population performs 90% of total household work, similar to most countries in Africa. Considering this estimation, the root cause behind the female-headship was found to include male labour migration and unmarried status (Posel, 2001). Although “historical patterns of patriarchy and apartheid” are connected with the context of female hardship, which is unique to South Africa. The scenario showed that “contemporary macro-economic conditions” are improving slowly with the help of female-headship (Goebel *et al.*, 2010: 578) and HIV/AIDS is causing the premature death of men (Gilbert *et al.*, 2010).

Following the abolishment of apartheid in 1994, South Africa experienced a gradual change in the dynamics of FHHs. It has recently witnessed a rise in FHHs in urban areas, which may be attributed to more women suddenly becoming independent. Rogan (2011) argues that apartheid’s segregation policies separated black families, thereby preventing the development of nuclear households (Bozzoli,

1983). Those who developed were just too weak (Russel, 2003). Apartheid prevented black families from living together and promoted FHHs in cities and rural areas; hence, the prevalence of FHHs is found with a higher degree of risks in South Africa. Apartheid highlighted that the intensity of broken homes in black communities is higher than others, resulting in a condition where legacy needed to be left behind. However, Osie-Hwedie (1998) contends that the growth of FHHs within the South African context can be attributed to factors such as single-parenthood, bearing children outside marriage, the deaths of husbands who leave widows in charge of households, marriage breakdowns leading to divorce, and polygamous marriages that make each wife responsible for her household.

Nwosu and Ndinda (2018) maintain that South Africa is a good example of analysing the relationship between poverty, female-headship, and employment. The South African case reveals the class and gendered nature of FHHs. It has been widely documented by the World Bank (2018) that the poverty incidences are creating risks for South Africa where the density of upper-middle-income families is huge. Moreover, the unemployment rate in South Africa is much higher. The official unemployment rate in 2017 was recorded at 26%, in which the women population is bigger (Stats SA, 2018). Society has been found to have a deeper intention to prioritise women-headed household activities due to the higher poverty prevalence that gave birth to a patriarchal society during the last two decades (Posel & Rogan, 2012). The black African and coloured racial groups contribute the bigger proportion of FHHs together. In 1998, about 40% of households' works in South Africa were performed by women (World Bank, 2020).

Research on similar topics has been conducted in huge numbers to gain a clear concept about the livelihood strategies adopted by FHHs and their experiences. The majority of those research studies emphasised the conceptual thought that poverty has a direct connection with FHHs that affect socio-economic conditions in South African regions. These research studies revealed that the performance of FHHs is found poorer in terms of poverty enhancement compared to MHHs (Posel & Rogan, 2011; Borat & Westhuizen, 2010; Posel & Rogan, 2012). According to Rogan (2012:105), it has been noted that "1999 recorded with around 65% of women who lived in a poverty condition compared to 61.3 % male". Some scholars further reveal the economic dynamics of FHHs. These scholars argue that FHHs are vulnerable because they intended to capture a larger position. Besides, they support more children, because female heads are less intended to get employed and if they do, their earning wages are comparatively lower in comparison to male partners (Ray, 2000; Woolard, 2002; May *et al.*, 1998). In South Africa, a major cause has been noted as the differences between the men and female wages that are very high or in some cases employed members are earning in a lower bracket of wages that is enhancing the tendency of FHHs (Posel, 2001), or the employed women are intended to be the heads of families in this society (Dungumaro, 2008). Income earned by female heads may have a smaller impact on reducing poverty (Posel & Rogan, 2011; 2012) because females earn a relatively

smaller income than males. Moreover, most females are employed in low-skilled jobs and earn wages (Smajic & Ermacora, 2007). The concentration of women in low-skilled jobs may point to the gendered nature of work, as well as class dynamics.

2.6. Sustainable rural livelihood strategies

In the development cooperation discourse, livelihood strategies are viewed as ventures that people assume and the preferences they create to meet their subsistence targets (DFID, 1999). According to Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002), people select strategies collected from ventures that operate the means that enable them to develop their subsistence, expand risks, or allow recovery based on their asset portfolio. Nevertheless, within the vulnerability context in which they operate, people are constrained by structures and processes. Therefore, their livelihood strategies are dynamic and constantly changing within the environmental context. Livelihood outcomes refer to the results of individuals' livelihoods that are affected by available opportunities and the approaches they assume to attain their subsistence goals (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Abimbola and Oluwakemi (2013) posit that households capture various income-operating ventures to increase their livelihoods. Subsistence ventures are impacted by several factors that act together to ensure their success. This study defines livelihood strategy as a blend of activities, social networks, assets, capabilities, ability, approach to physical and financial resources, as well as the capability to control essential institutions to meet socio-economic needs.

As noted earlier, some studies suggest that FHHs are vulnerable because they do not derive enough income from their economic activities, have many dependents, and are less productive otherwise their male equivalents are (Milazzo & van de Walle, 2017; Chen & Ravallion, 2013; Buvinic & Gupta, 1997; Chant, 1997). The poverty-burden narrative has stressed vulnerability and marginalisation among women and FHHs. Therefore, it has been widely reported that women are constrained in terms of livelihoods. Some scholars have shown women as highly concentrated in low-paying and formalised jobs (Moepeng & Tisdell, 2008; Glynn, 2019), while others establish a close connection between social protection and FHHs (Bhorat, Poswell & Naidoo, 2004; Reddy & Sokomani, 2008; Du Toit, 2011; Lekezwa, 2011; Makiwane, 2010; Dubihlela & Dubihlela, 2014).

Various studies have been conducted regarding subsistence ventures' groupings (Scoones, 2016; Maniriho & Nilsson, 2018; Alemu, 2012; Munhenga, 2014; Mukotami, 2014). The majority of all these mentioned studies has highlighted relocation, livelihood diversification, and rural escalation. A few researchers have inspected several contrasting factors that govern the possibility that an agricultural household assists in non-rural income diversification ventures and farming (Geremew, Sangho & Fellizah 2017; Eneyew & Bekele, 2009; Barret, Reardon & Webb, 2001). All these observers assembled subsistence ventures into three criteria, namely agricultural ventures, non-rural

ventures and rural. Alemu (2012) assembled livelihood ventures into four types of criteria, namely non-employment, rural, off-agriculture and non-agriculture. Assembling livelihood ventures may confine them, but with specification, the choices become contrastable.

Alemu (2012), Brown *et al.* (2006), and Leibbrandt *et al.* (2000) were curious about the elements that affect livelihood ventures. Brown *et al.* (2006) recognised these elements as socio-class, terrestrial, and economic, where Alemu (2012) worried about elements that impact family ventures, such as identity (socio-class). Therefore, the main concentration is Munhenga (2014), who connected with the family transformation from agriculture family venture to other subsistence ventures, and distance, merit, settlement, trade, connecting to collaborative, learning, and family structure all are the leading elements.

In contrast, Nilsson and Maniriho (2018) observed the donation of several family subsistence ventures of the entire remuneration operated within an individual family, i.e. subsistence diversification. Depending on necessity is a livelihood venture and is more satisfying to the family. Due to limited revenues, in the factors of the self-evaluated above, subsistence ventures connected with low quality are frequently of the least price. In this situation, Leibbrandt *et al.* (2000), along with Rana, Jahanzeb and Urrehman (2008) suggested authorities deliver executive instruction (mortal expense) and web explosion in the medium of wireless, enhance investment in foundation (physical expense) and create loan rules praising (financial expense) to assist and retain livelihood ventures.

The family employs several types of ventures for family, with each venture possibly distributing contrast from other, based on praising the contrast expenses from the family. Compositions have appreciated the diversification of family ventures emerging in between vulnerability regarding trends, revelation during the prudence and micro-prudential logic of families based on agriculture (Warren, 2002; Ellis, 2000; Nelson & Hussein, 1999. Carter and May (1999) maintain that families in case they are needy or non-needy lead their family ventures from miscellaneous ventures to decrease risks connected with revelation. The types of family diversification are based upon ventures chosen depending on how employment is payable (majority of needy families have an approach to people expenses as well as employment) and due to the particular situation regarding the venture (Hussein & Nelson, 1999). In the words of Bryceson (1996), Delgado, Matlon and Reardon (1992), Mathebula *et al.*, (2017), Chambers (1997), Warren (2002), and Ellis (2000). It is suggested, regarding diversification, since a venture remains superior; it never means any kind of surety. In sub-Saharan Africa, regarding regulations along with this reasoning, Loison (2015) supervised the learning process of over-diversification of the rural family. All the above-mentioned results highlight the fact that all families within adequate benefits can expand the families among agricultural and non-agricultural ventures. In the “Three Gorges Reservoir”, conducted by the retainable families to detain and inspect data from farmers in China, XU *et al.* (2015) concentrate on elements that regulate a family

preference in a family venture. All approaches deliver an exploratory qualitative analysis and countable logistic retirement structure that highlights that nearly 56% of families display the least helplessness on the farm. The following unpredictable matter had a remarkable impact on the family venture: the greatest years of learning of any family appendage are based on the peer group of the main person of the family, the digit of employers in an individual family, family position and official and unofficial community systems. It captures time to be developed and improved since belief among citizens needs interlinkage of time.

According to Ellis (1998), asset diversification is not just optional. In addition, Mathebula *et al.* (2017), and Pandya-Lorch and Von Braun (1991) observed that rural families verify their family ventures to reduce issues and acknowledge shocks. In contrast, Barret *et al.* (2001) opined that a family varies its families because of drive elements such as possibility decreases and strain elements such as enhancement in remuneration associated. On the other hand, Khatiwada *et al.* (2017) surveyed the family ventures and varied their remuneration to non-agricultural assets. Education, land capturing (natural expense), farm, and ability to instruct (human expense), operate to praise (financial expense) and accessibility to the pavement, and retail point (physical expense) were the vast impacting elements on the assumption of superior returning family ventures. In a similar layer, Geremew *et al.* (2017) observed the elements that regulate the possibility that an average family takes part in non-rural income variation ventures in Ethiopia. Utilising “legit anemometric” and “apparently unattached retirement (SUR)” evaluation, the learning highlighted conventional elements, which are fixed appreciation of notion possession (pure expense) and come with the community in collaboration (community expense), which all retain remarkable impact over the possibility regarding agricultural families taking part in non-farm ventures.

Therefore, Chambers (1997), Bryceson (1996), Nelson and Hussien (1999), Reardon *et al.* (1992), Warren (2002) and Ellis (2002) focused on family diversification as a venture for threat control. The fundamental dispute was that diversification needs families to select the second-best substitution venture source of remuneration. The involved reflections were highly important and farmers’ focus threat decreased as more than remuneration was given up in the diversification procedure. In contrast, Urrehman *et al.* (2008) explored several types of family ventures and elements in “Abbottabad district” that influenced the family ventures, “Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP)”. Above learning depicts that 15.8% are remaining under the criteria of the needy families having subordinate remuneration between other origins. Besides these midpoint or superior-off families, the majority are hanging on to government and private facilities, settlement from with the assistance of the nation and international, self-implementation, and agriculture. The number of maximum respondents (80.4%) engaged in secondary origins of remuneration, though therefore, family ventures were specified in a varied group.

Based on the words of Alemu (2012), controlling family ventures in rural South Africa appeals to a duo perspectives, a “private logistic retro gradation” and “Stochastic supremacy test”. All learning secured the outcomes that highlighted families that operate remuneration from payable employment in non-agricultural and agricultural ventures are superior to other families. Mushunje and Hosu (2013) state that family diversification focuses on-agriculture diversification that can enhance remuneration and decrease threats, whereas the learning by May and Carter (1999) highlighted that even in the medium term, families can procure their family from several types of ventures, wage remuneration providers are superior from the families based on farms regarding remuneration. Based on the scenario of South Africa, Eastern Cape, Mushunje and Toyin (2016) recognised that families do not vary their families and that they depend upon government capital transmission. Nilsson and Maniriho (2018) recognised considerations of remuneration diversification among Rwandan families utilising “specific panel figure” procured between the “Integrated Families Living Situations Inspection” regarding 2011 and 2014. Learning appeals are based on a sample of 3839 families in a binary logit panel model to an illustrative model, all over Rwanda protecting for “latent family-particular elements”. All results or outcomes from the study, “Communication and Information Technology (ICT)” state that rural locations were among the highly vital elements that impacted family diversification.

2.6.1. Female-headed households and social protection

Many studies posit that social protection policies/programmes enable the poor to vary their remuneration-generating ventures and spread through the human expense towards attaining food insurance (Knowles, Davis, & Tirivayi, 2013; World Bank, 2014). The term social protection is recognised as both ‘security webbing’ and a ‘springboard-out-of-poverty’ for needy households. The concept of social protection is trusted to build an atmosphere that promotes the economic empowerment of the poor (UN, 2016). Empirical evidence from the World Bank (2012) shows that those living in poverty are likely to have profited unreasonably from the increase of social security regulations. For years, social protection has saved so many households from vulnerability and food insecurity. According to Dubihlela and Dubihlela (2014), in South Africa, the system of social protection plays a vital role to reduce all influences regarding ‘socio-economic challenges’ among FHHs.

The United Nation’s (UN) report revealed that women are at the centre of social protection programmes (UN, 2016). Molyneux (2006) identifies women as the targeted beneficiaries of cash-transfer programmes. This is because they have proven reliable in fulfilling their responsibilities toward their children and spending money to satisfy their children’s needs. Social protection seems to have an empowering effect on FHHs because it increases their bargaining power. Empirical evidence from various studies (Duflo, 2003; Quisumbing & Maluccio, 2002; de la Brière, Adato, Quisumbing,

& Mindek 2000; Adato, Carter & May 2004) highlights that health protection and regulation of children in family income allocation are increased in the condition when the capability of women's bargaining enhances. Moreover, child welfare is believed to possibly divide the 'intergenerational transmission' of impoverishment. This is achieved through human capital when transfers are channelled towards the education of the children as well as the health of children and mothers (World Bank, 2014).

Lalthapersad (2002) remarks that social protection grew significantly early in South Africa during the post-apartheid era. Depending on the record of the South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA, 2012), over 46 million South Africans have been recipients of social protection. Many studies in the development discourse have found social protection to help families' runoff from scarcity through reducing the scarcity gap and diversifying livelihoods. Dubihlela and Dubihlela (2014), for instance, argue that social protection lifts poor people out of vulnerability and brings them near to the scarcity segment. In the record regarding South Africa, women are considered the majority receiving profit abilities from the child support grant (CSG), because they are the main caregivers. Most FHHs rely on social protection for survival. However, the misconception in the literature on the poverty burden is that women are subordinate and inadequate. Hence, women receiving welfare (social protection) are often associated with vulnerability (Haney, Michielutte, Vincent & Cochrane, 1975). However, to better understand the survived experiences of FHHs, it is necessary to move beyond the poverty-burden narrative and consider FHHs' family ventures in the phrase of their degrees of industriousness and resistance as well as persistence to navigate their daily struggles.

2.6.2. Female headship and poverty in rural areas of South Africa

Based on the annual report, it can be identified that South Africa is considered an average-remuneration growing nation with insufficient disproportionate remuneration at the federal level. Thus, the encounter of the majority of families of South Africa is that of continuous scarcity and disproportion that were explicitly framed by the influence of the 'apartheid policies' of the government previous to the formation of the modern representative solitary government in 1994 (Makhura, 1998). Depending on the outcome of the centenary of colonialism and four decades of the apartheid era, rural families in South Africa gain the adventure of an unpredictable condition of scarcity.

The rural areas of South Africa are the regions that have experienced the challenges of poverty and socio-economic problems the most since the apartheid period. It is acknowledged that there has been a reduction of poverty since the new dispensation, but most South Africans are still lacking. Globally, over a billion people are subjected to and live in extreme poverty, of which South Africa forms part (Kehler, 2001). The evidence also shows the high unemployment rate and inequality that affect South

Africa and create socio-economic problems among its inhabitants. As of 1994, poverty has declined, but a large portion of South Africans are still subjected to poverty. Statistics South Africa (2018b) reveals a poverty decline from 28.4% in 2006 to 21.4% in 2011, but an increase to 25% in 2015. Rogan and Posel (2012) confirm that many learnings in South Africa explore that families where females remain the head belong to the low remunerable rather than the families led by the male candidates (Posel & Rogan, 2012; Rogan, 2015). The study highlights the stress in enhancing families led by female candidates as heads of the family in South Africa (Madhavan & Schatz, 2007).

The above reveals that the amount of research supervised in South Africa due to the interrelation of gender as well as poverty does not give evidence that changes from male-headed to female-headed resulted in poverty. However, other authors like Ndinda and Ngandu (2016) give attention to poverty and female-headed households to determine whether the individual female has become poor as a result of becoming a female-headed household. In South Africa, poverty is still associated with a black face, which is felt by women (Ndinda & Uzodike, 2008; Ndinda, 2009). The Institute of Development Studies (IDS, 2001:1) recognises the feminisation of poverty as the situation of severe poverty among more women than men and particularly as an outcome of the enhancement in female-headed families. Within the same context, Chant (2008) agrees that more women than men experience extreme poverty, and poverty can be prolonged (Chant, 2008:167).

In 1954, women in South Africa observed and acknowledged that poverty in South Africa has a gender face, and they developed a Women's Charter that reads,

“We women share with our menfolk the cares and anxieties imposed by poverty and its evils. As wives and mothers, it falls upon us to make small wages stretch a long way. We feel the cries of our children when they are hungry and sick. It is our lot to keep and care for the homes that are too small, broken and dirty to be kept clean. We know the bitterness of children taken to lawless ways, of daughters becoming unmarried mothers whilst still at school, of boys and girls growing up without education, training or jobs at a living wage. These evils need not exist. They exist because the society in which we live is divided into poor and rich. They exist because there are privileges for the few, discrimination and harsh treatment for the many. We women folk have stood and will stand shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk in a common struggle against poverty and class discrimination” (Women's Charter, 1954).

After the democratic constitution, many other legislations were introduced to address gender equality and poverty. All these policies and legislation were aimed at inscribing the problems of scarcity and proportion among men and females and further encouraged equal opportunities for all to participate in the economy, regardless of colour, race, class or culture.

The introduction of these policies in favour of promoting gender equality is aimed and fixed on liberal feminism that assumes that oppression of women is the result of patriarchal arrangements (Tong, 1989). This arrangement regards women as less skilled than men and they are therefore deprived of opportunities. To avoid this to happen further, an approach of liberal feminism must be applied to give both men and women an equal opportunity to access education for employment opportunities. This approach tackled gender inequality and supported gender equality and the rights of women (Ndinda & Uzodike, 2012; Ndinda, 2009). Even with all these constitutional changes and new policies, women are still the poorest and represent poverty in South Africa.

2.7. The sustainable livelihoods approach

The idea of 'sustainable livelihoods' can be traced back to Robert Chambers in the 1980s whereby he demonstrated interests to address the development challenges that were increasingly emerging with the growing population (Kollmair & Juli, 2002). His ideas were grounded in the thinking that development can be efficiently enhanced through cooperation among different stakeholders to capacitate the livelihoods of the disadvantaged, mostly those living in rural areas to have incomes using the different assets that they possess (Pons, 2008). For instance, Chambers and Conway (1992 cited in Pons, 2008) highlighted that there are diverse portfolios of activities that can be utilised by people in poor communities using the different assets they have. Advancing an understanding that sustainability of livelihood is achieved through creating systems that help people within their communities to withstand and recover from shocks and stresses, to know how to create capabilities and utilise their local assets to benefit them in the present moment and in the future without compromising their environment (Chambers & Conway, 1992). These ideas provided the basic foundation and principles upon which the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) was developed by the British Department of International Development (DFID) in 1997.

The term SLA shows the different types of strategies that survey the fact of FHHs' intention to sustain the subsistence of their households. It is identified as a serious tool that helps in increasing the negative events such as poverty, crime, sickness, and other social risk factors. In this scenario, Renosterberg Municipality has several risk factors that create difficult situations in the social-cultural environment. According to Scoones (1998), there can be some critical voices that can support the people to live a better healthy life. This study depicts the criteria that are important to living a healthy life among the residents within the Renosterberg Municipality. Due to recognising the real issue among the people and their subsistence, SLA is considered as one of the most crucial network systems that not only assists interaction with people, but also provides knowledge regarding the criteria. In the words of Morse and McNamara (2013), having trust and flexibility is important to manage the subsistence context.

The development of SLA was aimed at eliminating poverty in poorer countries and providing a livelihood approach that would contribute to the debate and discourse of development (Kollmair & Juli, 2002) It was developed as a tool or checklist that can be used “to understand poverty in responding to poor people's views and their own understanding of poverty” (Kollmair & Juli, 2002:3). SLA facilitates the identification of practical priorities that are essential in auctioning the views and the interests of those identified to be affected by poverty. Serrat (2017: 22) notes that SLA,

“...makes the connection between people and the overall enabling environment that influences the outcomes of livelihood strategies. It brings attention to bear on the inherent potential of people in terms of their skills, social networks, access to physical and financial resources, and ability to influence core institutions.”

The use of SLA was crucial in this study to provide a detailed comprehension of the sustainable living approaches being utilised in female-headed households within the Renosterberg Municipality. SLA presented an important perspective to explore and understand the poverty experiences of FHHs and the different livelihood approaches and frameworks they have put in place to feed and support their families.

SLA seeks to shape activities that are people centred, holistic, dynamic, build strengths, bridges macro-micro-links and focus on sustainability (Kollmair & Juli, 2002; Serrat, 2017). Therefore, SLA was adopted for this study because it presents two crucial aspects that are critical in examining and understanding the different categories of sustainable livelihoods to survival strategies of female heads in supporting and sustaining their households. Firstly, it presents critical development principles that are people-centred, responsive and participatory, and multi-level. Table 2.1 presents detailed explanations of these key principles and their explanations.

Table 2.1: Core principles of sustainable livelihoods

Principle	Detailed description
People-centred	Substantial and sustainable reduction of poverty requires focus that respects the freedom of the people to have choices and be heard. The external support offered is based on what matters to the people and acknowledges the differences that exist between groups. The support works directly in a way that compliments and adapts to the current livelihood strategies and social environment.
Responsive and participatory	The people who are for poverty reduction should be the key actors in deciding the fundamental processes and actions of highlighting and addressing the livelihood priorities. They play the crucial role of driving the process while outsiders play an enabling role of listening and responding; with the relevant support they are asked to assist the local people.
Multi-level	To eliminate poverty, it is crucial to engage a multi-level approach whereby

	micro- and macro-level strategies are blended together to support the people to develop and build solutions from their own strengths. Ensuring that micro-level strategies inform policy development and create an enabling environment that macro-level structures can utilise to support people to develop and implement their own solutions.
Conducted in partnership	The management of the initiatives is conducted through partnerships between the people and their organisations, the public and the private sector. The progress is achieved with very minimal or non-external control of strong organisations.
Sustainable	Sustainability has four key dimensions that are crucial to explore and find a balance between them in any environment. These dimensions are economic, institutional, social and environmental.
Dynamic	Support offered by external actors should always recognise the dynamic nature of livelihood strategies, respond flexibly to changes in people's situations, and develop longer-term commitments.

Source: Author (using Ashley and Carney, 1999 and Pons, 2008)

These core principles of SLA give the basic insight into how the study seeks to understand how FHHs are being engaged and supported to address poverty challenges (DFID, 1999). They help to reflect on the responsive and participatory measures that have been and are being engaged towards tackling different livelihood challenges affecting FHH. SLA provides the lenses to reflect on the micro-, macro- and integrative strategies being utilised to cater for the livelihood interests of FHHs. It presents the platform to understand partnerships, sustainable measures and the responsive nature of livelihoods strategies that have been developed to cater for the identified challenges surrounding FHHs in Renosterberg Municipality (DFID, 1999; Ellis, 2006).

Secondly, SLA presents the sustainable livelihood framework, which is crucial towards organising and understanding the constraining or enhancing factors of livelihood opportunities and how they relate to each other (Serrat, 2017). Therefore, the SL framework highlights how different households have access to different livelihood assets, which the SLA aims to expand (Serrat, 2017:23). It is essential to understand that the framework adds an important reflection to this study as it helps to understand the sustainable livelihoods of FHHs in Renosterberg Municipality. In this study, it adds a critical insight into understanding the local circumstances and priorities towards sustainable livelihood strategies of FHH using the following lenses of the SL framework:

- (i) It helps to explore how capital assets (human, natural, social, physical, and financial) are being used in livelihood assets by female heads to sustain their households. Human capital reflects on the successful subsistence required by a few elements such as exertion, skills, excellent health, knowledge, and physical fitness. Financial capital is any kind of economic resource that is considered

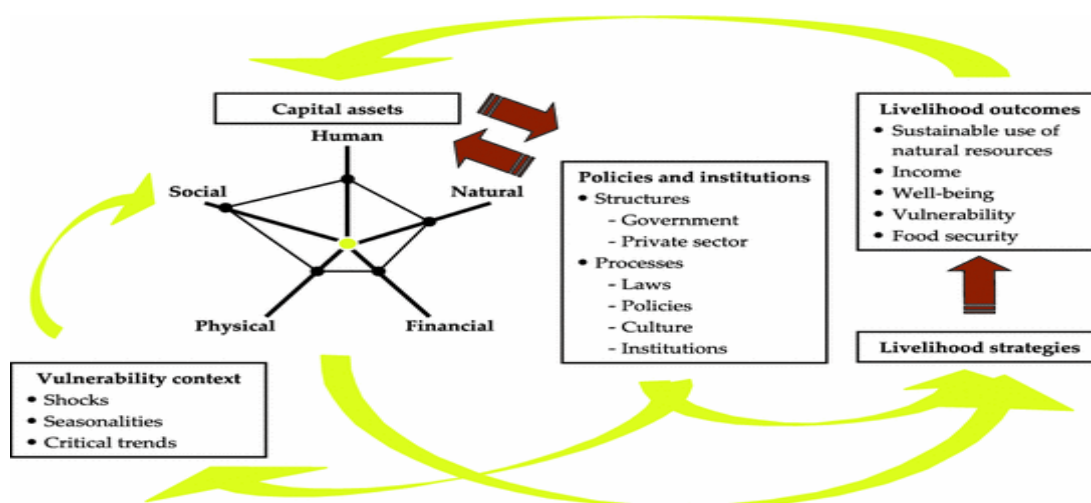
as a supportive role in making products or delivering services. It includes several elements such as business loans, cash, economic assets, technology, credit or debit, all of which are important to lead the subsistence of a group of people. According to Scoones (1998), social capital is a criterion of subsistence such as social interaction, social collaboration, merging, and social network. Maintaining social culture can manage the connection between neighbours and different communities. In this scenario, social capital is identified as connecting the attachment among FHHs and non-governmental firms. Physical capital refers to the infrastructure, tools and technology that can be used to support enhancing sustainable livelihoods. Natural capital is established to be the collaboration among the farming process and land with the people; there are several natural resources, such as water, air, soil, and plants. All these natural resources are considered vital to balance the global environment in Renosterberg Municipality.

(ii) It helped to understand the vulnerability context of FHHs and reflect on the different environmental changes happening and how the shocks, seasonality and critical trends that occur with these changes are affecting their well-being.

(iii)The SL framework helped reflect on the different opportunities accessed through policies presented by public and private institutions in Renosterberg Municipality towards improving the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable, such as FHHs.

(iv) Understand the livelihood strategies such as natural or non-natural resource-based activities being used by FHHs to achieve their desired livelihood outcomes. The SLA, through the framework, helped to identify the availability and promotion of different platforms that support activities and processes that impact the FHH to think outside the box in achieving sustainable livelihoods (Rakodi & Lloyd Jones, 2002; Serrat, 2017). Figure 2.1 below presents the SL framework.

Figure 2: Sustainable leadership approach framework



Source: Serrat (2017:22)

The entire analysis concludes that SLA highlights several subsistence factors related to the different communities of people that support others to understand the resolving issues. It is identified as a dynamic approach that is capable of changing peoples' subsistence experience.

2.8. Conclusion

This section discussed the development of FHHs, from the global to the South African context, in the period from 1970 to the present. It presented that the development of FHHs' opinions regarding their gendered nature and the vulnerability of women, as well as how FHHs' livelihood strategies form their survived experiences over time. It also observed the social and economic status of women and introduced the case study. This section explored the key debates on female-headed households in the hypothetical dialogue. It distinguished between the main concepts of the study, namely female-headed households, social protection, poverty burden and livelihood strategies. It further deliberated on female heads to position women and their roles in society and to understand FHHs better. Moreover, the section explored the idea of sustainable livelihood strategies to establish linkages with their survival. This would help to make sense of FHHs and their specific livelihood strategies. The section also argued that FHHs transcend binaries, and the fixed poverty burden narrative is dominant in much of the academic discourse and policy debates. It was shown that despite the gendered nature of poverty, the experiences of FHHs point to their deployment of livelihood strategies in the form of confrontation and perseverance among women heads. Finally, the section developed a framework for enlightening the practices of FHHs and their livelihood strategies broadly, and confrontation and perseverance, specifically.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

The previous chapter, a literature review, provided a critical overview of the livelihood strategies adopted by female-headed households. The subsequent chapter highlights the various methods endorsed by the researcher to analyse, collect and interpret the data collected from various sources. The methods have been chosen based upon their application and suitability for this particular study, which would help achieve the study's purpose and results. In this regard, data was accumulated from female-headed households located in Petrusville and Phillipstown, in the Renosterberg Municipality in the Northern Cape. Based on the topic of the study, the research has been designed in a manner that can help understand the challenges faced by female-headed households, investigate their livelihood strategies and develop recommendations as to how such households can achieve sustainable livelihood.

3.1. Defining methodology

The methodology is characterised as a procedure or plan of action that relates methods to results and influences the decision and use of methods. However, the methodology has a wider scope and this also includes the justification for choosing each method by the researcher, which needs to be aligned with the objectives of the study (Ryan, 2018). This helps in understanding the relevance of these methods as well as the reasons they are chosen. However, it has also been seen that no methodology is appropriate and the majority of it is guided by the epistemological and ontological assumptions adopted by the researcher in their respective methodologies. Therefore, the researchers who has a positive test assumption tends to adopt the objective reality, which allows them to focus upon quantitative data, and therefore these methods are designed to measure the objective reality based on scientific facts and inconvertible data from random samples. On the other hand, there also are individuals with interpretive philosophy who prefer the use of qualitative data based on observations drawn from reality and human actions (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Therefore, the method of data collection analysis and interpretation is quite different for the interpretivism philosophy. This mostly focuses on understanding and uncovering responses of individuals and their perspective towards a topic of the study; therefore, the contextual conditions are taken into consideration, which serve as a major path in addressing the research question (Pham, 2018).

Research methodology can be defined as the various steps and methods systematically adopted by the researcher to investigate and explain a particular problem. The research methodology acts as a blueprint for the researcher to adopt systematic measures, which helps them achieve the research question's answers. Research methodology covers all the steps that the researcher follows in order to

accumulate data along with the justification for choosing the various measures, assumptions and steps. The various elements of research, such as data collection, sampling and research design data analysis and presentation are all part of the research methodology.

3.2. Research design

A research design is a conceptual structure within which research is done, and serves as a plan for data gathering, evaluation and interpretation. The research design allows the researcher to determine what kind of data need to be elected from which sources and how, based on the research study (Marsonet, 2019). Furthermore, the research design also helps determine the various conditions for collecting and analysing data in a manner that can be relevant to the purpose of the study and helps the researcher maintain an economic way of completing the research. Therefore, the various aspects linked with other research designs need to be efficient and effective, while also helping to maintain the aims and objectives of the research.

In this regard, it can be seen that there are three sorts of research designs, which are widely used, namely quantitative research design, qualitative research design and mixed method of research design. However, the kinds or selections of the research design depend upon the ontological and epistemological consideration adopted by the researcher, which determines how effectively the objectives of the study can be achieved (Suleimenov *et al.*, 2018).

The various dimensions of a research paradigm, which include a methodology epistemological and ontology, help to underline the philosophical assumptions, which form the basis of adopting an appropriate research design. These three paradigms of research help in developing the conceptual framework for the research, which allows a researcher to develop a perspective, thereby allowing examining problems and identifying appropriate solutions. Apart from that, it can also be stated that research design is a product of the various research paradigms, which helps the researcher to adopt various approaches and ways of conducting the research. However, the research data design is greatly determined by the opposing paradigms of the interpretivism research philosophy and positivism research philosophy (Verhaegh, 2020). The assumptions and methodological approaches of both these types of research are different; therefore, the research design varies.

The research design is a framework to be able to do your data collection and analysis of that data. The method of qualitative data collection and the usage of thematic analysis was combined to do this research. This focuses more on details and deep understanding of a situation and allows the active involvement of the researcher in the study processes, and to be able to study the respondents in their natural setting within the locality (Ryan, 2018). All these interviews took place at the participants' dwelling units in Petrusville and Phillipstown, which form part of the Renosterberg Local

Municipality. All the characteristics of this research method convince the researcher that this method is appropriate to realise the objectives of this study.

The qualitative methodology uses words more than numbers in collecting and exploring statistics. As mentioned earlier, those who experience poverty, in this case, female-headed households, are the most suitable to define their own experiences and the livelihood strategies they use to alleviate poverty. The study, therefore, aims to unearth the experiences of FHHs in their natural setting. It is clear from other scholars that in the qualitative study, the researchers have an effect on the process and they pay attention to the entire procedure, look into the development and joining of each stage, and care is exercised not to sway the study and finally the results.

During data collection, the researcher did all information collection activities, because he is familiar with the area. Due to this advantage, the research had an advantage of close partnerships between the researcher and the participants resulting in sharing of their stories without restraint. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study. The researcher strived to avoid bias or self-deception, put aside his personal views, and record all aspects and observations as much as possible to avoid bias in data analysis, interpretation and in writing the findings. The methodology rendered comprehensive thoughts of the livelihoods of FHHs and their experiences and perceptions.

3.2.1. Quantitative research design

The quantitative approach and quantitative design characteristic are determined by the objective-based ontological orientation and a positive-based epistemological orientation (Yan, 2019). It can be stated that researchers adopt the quantitative approach that is deductive in nature and helps to test theories. Furthermore, a quantitative approach allows the researchers to primarily use scientific facts and information for developing an understanding of the following:

- The deductive approach, which focuses on testing theories, is used.
- Measurement and observation are used.
- Utilises techniques like surveys to generate statistical data in the form of numbers.
- Limits knowledge to a few variables, hypotheses and questions.
- Attempts to establish cause-and-effect relationships in order to generalise findings.

Furthermore, quantitative studies assume impartiality, strive to maintain a detached and significant posture, and favour data collection, analysis, and presentation design of statistical outcomes reflected by statistical data (Mathotaarachchi & Thilakarathna, 2021). Experimentation designs and cross-sectional designs, such as surveys, are examples of quantitative research designs. Based on these findings, this particular study utilises the qualitative research method design.

3.2.2. Qualitative research design

An interpretivism epistemological perspective and a constructionist ontological orientation distinguish the qualitative method. The qualitative design is inductive in the sense that it aims to generate theory (Ryan, 2018). A qualitative method is one in which the researcher frequently makes knowledge assertions that are largely based on constructivist views, emphasising the following:

- The significance of the social and historical contexts within which meaning is formed.
- Meanings and personal experiences diverge.
- Inquiry techniques such as case studies are used to acquire rich, deep data.

Furthermore, qualitative researchers' content states that 'reality is socially created', and they gather, analyse, interpret, and present facts as descriptive narration with words. Apart from that, case studies and longitudinal designs are examples of qualitative designs (Pham, 2018). On the other hand, qualitative and quantitative research can be differentiated on the basis of the following three aspects:

- In qualitative research, the researcher's function is personal, whereas in quantitative research, the researcher's position is impersonal.
- The goal of qualitative research is to explain, while the goal of quantitative research is to understand.
- Knowledge is found in quantitative research, but knowledge is produced in qualitative research.

3.2.3. Mixed methods of research design

The mixed-methodologies research design is the third form of research method. It combines qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study (Ray, 2017). The mixed method of research design is quite versatile and increases the flexibility of the researcher in terms of collecting, utilising and interpreting data to represent them in a manner that can effectively help in addressing the research questions. Since the mixed method of research design utilises both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the researcher achieves the ability to utilise the best of both these paradigms. As a result, both the use of observations and measurement of scientific and mathematical values can be combined to achieve effective results, allowing the researcher to narrow down their findings and come up with a better understanding of the topic. The rationale for utilising a mixed method of data collection and research design is greatly determined by the kind of study the researcher is approaching (De-yong, 2018). In several cases, it has been seen that quantitative or qualitative data alone cannot be significant enough to achieve the appropriate answer to the research question, and this is where the mixed method of data collection and analysis comes into play. With the help of a mixed method of research design, the researcher achieves the ability to resolve the shortcomings that occur in both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Moreover, it has also been seen that quantitative and qualitative research leads to many variances when it comes to interpreting their data and information

and a mixed method of data collection and research design can help in reducing variances in terms of findings and interpretations (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

3.3. Case study

The case study research design was used in this study to compliment the qualitative research design. The type and scope of the study heavily affected the design decision. Furthermore, it has also been seen that a case study is intended to be a comprehensive and in-depth examination of a certain element. Case studies are not intended to prove anything, but rather to teach the researcher something. The researcher can learn about the livelihood strategies of female-headed families in Petrusville and Phillipstown through this study (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The case study is appropriate for research that addresses descriptive or explanatory questions and intends to generate a first-hand, close, and in-depth understanding of other people and occurrences. Adding to that, it has also been seen that the case study method is very useful when the researcher wants to get descriptions and interpretations from others, i.e. respondents.

- Situational circumstances must be considered since they are relevant to the phenomena under investigation.
- There is no obvious separation between phenomena and context.
- The researcher cannot influence the respondents' behaviour.
- The study aims to provide answers to the how and why questions.

The case study design's strength is its capacity to investigate a 'case' inside its 'real-life' material in depth.

3.3.1. Entering the field site

Renosterberg Local Municipality is a small town located in the district of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality. The area is characterised by unemployment and lack of development. It is about 250km from Kimberley, which is the province's capital, and 110km away from De Aar, where all government district offices are stationed. The municipality consists of three towns, namely Petrusville, Phillipstown and Vanderkloof. The area is vast and about half a million hectares. According to the Renosterberg Municipality's Integrated Development Plan, Renosterberg Municipality covers an area of approximately 5 530km² with a population of about 10 978 people. It has been seen that young and male persons are leaving the area to seek employment elsewhere to sustain their households or family livelihoods. This results in the growth in the number of female-headed households, as it constitutes about 34.4% of the total number of households (Stats SA, 2018). In other words, one out of every three households is female-headed. The study focuses on how FHHs

employed their livelihood strategies to survive their households and the challenges that they experience.

3.3.2. Population of the study

A population, also known as a material world, is any object in any subject of study. A sampling frame is a list of all units in the population from which the sample is drawn (Sharma, 2017). The purpose of this research is to better understand the livelihood strategies of female-headed families in Petrusville and Phillipstown (Renosterberg Local Municipality). Within the context of the study, the 'case' is the population of female-headed families. This municipality has about 3 563 households, with more than 34.4% being female-headed. The population, according to the General Household Survey 2018, was 11 818. The population in this study can be regarded as the space of components from which the study group (a sample) was drawn. The study group refers to all FHHs that reside within Renosterberg Municipality. However, not all FHHs were visited; therefore, a sample of FHHs must be studied because it would be difficult to research all FHHs owing to time constraints throughout the academic year and financial constraints. The listing of units in the population from which the sample is selected is a sampling frame. Renosterberg Municipality is administratively divided into three towns, namely Petrusville, Vanderkloof and Phillipstown.

3.3.3. Sampling technique and design

In this sense, the sample might be described as a subset of the population for research purposes. The probability technique and non-probability sampling may be found within sampling. Because it is more favourable in a case study, this study employed a non-probability sampling approach (Taherdoost, 2017). In this study, the population of 20 FHHs aged 18 years old and older who reside within Renosterberg municipality was sampled and be visited using the qualitative method. A list of female-headed households was be sourced from the Department of Social Development. A gatekeeper letter has been sourced and approved by the department. The researcher focused on female-headed households in Petrusville and Phillipstown. Selecting a population from two towns ensured a better understanding of the female-headed household's livelihood and minimise time lost to the study. The researcher was purposely talk to 20 female-headed households until saturation has been reached. In qualitative research, this is a point where the respondents do not provide any new information.

The importance of focusing on female-headed households is because the government, with basic services, has the hope that it was help them improve or result in sustainable livelihood. The economic status of a family might improve over time. Therefore it is important to ensure that only the poorest families are catered for (Van Hassel *et al.*, 2017). The researcher is aware that the numbered sample results cannot be generalised to the whole population and therefore it cannot be representative of the population of the area. It has been observed that qualitative research samples tend to be small in order

to support the complexity of case-oriented analysis, and qualitative samples are purposeful in nature and chosen to give deep varied information for the study.

As per the ideas of Rahi (2017), a sample design is a specific strategy for selecting a sample from a particular population. It refers to the method or approach used by the researcher to choose things for the sample group. Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two forms of sampling. A probability sampling technique is one that is drawn at random from a population, with each unit having a known chance of being chosen. A randomly chosen sample permits the study's findings to be generalised to the population from which the sample was obtained. A non-probability sample is one that was not chosen using a purely random selection process. The results of such a sample cannot be generalised to the population from which it was taken, since the sample is not representative of the population from which it was collected. A probability sampling technique is frequently preferred because it is thought to produce more valid and reliable results. However, in some cases, generating a probability sample may be impractical (Samawi *et al.*, 2018).

3.3.4. Data collection

This procedure began only after authorisation from the Free State University's Ethics Committee. The qualitative nature allowed the researcher an opportunity to understand the respondents' experiences and perceptions about their living conditions. Furthermore, the advantage of conducting interviews is that it is a shared conversation with the respondent. It allows the interviewer an opportunity to probe for answers and give the interviewee an opportunity to ask questions where they do not understand something and to fully express themselves (Mkandawire, 2019). An interview guide was used to collect data. Responses were recorded using a voice recording tape and not a video recording as this would have compromise the confidentiality of the participant. The researcher also took field notes. The voice recordings and notes were then transcribed as told by the respondents. The researcher developed the interview guide with questions in languages that are used in the area, which stimulated in-depth discussions about FHHs' livelihood strategies. The interviews that were conducted took between 40 and 60 minutes. The participants were told about the aim of the interview and were given the option of participating or not participating in the study (Spry & Pich, 2021). Permission in the form of a written consent form was attained from the participants and they were assured of the confidentiality of their personal information, which was not be published. The interview guide included questions such as: Why do you consider your household as headed by a female? On average, how much money do you have to live from per week, per month? Do you receive any support from elsewhere? What is the biggest challenge that you and your household are currently facing? What is the biggest livelihood challenge you and your household currently face? What activities do you engage in to maintain your household? Do you think there is anything those in power should do to support female-headed households? Due to the sudden eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the

researcher observed all the regulation protocols of wearing a mask; sanitising of hands; keeping 1.5m distance and the interview guide was not unnecessarily long. For data collection, a semi-structured interview was used. Interview questions are one of the significant methods of data collection used in case study research design (Feng *et al.*, 2020).

3.3.5. Data analysis

For qualitative data, data analysis was done simultaneously with data collection to be able to do a follow up on new developing issues that needed more clarity. The analysis of data was done through thematic content analysis. The qualitative method was followed, and interview guides were employed to collect data. Therefore, a process to incorporate the various elements, analytically breaking down of acquired research data into smaller manageable information. The applied process of analysis to present and interpret data by reading through transcripts, field notes and documents was followed (McShane & Böckenholt, 2017). Through the interviews, themes and sub-themes are generated by coding to evaluate them better and give names to be able to link and connect the concepts and write up the insights. The researcher was aware that the thematic analysis method is used in qualitative methods and in its analysis of data, using identifying, analysing and reporting themes in one's data. It marginally organises and describes data-rich detail. The advantages of this analysis are that it offers flexibility for the beginning of data collection with combined analysis in the research process and assists the researcher to recognise several references among the progressing themes and the complete data (McShane & Böckenholt, 2017).

3.4. Research ethics

Since the study involves human subjects, even if there is no danger of bodily damage to participants, ethics permission was obtained through the Faculty of Economic and Management's Ethics Committee at the University of the Free State. The aims and goals of the study were explained to the participants, and permission to use an audiotape recorder was requested (Bracken-Roche *et al.*, 2017). Participants were also informed that the research is for educational purposes to achieve a university degree, and thus no remuneration was given to anyone who participates in the research. The respondents were requested to sign a written consent form or verbally agree to voluntarism and have the right to refuse to be part of the study if they feel like it. All respondents' personal information remained confidential during the study processes and privacy was ensured. The researcher observed and protected respondents from any emotional and psychological harm by adhering to confidentiality and not disclosing any participant's identities (Bracken-Roche *et al.*, 2017). Adding to the confidentiality, all information collected was coded using pseudonyms in transcripts to achieve anonymity of participants in order to achieve protection from any harm. The researcher was always

honest and did not deceive the participants under false promises. When researchers promote their work as something other than what it is, they are engaging in deceit.

Caution is the disregard for ethical issues because of their connection with the reliability of the study. The researcher used a set of standards that assess the conduct of the researcher. The researcher ensured secrecy and confidentiality by signing a consent form that binds him to not disclose any information collected, and that was kept safe in a lockable place (Roth & von Unger, 2018).

Owing to the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing regulations was be adhered to as well as following the provisions of health protocols, including sanitising of hands and the wearing of face shields or masks. The ethical concerns that arise during the interaction between researchers and respondents are divided into four major groups, which are as follows:

- Participants are at risk (physical, emotional)
- Deception
- Informed consent
- Right to privacy

3.5.1. Protection of harm

There was no physical damage to participants as a result of the research. Nonetheless, the researcher assured the participants that they were safeguarded from any mental or emotional harm by refraining from asking any sensitive questions that may provoke these (Bracken-Roche *et al.*, 2017). One approach to safeguard participants from danger is to ensure the secrecy of their replies. In summarising the findings, the researcher ensures confidentiality by not exposing the real identity of the respondents. Rather, each of the 20 respondents were assigned a unique number that was used to identify the source of information when the findings are reported verbatim. By doing so, the confidentiality of the responders is ensured, guaranteeing that participants are safe.

3.5.2. Informed consent

The participants were assured to also be fully informed about the study. The following measures were taken to guarantee that respondents give their informed consent to partake in the research.

- Principal investigator prominently displayed a letter of authorisation from the institutional Ethics Committee to perform the study.
- The researcher obtained consent from the participants to participate; however, they may withdraw their involvement at any time if they are uncomfortable for any reason.
- The researcher provided participants with the option of declining to participate in the study, ensuring that individuals participated voluntarily.
- The researcher informed the participants that the study is entirely academic in nature

3.5.3. The right to privacy

Participants, like everyone, have the right to privacy, which must be respected by the investigator or researcher. Covert techniques are often considered breaches of the privacy principle since participants are not given the option to oppose invasions of their privacy (Bracken-Roche *et al.*, 2017).

The research strived to respect participants' right to privacy in the following ways in this study:

- Participants were informed of their ability to decline to answer any question, even if they have consented to partake in the research.
- Principal investigator tried not make interview sessions unnecessarily long.
- It was made clear that participants had the right to decline to be questioned.
- Participants were notified that their replies would be treated with the utmost secrecy.

3.5.4. Avoidance of deception

Deception can be defined as when researchers promote their work as something other than what it is. By not attempting to get access to respondents under false presences, the researcher ensured the participants appearing for the study are not tricked (Roth & von Unger, 2018). When it is not “possible or desirable to offer participants with a completely full description of what the research is about,” the researcher informed the respondents that they will benefit nothing from the investigation. The researcher did not coerce participants into participating in the study under the false impression that they will profit in any manner. As previously indicated, informed consent requires the researcher to notify the participants that the research is only for research goals (Bracken-Roche *et al.*, 2017).

3.6. Chapter summary

Based on the discussion in the above chapter, the interview guide, in addition to the semi-structured interview was be utilised for data collection in this qualitative method case study to understand the sustainable livelihood choices of female-headed families in Petrusville (Renosterberg Municipality). It was centred on thematic content analysis, based on the principles of the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF), which was used to represent major topics. The results of the semi-structured interviews were applied to explain and confirm the results of the interview protocol. The Department of Social Development provided a sample of female-headed families. The researcher took the necessary procedures to assure the credibility of the findings of this qualitative method research. In this study, research ethics were strictly adhered to. The study's analysis be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings of the study. It reflects and identify the recurring themes from the participants' responses. The study's main objective was to investigate and better understand the different types of sustainable livelihoods and survival strategies of female-headed households in the Northern Cape Renosterberg Municipality. The interview responses were put on an Excel spreadsheet to generate simple descriptive statistics that would complement the interviews responses that the participants gave. This helped enrich the qualitative data by providing some detailed perspectives and understanding the responses given by the 22 participants. The presentation made use of tables and bar graphs to provide detailed analyses of key issues. The chapter presents and discusses different themes that reflect on the challenges faced by female-headed households, the livelihood strategies of female-headed households and mechanisms that can be put into place to respond to the challenges experienced by female-headed households.

4.1. Reasons for female-headed households

The study established that various reasons lead to female-headed households.

Figure 3.1: Reasons for female-headed households

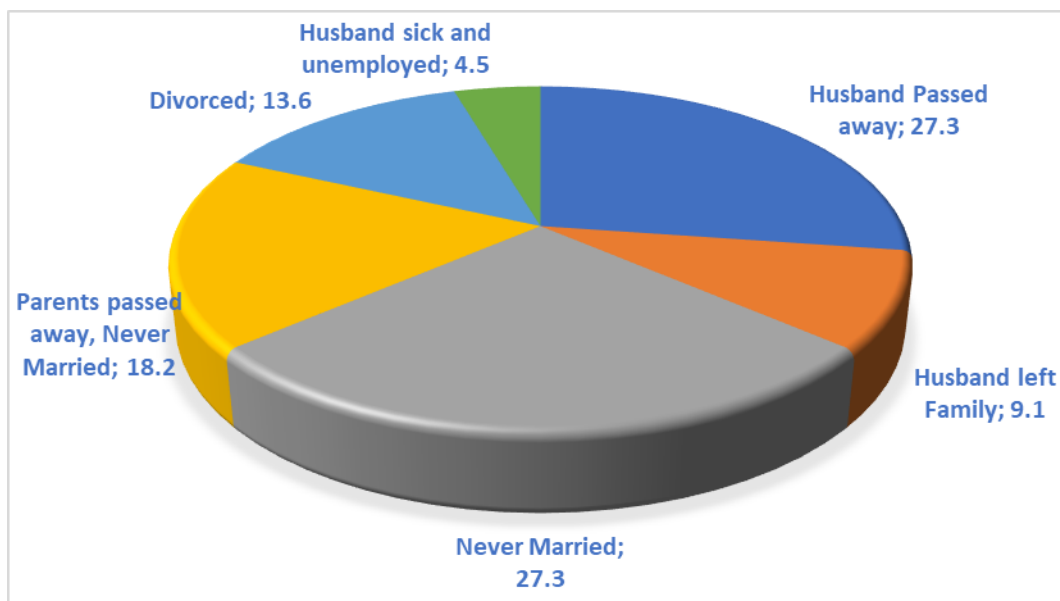


Figure 3.1 above reflects on this indicating that the majority of participants, that is 27.3 percent, revealed that they headed their houses following the death of their husbands. Another 27.3 percent argued they were never married, and 18.2 percent were also of the view that their parents passed away

and never married. All this has been identified as due to the death of the once breadwinner, spouse or parents.

My husband passed away in 2001 and left me with kids to look after. (Participant 1)

My husband passed away; it was a car accident. (Participant 8)

My parents passed away and I was never married. My family depends on me. (Participant 12)

The above results may not be surprising as the various deaths may be attributed more to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, including the Covid-19 pandemic, which has claimed many lives.

Regarding divorce as a reason behind female-headed households, 15.6 percent of the participants alluded to this fact, with 9.1 percent indicating that their husband simply left them, leaving all the household responsibilities to them. Participants 3 and 18 reflected on this as follows:

The husband left the house and never came back again leaving me with children to take care of. (Participant 3)

My husband was abusing me and I saw it better to end the marriage than continue with his abusive behaviour. (Participant 18)

So, the stand of the participants is that men walked out of the relationships, and some men were abusive to the extent that their wives could no longer accommodate them. Statistics have shown higher divorce rates in many countries; therefore, it cannot be a surprising fact within the South African context. Divorce cases can be due to early marriages, which lead to early regrets to leave the marriages and again since the awareness of women empowerment and integrity, women have been equipped to fight for their rights and are enlightened enough to no longer suffer in abusive relationships. However, they seek independence, and from there the high divorce rates.

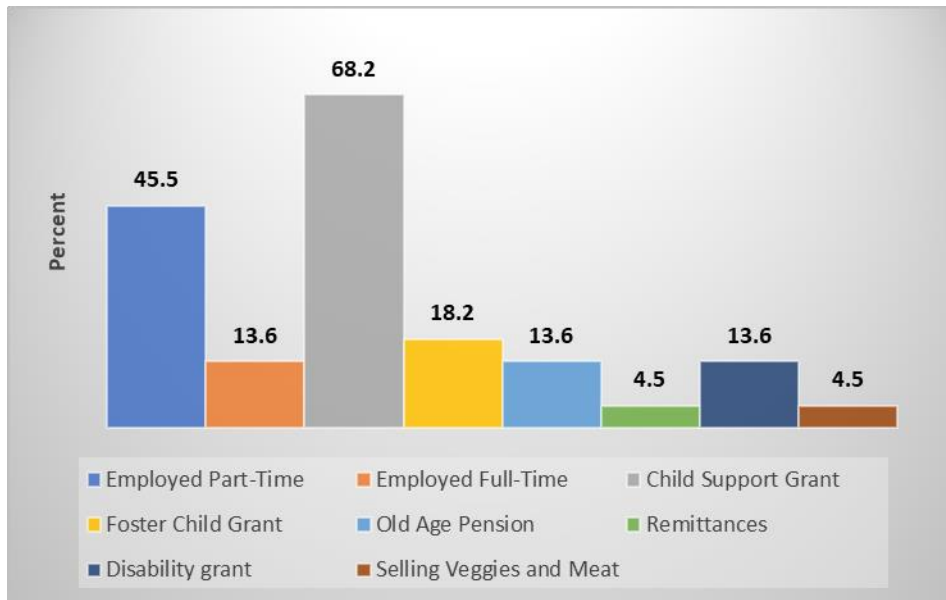
Only 4.5 percent of the participants reported that their husbands are sick and, due to the sickness, they are not able to work and contribute to the household expenses. As a result, the wife assumes the role of the head of the household and starts providing for the family. This is a common picture in most African homes where a husband falls sick and the wife takes over the leadership position of the house.

My husband is not well and unemployed he does not contribute to the family income at all. (Participant 9)

4.2. Sources of income and livelihoods in female-headed households

Figure 2 illustrates the households' sources of income. It is important to note that most of the participants mentioned more than one source of income.

Figure 3.2: Main source of income



Out of the 22 participants, 15, constituting 68.2 percent, reported that they receive income from child support grants, with SASSA regularly mentioned and the third highest proportion of participants, 18.2 percent, indicated they receive income from foster child grants. In addition, 13.6 percent also highlighted old age pensions and disability grants as a source of income.

I receive social grants from SASSA which I support my children with. (Participant 2)

Depend on my grandfather old age pension and receive child maintenance for the two grandchildren who stay with me. (Participant 5)

Depends on Child grant of my two children and further receive sick grant for mother-in-law. (Participant 9)

Following that, most of the old aged live with their female relatives or daughters, which automatically implies their caregivers are the ones responsible for their finances; in these instances, they happen to be females heading the households.

Almost half of the participants (45.5 percent) are employed on a part-time basis at government projects within their communities, youth centres and local petrol stations. They work two days in a week and receive the stipend.

I am working on a community project (CWDP) on a part-time basis. (Participant 7)

I am employed on a contract basis of 12 months at the Youth Centre with a stipend of R2000 per month. (Participant 20)

I am on part-time employment, cleaning toilets at the local petrol station. (Participant 19)

Only three participants, constituting 13.6 percent, have full-time employment; two are employed at an early child development centre while one is employed at the South African Police Services (SAPS). Crèches or early child development centres are usually the domain of women and it is maybe due to this fact that some of the women who head their own houses work there. Though these participants are privileged to have permanent employment, they experienced loss of income due to ECD centres' closure during the COVID-19 lockdown.

I am employed at Early Child Development Centre on a permanent basis but did not get a salary during COVID-19 due to the closure of the centre. (Participant 4)

One participant reported that she makes a living from selling vegetables and meat, and one reported receiving remittances (money from their daughter).

I am also selling vegetables and fresh meat to survive. (Participant 7)

I am getting old age grant, foster care grant for kids, and sometimes get money from my child who works in Port Elizabeth. (Participant 1)

4.2.1. Other activities engaged to maintain household livelihoods

It is evident from Figure 3 below that half of the participants, 50.0 percent, are not engaged in other activities other than their main activity as a source of income. This is because they solely rely on their main source of income to survive and provide for the household. This can be because the main activities take up most of their time and they will not be free to engage in extra activities or they may be too tired to partake in any other source of income activities apart from only the main. Some may also have given up hope to find other income given the status of many of the small town economies.

Four out of the 22 participants, 18.0 percent, have part-time or what is referred to as ‘piece jobs’. Three of the participants mentioned the activities they do at their part-time jobs, which included hairdressing, working in a programme providing training to youth on vocational skills, and cleaning at the Department of Social Development. The participants’ views are reflected below:

I am doing part-time hairdressing and that depends on the availability of clients. (Participant 10)

I am involved in the AIYKE program, which trains youth in vocational skills and provides a stipend of R650 per month. (Participant 14)

Part-time job of cleaning social development offices and that also depends on their budgets. (Participant 18)

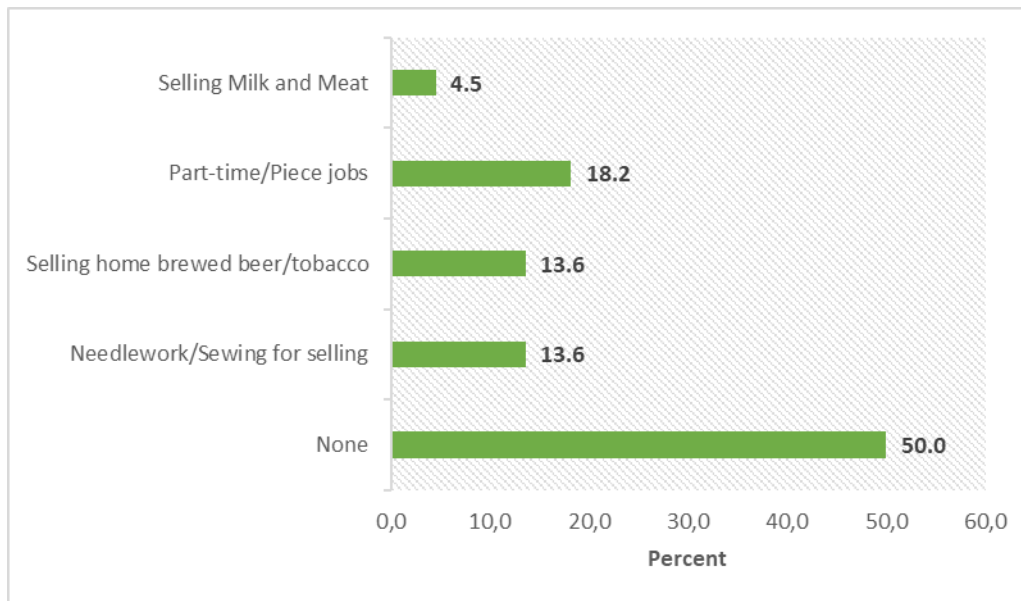
Selling home-brewed beer and tobacco was popular for three of the participants, while the other three participants were involved in needlework, sewing, and selling to the community. However, lack of funds became a barrier to continue sewing for one participant as she did not have money to buy material. Also, it was illegal for those selling home-brewed beer, but because they did not have any source of income to sustain their families, they opted for the illegal move.

I am selling beer but I know it is illegal, however that is the only way I can take care of my family. (Participant 16)

I am doing sewing and selling but has stopped now because of lack of funds to buy materials. (Participant 8)

The above scenarios can be attributed to the fact that the government is not doing much to support the women’s initiatives trying to make a living for their families, which leads some of them to engage in illegal trades. For example, one participant (4.5 percent) sells milk and meat to the community to earn an extra income.

Figure 3.3: Other sources of income



4.2.2. Income support

All the participants to the study stated that the income, both from the main activity and other activity, they receive to support the family is not enough. One of the participants attributed this to the fact that she is the only person working in the household and her income must cover all household members. Even though the income received is not enough, one participant mentioned that she makes it work with the little she receives, ensuring that everyone is provided for, saying the following:

It is not enough (the income) but I get things done with the little. (Participant 1)

4.2.3. Other plans for survival

The participants were asked whether they had any form of plan to survive, which displayed the following results. Eleven out of 22, half of the participants, reported that they do not have any plans to generate income to supplement income from their main activities. Though their main income is not enough to support their families, they have means to only survive on that. Participants 4 and 12 respectively reflected on this as follows

I do not have any plan but continue searching for a better job with a better salary. (Participant 3)

There are no other plans, except looking for employment and requesting or begging for food parcels from the social development department. (Participant 12)

The above scenario reflects the need for good governance and effective service delivery within local governments, which can go a long way in creating opportunities that ordinary people can live an improved life.

Two of the participants also mentioned that they have started a vegetable garden; however, they have water supply problems from the municipality and as a result cannot sustain the gardens. Two other participants survive on borrowing money from the community and cash loans and pay them back month end with their salaries/wages. This is what the participants had to say regarding gardening and borrowing money, respectively:

I am having a small garden for vegetables but struggling with water supply from the municipality. (Participant 2)

I started my own garden, but the drought and water interruptions of municipal water is affecting the progress. (Participant 6)

I am lending/borrowing money from community members or cash loans and pay it back on my salary day. (Participant 2)

I depend on the community by borrowing and repay when I receive the grants. (Participant 15)

This can be seen as posing problems for the FHHs following the fact that they are always in debt and with greater chances of re-borrowing soon after paying the previous money owed as a way to make ends meet.

The interviewees highlighted the importance of establishing micro-businesses to augment their income, but were met with lack of financial help. One other participant was of the view that she relied on the employer's advance payments to take care of things at home. Participants 6 and 17 highlighted this as follows:

I was involved in the soup kitchen that has provided some support to me but it has stopped because of lack of funding. (Participant 6)

In difficult times I ask from the employer to advance me and payback on my salary day (Participant 17)

The findings reveal a lack of funding by the government and community to females trying to make a living as breadwinners to their households. Furthermore, the results outline why these same females remain in debt as they are compelled to work for salaries already paid for, and therefore they opt for loans to sustain their households.

Some participants also revealed that, as breadwinners to their households, they had to undertake several odd jobs as a survival strategy. These ranged from domestic chores to selling various small goods. This is what the participants had to say:

I educate my children with money from domestic chores, by cleaning and ironing other people's clothes. Sometimes I go to my parent's place and they will provide me with food. (Participant 18)

I do some odd jobs at shops (Cleaning) and selling of Simba chips and ices to the community. (Participant 4)

Though this made some households' days go by, it strengthened the stereotype of women's place being in areas that entail cleaning and the selling environment to sustain themselves and their respective families.

4.2.4. Support sources to main income

The participants acknowledged that they received remittances, social grants, food parcels, and skills training to increase employability and complement their main income. This is represented in Figure 4 below.

Figure 3.4: Other support received

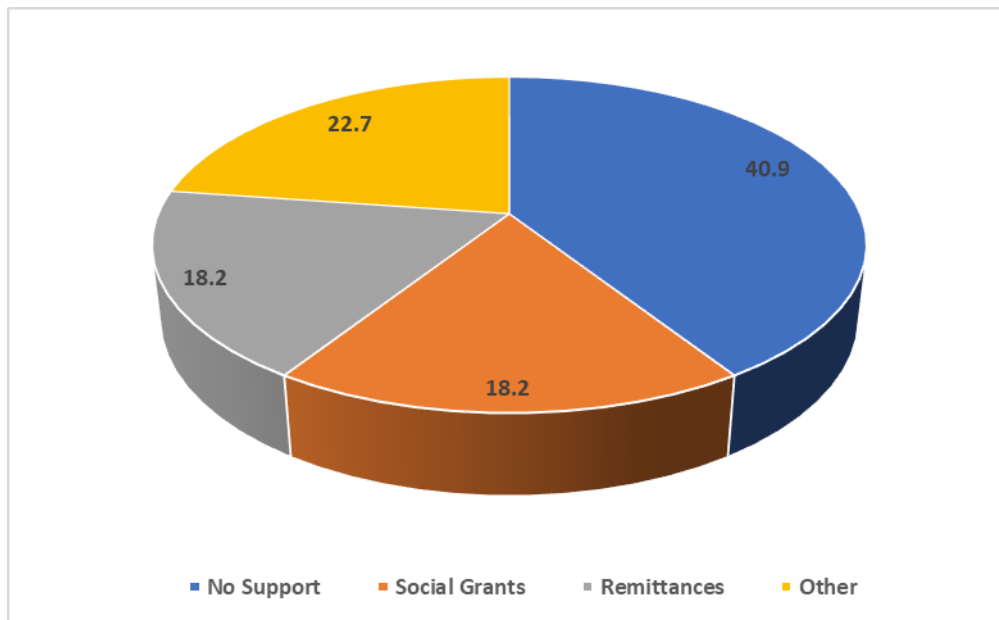


Figure 4 above portrays that an equal percentage of participants (18.2 percent) receive support in the form of social grants and remittances. Participants who receive remittances specified that it is money from their family members; however, the support did not come regularly.

I have two sons that have university qualification married and stay with their families, but they sometimes sent me money to add on what I have. (Participant 16)

On the same note the majority of the participants (40.9 percent) reported that they do not receive any support from anywhere, and this was a concerning finding. This further provides evidence that the livelihood of female-headed households is negatively impacted by low income and no support from other sources.

In the *other* category, the participants also upheld that food parcels from the Department of Social Development and the Premier's office were an additive to their main income. Also, help came from family members and friends in the form of food or paying of basic utilities. However, this support is not regular, and therefore most of the time the FHHs face food shortages. The above views are highlighted below:

Relieve food parcels is provided from the Department of Social Development and that also is not given each month and we get food parcels from the Premier's Office when he visits the area. (Participant 1)

Sometimes my friend will offer help by buying for me electricity, food, and other necessities, but not on a regular basis. (Participant 18)

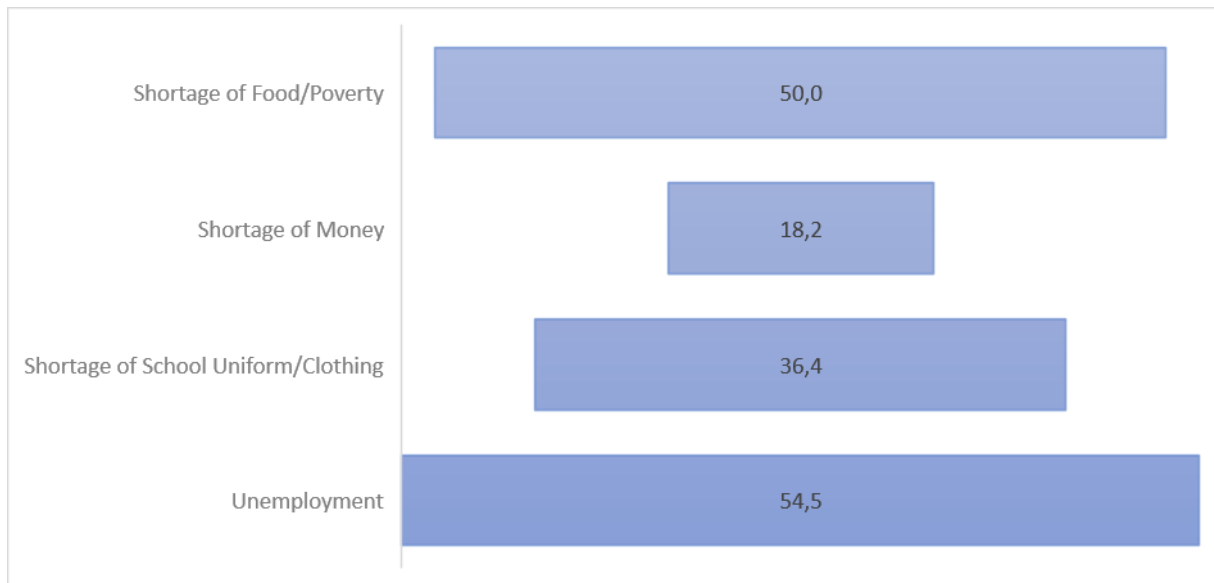
The interviewees also brought out that the Department of Agriculture has been upfront in supporting women and providing seeds to them to start gardens (subsistence farming). Though this is a noble gesture, the impact of COVID-19 halted this support. This is highlighted by Participant 6:

Department of Agriculture has provided seeds to make gardens, but the project stopped because of COVID-19.

4.3. Livelihood challenges faced by households

Various challenges have been identified by the participants that impact on the livelihoods of the female-headed households. Figure 5 below presents the overall recurrence of the identified challenges based on the total number of participants. Thus, while other participants identified a shortage of food as a challenge, others indicated a shortage of money, school resources, unemployment, and unemployment for others. All these issues were highlighted to be the main challenges.

Figure 3.5: Livelihood challenges faced by households



Female-headed households are generally faced with challenges that affect their livelihood in an era where unemployment is high. Figure 5 above illustrates the high unemployment level among female-headed households, which worsens their already dire plight of being breadwinners of their households. Unemployment (54.5 percent) is the most prominent challenge cited affecting the livelihoods of households. It was reported that youth family members are mostly affected by unemployment, struggling to find jobs after schooling, and if the case had been different, they would have aided their mothers or female breadwinners in the households. Participants 7 and 12 had this to say:

Employment opportunities are lacking since I have a child that has completed grade 12 but is unemployed. (Participant 7)

There is a shortage of food and employment opportunities. (Participant 12)

More so, shortage of food/poverty constituted 50.0 percent of the livelihood challenges reported by participants, while more than a third, 36.4 percent of the livelihood challenges, were shortages of school uniforms or clothing for children. Another 18.0 percent of the female-headed households did not have enough money to provide for their families. This may not be a surprising finding because there are already high unemployment rates and for life to be smooth, there is a need for guaranteed finances flowing one way, which may come in the form of a salary.

The participants furthermore indicated that female-headed households struggled to keep children in school. This can be attributed to many reasons not provided in the survey; however, the lack of money can be the major factor. Also, the supply of water was identified as one of the challenges. Participants

showed discontent with the municipal services when it came to water supply as they experienced a lot of interruptions. This again brings out the incompetence of the municipality to cater for services rendered basic to the people.

In a similar vein, Participants 1 and 2 revealed that female-headed households were characterised with many pending credits and an unresponsive public to their endeavours. The participants in their own words highlighted that:

I have unresolved issues with creditors and it is difficult to pay what I owe whilst continuing to make a living for those I cater for. (Participant 2)

I am doing some needlework and selling to the public, but it is a struggle to sell and also to get to the potential customers. (Participant 1)

Some of the participants bemoaned the lack of their personal houses, which would lessen the burden of rental money every month end, and some of the houses were no longer in good shape, lacked proper security, and are prone to burglaries. It is a common picture though, that female-headed houses are targeted by thieves, following that most of them are female-headed and since women are considered weaker, i.e. not able to protect themselves and their household members. The participants noted that:

We want our own house because we are renting an RDP house from other community members. (Participant 6)

My house roof is leaking because it is old, and the fencing is not in good order and allows the thief to do break-ins. (Participant 13)

More so, the participants indicated several other challenges, for instance, they indicated that they also experience transport challenges to send their children or dependents to school. This is what one participant had to say:

I'm unable to pay the monthly taxi fee for my child to go to school. I struggle with the school stationery on its own, where then can I source everyday money for the transportation to school. (Participant 19)

4.4. Skills assisting female-headed households to make a living

The interviewees brought out the below as the skills that aid female-headed households to make a living. However, it is worth noting that in trying to establish if the participants possess skills that assist them in earning money to support their families, the responses show that the participants are from an unskilled or low skilled community because almost 70.0 percent of the participants reported that they do not have any form of skills. However, the remaining participants revealed a few of the skills that made possible their survival.

Two of the participants indicated that they had qualifications that enabled their employability. It is from these skills that they derived their livelihoods and the families that fell under their care. Participants 2 and 20 had this to say respectively:

I have Certificates in Early Childhood Development that resulted to my employment. So that is the source of income for me and my family. (Participant 2)

Communication skills, administrative skills, and computer training and security training- all these makes me to be part-time employed at the youth centre. (Participant 20)

In a similar vein, another participant revealed that she did needlework and made a living out of it and another stated she had enhanced her cooking skills, which she now saw as a skill that makes her employable at early learning centres. The participant indicated that:

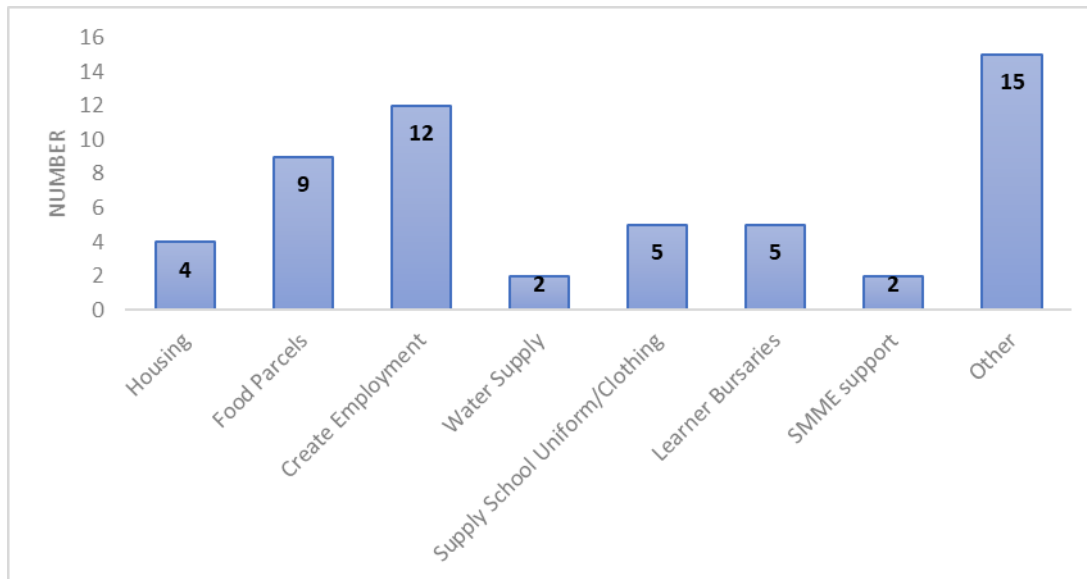
My cooking has improved, which I now consider part of my skill. I am employed at a crèche and apart from that I possess no other skills. (Participant 3)

The study established that for most of the female-headed households, their considered skills mainly fall into selling, cooking and sewing. Hence, as most of these homes are female headed, it shows how women will be capitalising on what society had labelled their domain from childhood to make a living.

4.5. Female-headed households support by the authority/government

The participants reflected on the competencies of the authority/government in making their lives and families better. Most of the participants revealed that the government fell short in most aspects that empowered them to be independent breadwinners to their families. Figure 6 below brings a clear picture of the needs of female-headed households so that they may be the role models and influential caretakers in their respective households.

Figure 3.6: Authority/government support



The graph above is represented in numbers, each number representing a proportion of participants who mentioned the kind of support out of 22 participants. Some of the participants in the interviews said that they have more than one support.

Evidently, creation of employment opportunities has the highest number of participants (12). The participants noted the need for employment opportunities to be availed to them so that they would be able to fend for themselves and their families. This is followed by food parcels (9 participants) noting that participants were specific that the supply of food parcels should be monthly. The views of these participants are reflected below as follows:

The government should provide housing and create employment opportunities, for with employment one can make a living out of a salary. (Participant 11)

If they (the government) can provide food parcels each month then we would experience no challenges. (Participant 2)

Supply of school uniform/clothing and bursaries to learners are cited by five participants each. The participants revealed the need for the government to give uniforms to their children still going to school, as well as bursaries. It is evident the government was doing this, but not at the scale the participants anticipated. Participant 10 noted:

Our government must provide bursaries for children, they should know we are struggling and it is essential they should aid us with this. (Participant 10)

As much as the government may appear incompetent in this respect, the above situations may be because female-headed households are increasing in numbers, and the State’s funds cannot cater to that category of the population.

In addition, four participants indicated that they would like the authorities to supply them with housing or at least allowances for renovation purposes. Two participants mentioned water supply and SMME support with funding, and this is what some of the participants had to say about the housing allowances, water supply and SMME funding, respectively:

If the authority can provide me with a home, I would be grateful because the current structure is old and falling apart, not conducive for me and my kids to live in. (Participant 1)

The government must provide allowances to upgrade my house. (Participant 2)

Stop the water shortage problem from the municipality, as this inconvenience me in my gardening, were I get vegetables which I sell for a living. (Participant 3)

I don’t ask much from the government but their support and development of small businesses. (Participant 7)

Fifteen (15) participants further reported distinct types of support they require from the authority/government, and they are depicted in the table below.

Table 3.1: Other support required from the authority/government

Provide transport to schools for my children
Communicate and share information
Provide training for vocational skills
Keep children away from drugs by keeping them busy
Attend to community members that hold other’s SASSA cards
Communicate and provide advice on policies that are meant to better women
Visit households to observe challenges experienced
Provide financial assistance
Provide women and girls with sanitary pads
Initiate skills development centres to facilitate skills for females
Fix leaking roof
Provide free electricity
Provide financial assistance to improve living conditions
Assist with child support grant
Develop training programmes and empower women
Develop food gardens

Table 3.1 uncovers that female-headed households needed their children to be provided with transport that fared them to school and grants for child support. The participants unpacked this as follows:

Transport fees should be provided by the government so that my children can be transported to school. It is a cost I cannot cover and where they learn is far and unsafe to walk. (Participant 3)

Communication and sharing information by the government were seen essential as it afforded transparency as well as easy identification of problems. This can be strengthened by initiating skills development centres that facilitate skills for mainly females. This is what participants 4 and 6 had to say:

They (the authority/government) can communicate and share information to better understand where we are headed. (Participant 4)

There should be better communication on the governments part and provide advices on policies that better women. Developing training programmes that empower women would help us as female-headed households. (Participant 6)

The interviewees also expressed the importance of being self-equipped, and therefore encouraged the government to provide training for vocational skills, keeping the children busy as a way to keep them away from drugs and attend to those members in the community that hold SASSA's cards for others, other than themselves, hence shunning those that qualify for the aid they deserve. The participants elaborating on this reflected that:

They (the authorities) must provide vocational skills training and help our children by keeping them busy to think of doing drugs. (Participant 7)

They must investigate the problem of some community members that hold others SASSA's cards. (Participant 5)

In a similar vein, the interviewees reviewed the necessity of those in authority to make house calls as it sheds a clearer picture of how bad or good situations are in female-headed households. This can place authorities in a position to offer the much-needed financial assistance to improve the living conditions of female headed-households. Below is what the participants said concerning the subject matter:

The authorities must visit the households and see the situations they are in and give support like food hampers. (Participant 9)

They (the government) must visit and create employment opportunities after observing that there isn't any. (Participant 12)

They must support and fix my leaking roof and look at the street storm water drainage because it has damaged my house foundation. The Municipality can fix and minimize their waste interruptions. (Participant 15)

The participants went on to state that electricity and water needed to be made available to them for free and the girl child's health taken into cognisance, as they experienced a shortage of sanitary pads. This situation of the girl child defeated the whole aspect of protecting them, which is the stand of many people, organisations or countries of the 21st century. Participants 16 and 19 had this to say:

Electricity and water should be provided free of charge so that their bills do not drain the little we make from gardening and other odd jobs.

Provide women and girls with sanitary pads. We as household breadwinners, lack the money to buy these and even for our daughters, which we look after.

4.6. Achievements made by females-headed households in life

It is a common understanding that females heading their own households, being single parents and most of them being breadwinners of their families, would not have a lot of achievements in their lives since their focus is providing for their families. This is supported by the findings of this study as shown in Figure 7. "Raising and supporting children" has the highest proportion of 59.3 percent of achievements mentioned by participants. These participants show gratitude for the fact that they do not have much to show, but very proud that they are able to raise their children, put them through school and provide for them. One participant reported that her greatest achievement is putting her two sons through tertiary education; this is a less likely picture in poor households that lack financial aid.

Some of the participants (a small percentage of 22.2 percent) indicated that they managed to complete their matric, training or certificate qualification despite the odds or challenges they faced. These participants completed certificates in ECD qualifications, matric, computer training and certificates through a social development programme.

I was able to obtain my certificate in Early Childhood Development (Level 5) qualification. (Participant 2)

I am happy that I acquired my certificates through a programme from social development that is computer training. (Participant 20)

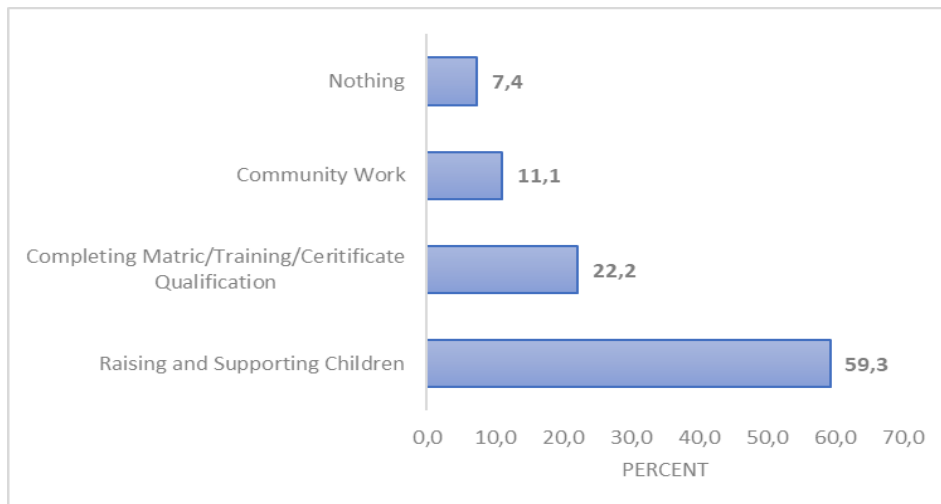
Some of the participants consider working in community projects and acquiring skills that enable them to interact well with the community as their life achievements. Only two participants feel that they do not have any achievements they recognise.

I have acquired better social and personal skills that helps me to better interact with the community. (Participant 3)

In addition, though society may dub it a necessary competence of every woman, one of the participants highlighted that her most outstanding achievement was acquiring cooking skills. Of course, it is not surprising since many girls are groomed to be great cooks in their own way, but what is worth noting is that the participant indicated that this is a skill that had afforded her the opportunity to be employed in most of the crèches.

My cooking have greatly improved since I started working at one of these crèches and it is that reference that makes me to be wanted at these different crèches. (Participant 18)

Figure 3.7: Participant’s achievements in life



4.7. Chapter conclusion

The chapter has presented the findings of female-headed respondents residing in the Renosterberg Municipality. The responses unearthed different insights when it came to an understanding of the sustainable livelihood strategies of female-headed households in the Pixley Ka Seme District. Furthermore, different themes and sub-themes were identified and presented, shedding more light on the subject matter. The following chapter will discuss the findings and give a detailed analysis reflecting on theory, existing literature, and previous studies carried out.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5. Introduction

The following section discusses the key findings related to the preceding research, theories, and literature. The study's research questions, which the study sought to answer, will aid. The main themes identified from the study's objectives will be discussed and seek to understand the sustainable livelihood strategies of female-headed households better. The study sheds insight into the challenges female-headed families face, the livelihood strategies of female-headed households, and mechanisms that respond to the difficulties and pressures experienced by female heads.

It is essential to note that there are various reasons that lead to female-headed households. The results indicated factors like a passed away husband, a sick husband, unemployment, a husband who has left the family, passed away parents and individuals who claimed they never married. In a similar vein, literature echoed the same sentiment noting that, in many African states, it has become a familiar picture that husbands leave behind their families, migrating to the urban areas from the rural areas in search of employment upon which they do not return entirely, causing an imbalance in the social security and political environment of the rural areas (Ruwanpura, 2003; CSO, 2010). More so, the case may be that it is polygamous, and wives are expected to take care of their respective families as the husband cannot do so (Ruwanpura, 2003).

Chant (2016) noted divorce as a cause of many female-headed households, leaving families with a loss of income. Zarhani (2011), like the Pixley Ka Seme participants, agreed with the fact that the passing away of a spouse or parent led to female-headed households, which also led to one not getting married entirely in the hope of fully taking care of their siblings, children or any left behind family members.

The participants, however, failed to bring to attention the fact highlighted by Buvinic and Gupta (1990) that there was a growing trend in various countries of female-headed families due to higher education prospects among the females, though it is mainly in developed countries where women are their house heads by choice, not any pushing circumstances. Again, high rates of single mothers having children out of wedlock have given rise to FHHs, and as Haney *et al.* (1975) note, since from the early 1970s, there has been an increase in female-headed households.

5.1. Challenges faced by female-headed households

The results brought out that female-headed families face various challenges. The loss of income in female-headed households was the most common challenge due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The available literature on the same course revealed the same, arguing that female heads tend to

experience income loss, meaning poverty will be consolidated in their homes (Posel & Rogan, 2011; 2012). Men are earners of the relevant money in households, and upon their passing away it automatically means the family is drowned in poverty. In South Africa, studies have highlighted how this is stressful for the female-headed households (Schatz & Madhavan, 2007) whose meagre salaries can be easily further affected by climate changes or work environment transformation (Posel & Rogan, 2012; Rogan, 2015). Thus, organisations or employers need to redefine the employment environment for women to enable them to receive salaries at par with men so that they would be able to cater for their families as independent breadwinners.

In addition, participants revealed that female-headed households, since they are headed by women, suffer from a lack of recognition or support from society, though such help is expected to come their way. Businesses of females were brought out to be unsupported, and even the government did little to invest in women's initiatives to empower their independence and give them a voice in matters that affect them. Parallel to this, the Poverty Vulnerability Report released by Stats SA (2017) identified women as more vulnerable, poverty-stricken and without support because of cultural beliefs and values that treat women as third-class citizens, without say or power to decide. Consequently, such beliefs need to be done away with to empower women to become successful house heads.

Poverty continues to be thriving as many rely on less than a dollar per day for livelihood, and sometimes this comes from a single source (Soudien, Reddy & Woolard, 2019). The participants seemed to have echoed the same sentiment arguing that the reliance of female heads on one source of income had placed them in a tight position, following that most of these incomes were not sufficient for their family's upkeep. Though there would be a need for supplementary activities to boost the income, these extra activities were found not to be available or unsupported by the government or society.

The participants brought to attention the fact that divorce exposes many female-headed households to financial challenges. The results noted that in most families, men are mostly the breadwinners, and upon divorce, money shortage becomes a familiar picture. Furthermore, the study revealed that in some cases, female heads are compelled to be in debt with specific individuals in society or the employer as she asks for advances to cater for the house's basic needs. Chant (2016), to consolidate on this, was of the same view, stating that many female-headed families upon divorce experience financial challenges, following being primarily dependent on the husband's income. This, of course, sees the husband experiencing financial independence at the expense of the family, hence the need to encourage women to stand on their own two feet even if they are still with their partners as no one can predict the future.

More so, the results brought out that female-headed households were characterised by unemployment or finding themselves in low paying jobs. Women embarked upon piece jobs or concentrated on

working in crèches, which were found to have become more of their domain considering their educational qualifications. In line with this, StatsSA (2018) revealed that, in 2017, the unemployment rate was 26%, of which the majority were women. Unemployment has been identified as a critical challenge that is affecting female-headed households from sustaining their families, and even giving their children a proper education.

Moepeng and Tisdell (2008) noted the situation where women were pushed towards low paying jobs because of lower educational levels. Unlike men, women attained jobs mainly in inferior positions (Glynn, 2019; Ray, 2000; Woolard, 2002). The results recognised this as one of the causes behind the female heads' lack of financial muscle. There is therefore the need to make available educational opportunities for women to place them in positions of power in more prominent and better-paying organisations. However, it is worth noting that a study in Botswana paints a different picture of female-headed households, as most FHHs were found to be financially independent and in positions to adequately cater for themselves and their family's needs (Moepeng & Tisdell, 2008), with 55 percent of those headed by women falling between the middle and upper classes.

The results also uncovered that female-headed households sometimes engaged in illegal activities as a coping mechanism, which put their freedom at risk. Though they did report being able to survive, it was a challenge in that they risked jail time, leaving behind those they will be working for to suffer more or lose more in terms of fines when caught. The participants availed that home-brewed beer was sold illegally by FHHs. Nedziwe (2017) states that this is not a new phenomenon, wherein female heads engage in illegal activities to cater for their families. Studies in the Southern African region show that female heads illegally crossed borders to acquire work to send money to those left at home. Though the legal nature of activities brought out by the participants and literature differs, the bottom line is the illegal nature of these activities undertaken by female heads to take care of their families and the risks associated with them.

Reliance on handouts was also found to cripple the FHHs' competencies to work for their families. The participants brought out that FHHs relied on grants and remittances from their children or society. This was revealed posing challenges following that the grants were insufficient to compact the existing financial challenges and remittances did not come regularly that one would rest their budget on them. So this reliance on handouts by female-headed households put them in positions of poverty and lack of finance. In a similar vein, Haney, Michielutte, Vincent and Cochrane (1975) noted that women especially have been exposed to social protection or welfare since the early years, which has led to reliance on handouts rather than learning to work for their survival.

The reliance on the social development department has led to many families going hungry and lacking clothing. The results unearthed that food shortages and clothing for children, mainly school uniforms, were scarce in some of the FHHs. This was further worsened by lack of transport money to pay for the

children travelling to and from school. UNICEF (2010), on a similar scenario, commented that food shortages in FHHs resulted in negative consequences in households. Various research studies have emphasised the direct link between poverty and FHHs, which negatively impacted the socio-economic conditions of many households in the South African regions (Dubihlela & Dubihlela, 2014; Lekezwa, 2011; Makiwane, 2010). Therefore, the need arises to empower women to be independent breadwinners who do not gamble their livelihoods on handouts.

The Municipality of Renosterberg was also found to have a hand in the plight of female-headed households. The results indicated that despite the initiatives by female heads to make a living for themselves through agriculture (gardening and selling of vegetables), the municipality has not been able to make available sufficient water. The results indicated that the participants noted this as a setback to their agricultural projects. The sustainable livelihood framework, reflecting on this, states that water, air, soil and plants as natural sources strike a balance in the global environment, and there is the need to utilise such to make a living (Rakodi & Lloyd Jones, 2002; Serrat, 2017). They present natural capital to different livelihoods. However, the results indicated that the municipality is failing the most vulnerable in the community, like FHHs, in that they fail to provide them with water as a basic service. With limited water provision, no decent life is possible, let alone using water for growing your own vegetables. The participants further revealed that the defiance of some children posed challenges for FHHs. It was noted that specifically male children were in no hurry to pay back the favour of being taken care of or educated and took their time securing a job or making a living for themselves.

The challenges affecting female-headed households were also commonly identified across the literature. For instance, participants highlighted how income loss or insufficient income had been a critical challenge, a sentiment that dominantly resonates with evidence on female-headed households (Milazzo & van de Walle, 2017; Chen & Ravallion, 2013). But, more so, most females heading households do not have any skills or expertise due to cultural backgrounds that denied them opportunities based on gender as compared to their male counterparts (Buvinic & Gupta, 1997; Chant, 1997; Chant, 2016; Ndinda & Uzodike, 2008). Thus, there is a great need for societies to come together, do away with certain stereotypes or beliefs and completely change the social standing of women as female house heads so that they are emancipated enough to be at par with men in most employment environments and be able to lead better lives for themselves and their dependents.

5.2. Livelihood strategies of female-headed households

The results recognised that female heads adopted various livelihood strategies as a way to survive. The results unveiled that some female house heads were selling vegetables, tobacco, milk and meat. This enabled the female heads to make a living. The Department of Agriculture was also found to be

providing seeds to those female heads who were into agriculture so that they would benefit from the practise of subsistence farming. Alemu (2012) and Neves and Du Toit (2013) recognise these same strategies as adopted by female heads as livelihood strategies, categorising them as on-farm, that is, agricultural and other land-based activities (Eneyew & Bekele, 2009; Geremew, Sangho & Fellizah 2017) and the non-farm, which entail the formal employment and the informal economic activities. Through these activities female-headed households yield their survival strategies.

The respondents have identified social grants as a source of income for female-headed households. The results revealed that many households capitalise on child support grants, maintenance, and old-age pensions of their parents or grandparents as a source of livelihood for themselves and their respective dependents. Lalthapersad (2002) similarly denotes that social protection in South Africa in the post-apartheid era has witnessed a rise, seeing over 18 million South African recipients of social protection (Magubane, 2021). Social security or social grants reduce female-headed households' vulnerability status, making them independent breadwinners to their families (Dubihlela & Dubihlela, 2014). Hence, there is a need to recognise those female-headed families in dire need of social protection to impact their livelihoods positively.

Non-labour resources of income, entailing social welfare and grants, remittances from those working in the urban areas and non-income sources such as societal aid, are of significance when it comes to the livelihood of FHHs (Neves & Du Toit, 2013; Neves, 2017). The results revealed that female heads sustained their livelihood with handouts from their children working somewhere, especially urban areas. Also, society, friends and well-wishers were found to be aiding FHHs with food hampers and payment of essential household bills, for example electricity bills. Though this is not a livelihood strategy to put faith in, the results indicated that to some extent, female heads managed to feed and take care of their families with these handouts.

Regarding education, the results indicated that some FHHs had educated individuals who derived their livelihood from permanent employment. Some participants identified as police officers, some having qualifications that enabled them to work in early learning centres. Others revealed they had utilised the social development programmes that necessitated their education to acquire various survival skills (administrative skills and computer skills). Literature has shown that social capital is what connects the FHHs and the non-governmental organisations. In a similar vein, Neves and Du Toit (2013) revealed that FHHs' livelihood was grounded on wages or own account. Formal sector employment was found to be an efficient livelihood strategy for FHHs, and the Pixley Ka Seme District participants seemed to be of the same view. Therefore, it becomes paramount to accommodate a fair share of women in the employment sector as they constitute most of these female-headed households.

Abimbola and Oluwakemi (2013) noted that house heads adopted various income-generating ventures to increase or sustain their livelihoods. These also had a bearing on their skills. Needlework skills

were identified as a prowess of the participants, even sustaining a livelihood during the COVID pandemic by sewing masks. The sustainable livelihood approach stated the need to be attentive to the potential of people as specific life sustainable skills may be locked within them. It is only when these skills are given attention to that FHHs can derive their livelihood.

Domestic chores and part-time employment formed the foundation of female heads' livelihoods. According to the sustainable livelihood approach, activities that shape sustainability are best developed from holistic approaches to shape livelihood strategies (Serrat, 2017). In this case, the results portrayed that the FHHs engaged in odd jobs, which contributed to their livelihood and contributed to sustainability. However, it is recommended that the female heads have jobs with security to continue experiencing sustainability together with their families.

5.3. Mechanisms in response to challenges experienced by female-headed households

The results revealed mechanisms that may be adapted to respond to the difficulties and pressures experienced by female-headed households. It is important to note that the study established that social grants should be made available to actual owners of SASSA cardholders to eliminate those who benefit from aid that was not directed towards them. As Lalthapersad (2002) notes, social protection is a powerful strategy that compacts the challenges of many FHHs. Hence, when directed towards the correct recipients, it would affect positive outcomes. Many studies have found that social protection policies/programmes lead to attaining food insurance (Knowles, Davis & Tirivayi, 2013; World Bank, 2014).

The results also revealed that the participants desired government intervention in agricultural initiatives embarked on by FHHs where needed. Furthermore, the municipality of Renosterberg also had to play its part in providing basic service delivery like electricity and water core to agricultural initiatives. In line with this, several researchers revealed that an agricultural household assisted in income generation and family sustainability (Geremew, Sangho & Fellizah 2017; Eneyew & Bekele, 2009; Barret, Reardon & Webb, 2001). Thus, it is paramount for both the government and municipality to take cognisance of this.

The results indicate that if the government availed loans, female heads might be boosted and not face challenges. However, the results showed that the government lacked direct support for businesses owned by female heads, taking the first action towards male-dominated business ventures. So, the argument is that with the right financial aid, FHHs would overcome many of their challenges. Therefore, Leibbrandt *et al.* (2000), along with Rana, Jahanzeb and Urrehman (2008), suggested that authorities should deliver financial aid to assist and retain livelihood ventures by FHHs.

The participants also revealed the need to increase handouts to FHHs, and food parcels made a regular. Though this may support redundancy, it serves to aid those female heads with no other plan to make a living for themselves and their dependents. The government was also urged to create employment opportunities aimed at FHHs so that the female heads may get income to support their families. As per the argument of the sustainable livelihood approach, the government, as advocates for poverty reduction, should truly listen to the needs of the FHHs, but more importantly should support their assets and things they are already doing for themselves to secure a livelihood. In other words, a strength-based community-driven approach versus a state-led one should be supported.

Participants agree with the notions of sustainable livelihood approach that indicate that doing away with inequality is a crucial process towards empowering female heads towards sustainability. Reduction of poverty was seen starting with respecting and giving people freedom and various choices to choose from. Patriarchal arrangements had to be redefined (Tong, 1989) and women given equal recognition as men and seen capable of exerting skills beneficial to organisations, lending enough income to sustain themselves.

The participants also urged government to avail educational opportunities for all, be it males or females. This was one of the ways for female heads to attain employment. Support in female head small businesses and availing of learners’ bursaries equipped the female heads with the right tools to fight poverty, hunger or any financial problems they may encounter. The policies that supported equality should remain in theory and be put to practice (Ndinda & Uzodike, 2012; Ndinda, 2009). Sustainability of livelihood is attained if the created system does help the community and the intended targets (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Hence the government encouraged them to walk the talk.

Matrix 5.1: Summary of the research question, themes and literature

Research questions	Emerging themes	Interaction with literature	Sources
The challenges that face female-headed households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Loss of income ■ Lack of societal and governmental support ■ Reliance on one source of income ■ Creditor/employer advances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Men, as breadwinners of their families, upon neglecting it, would leave it with no source of income, and this income loss consolidated poverty in FHHs. This was identified as a stressful matter for most FHHs. ■ Cultural beliefs and values place women in society as third-class citizens, and this renders them vulnerable and lacking decisions to be independent house heads. ■ Many people survive on less than a dollar per day for livelihood, and the more significant population of this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Posel & Rogan (2011, 2012); Schatz & Madhavan (2007); Posel & Rogan (2012); Rogan (2015) ■ Stats SA (2017) ■ Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard (2012); Soudien, Reddy and Woolard (2019)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unemployment/low paying employment/lower levels of education ■ Illegal activities ■ Reliance on handouts ■ Money/food /housing shortages ■ Municipality incompetence 	<p>percentage are women who happen to be female heads. So this reliance on the insufficient source of income gives birth to challenges for FHHs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Divorce makes women financially vulnerable as men are portrayed as breadwinners, and this leads them as female heads opting for creditors whom they will not be able to pay back in time or working for already paid-out salaries. ■ The majority of women dominated in the 26% unemployment rate of 2017, and potential breadwinners, that is, children of the female heads, were also found unemployed though educated. Lower levels of education among women also placed them in inferior and less-paying jobs in organisations. ■ Studies in the Southern African region indicated that engaging in illegal activities for survival by female heads had been there from time immemorial, risking getting caught and facing jail time or heavy fines. ■ Women have been targets of social protection for a long time, and this has affected their ability to take care of themselves and rely more on handouts. ■ A direct link between poverty and FHHs was found, and this had negative consequences on the socio-economic conditions of many households. ■ The SLA identified water among the main natural sources leading to human survival or natural capital through agriculture. However, the Renosterberg municipality was not adequately supplying it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chant (2016) ■ Stats SA (2018); Moepeng & Tisdell (2008) ■ Nedziwe (2017) ■ Haney, Michielutte, Vincent & Cochrane (1975); Posel & Rogan, (2011; 2012) ■ UNICEF (2010), Lekezwa (2011); Makiwane (2010); Dubihlela & Dubihlela (2014) ■ Rakodi and Lloyd Jones (2002); Serrat (2017); SLA
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<p>The existing livelihood strategies of female-headed households</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Small-scale business ■ Social grants ■ Remittances ■ Education initiatives ■ Skills development ■ Domestic chores/part-time employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Department of Agriculture provided seeds to female heads in support of subsistence farming, and the informal business females engaged in, like selling vegetables and meat. ■ 18 million South Africans have been found to be recipients of social grants, and this has been witnessed to reduce the gap between scarcity and livelihood. This also empowered women to be independent breadwinners. ■ Remittances from children working in urban areas and the aid of society helped the FHHs to have better living standards for themselves and their dependants. ■ Formal sector employment was found to be an answer to most of the challenges of FHHs, as it provided a guaranteed wage or salary. This was attained through getting educated. ■ House heads embarked on different ventures that sustained them and some became skills to live by, such as needlework skills. Certain skills are located within and just need to be explored and utilised. ■ Engaging in odd jobs for the FHHs contributed to their sustainability as they could make the most out of the little they got. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Alemu (2012); Neves & Du Toit (2013); Geremew, Sangho & Fellizah (2017); Eneyew & Bekele (2009) ■ Lalthapersad (2002); SASSA (2012); Dubihlela and Dubihlela, (2014) ■ Neves & Du Toit (2013); Neves (2017) ■ Neves & Du Toit (2013) ■ Abimbola and Oluwakemi (2013), SLA ■ Serrat (2017)
<p>Mechanisms to combat challenges faced by female heads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social protection ■ Government support in agriculture ■ Loan availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social protection is a powerful tool that should be directed to its proper recipients to empower them. Social protection also guarantees food on the table for FHHs. ■ Agricultural initiatives were found to generate income that led to families' sustainability, hence the need for governments to work towards agricultural initiatives of FHHs. ■ Financial aid was witnessed to retain livelihood ventures. Government also 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lalthapersad (2002); Knowles, Davis, & Tirivayi (2013); World Bank (2014) ■ Geremew, Sangho & Fellizah (2017); Eneyew & Bekele, (2009); Barret, Reardon & Webb, (2001) ■ Leibbrandt et al.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Handout increases/create employment ■ Advocating for equality ■ Educational opportunities 	<p>needs to fund female businesses and not concentrate only on male-owned ventures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Governments were to create employment for female heads so that they would be able to take care of themselves and extend handouts to those female heads with no skills, qualifications or know-how of how to sustain themselves ■ Women were to be given equal recognition as men, and patriarchal thinking done away with, only through this can they be able, as women, to attain sustainability. ■ Equality practices were to be practised, and women were given equal educational opportunities as men, for good education was found to be the gateway to better employment prospects. 	<p>(2000); Rana, Jahanzeb, and Urrehman (2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SLA ■ Tong (1989) ■ Ndinda & Uzodike (2012); Ndinda (2009); Chambers and Conway (1992)
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5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and discussed the findings of this study. The results brought out different perspectives in the understanding of sustainable livelihoods strategies of female-headed households. The study revealed that female-headed households were characterised by many challenges that sometimes needed societal and governmental intervention for them to be combated. So, the various difficulties faced by female-headed households were explored. This was followed by the different livelihood strategies the female heads adopted to sustain themselves. Lastly, mechanisms that could be put into play to lessen the plight of female heads were unveiled. The results showed that the challenges the women faced outweighed the strategies they adopted for livelihood, and therefore there is a great need to explore the various initiatives that may change this stand. The next chapter will conclude and offer recommendations to the study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Introduction

In this chapter, the summary of the research study will be presented. The chapter aims to see the extent to which the research objectives were met after the presentation and discussion of findings in the preceding chapters. Therefore, the chapter will begin by summarising the research findings, followed by offering general conclusions of the study. Recommendations will also be offered, and lastly, the study's limitations will be presented. The study's main objective was to have a better understanding of sustainable livelihood strategies of female-headed households and Pixley Ka Seme District under the Renosterberg Municipality in the Northern Cape, which was utilised as a case study.

6.1. Summary of study findings

This study undertook three research objectives with the aim to investigate and better understand the different types of sustainable livelihoods and survival strategies of female-headed households in Renosterberg Municipality in the Northern Cape. The objectives are as follows:

- To understand challenges that face female-headed households.
- To investigate the existing livelihood strategies of female-headed households.
- To recommend a provisioning mechanism that responds to difficulties and pressures experienced by female heads in the area.

A qualitative approach was utilised for the research, and the data was obtained through semi-structured interviews. A non-probability sampling method was used, and from that, purposive sampling was selected. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the participants were from female-headed households and 18 and above according to the researcher's target population. A list of female-headed homes was first sought from the Department of Social Development to speed up the selection of 20 female-headed households. The total number of interviewed participants was 22, all of whom spoke out of a free will, as they were not coerced in any manner to partake in the study. Face-to-face interviews were conducted (all Covid 19 regulations observed) with the aid of an interview guide so as not to stray from the main purpose of the study. These interviews were also voice recorded to enhance accuracy of data. The recorded data was then transcribed, and recurring patterns recorded through thematic analysis. Themes were identified, which reflected the challenges faced by female-headed households, livelihood strategies of female-headed households and mechanisms that respond to the difficulties and pressures experienced by female heads. Some of the responses were put on an Excel spreadsheet as a way to generate simple descriptive statistics that complement the interview responses given by the participants.

The study's key results were that the Pixley Ka Seme District participants, as female heads, were traumatised with various challenges that they could not cope with. Though various livelihood strategies were also identified, they seemed to be weighed down by the challenges that were presented. Furthermore, the Renosterberg Municipality served as case study that reflected on the crucial role of municipalities in creating relevant opportunities that can be utilised in addressing the challenges of FHHs. The study further consolidated the challenges that the female heads who were under this municipality already experienced. Thus, recommendations were offered for the municipality and government to improve their service delivery to deliver services beneficial to the female-headed households.

6.2. General conclusions of the study

Below are the study's general conclusions following the presentation and discussion of the data gathered pertaining to the sustainable livelihood strategies of female-headed households:

6.2.1. Reasons for the formation of female-headed households

- The participants revealed that female-headed households were a result of a passed away husband or parents, leaving the women to take over the role of breadwinner of the family.
- The participants also were female heads because they never married following the passing of the parents or spouse and hence wanted to divert their full attention to their siblings or were divorced due to abusive husbands and never re-married.
- A sick husband, unemployed husband or a husband who has left the family in search of greener pastures and never came back or polygamous marriages also contributed to female-headed households.

6.2.2. Challenges faced by female-headed households

- The study found that income loss was the main challenge of female-headed households, especially after the death of a breadwinner or the breadwinner leaving the house, and this was found to leave female heads with no option but turn to creditors for help.
- The study further revealed that society and the government did not fully support female-headed initiatives, which saw some of the female heads of small businesses scrambling.
- The employment environment was also found unfair to female heads as superior and better paying positions were occupied by men, leaving women engaged in less paying jobs or part-time occupations with wages that did not sustain them.

- It can also be concluded that money and food shortages are another challenge of FHHs and they are compelled to engage in various initiatives for survival, including illegal ventures like the selling of illegal beer in the process of risking being jailed or heavily fined.
- FHHs were found to rely on handouts and remittances from their children, friends and family members who did not come regularly, hence without any help, they suffer from starvation or financial challenges.
- The Renosterberg Municipality was found to be not rendering its full services like providing electricity and water regularly, which supported the agricultural initiatives of female heads, hence saw these initiatives failing.

6.2.3. Livelihood strategies of female-headed households

- The participants revealed that female heads were in informal business initiatives like selling milk and vegetables and making a living out of them and some opted for domestic chores that put food on their table.
- Social grants were found to be lessening food shortages and stress on the part of the female heads, and remittances did cover a certain gap whenever they were made available.
- The study found that specific skills facilitated livelihood among female heads, and female heads, through needlework, managed to sustain their families.
- Some participants were found to be educated to have stable jobs, with others reporting that they utilised the developmental initiatives to acquire their qualifications that placed them in better employment positions.

6.2.4. Mechanisms in response to challenges faced by female-headed households

- The study concludes that offering social security to the right recipients increases the livelihood chances of female-headed households.
- The government was urged to support female-headed projects providing loans or financial aid.
- Employment opportunities were also identified to be scarce and hence a need arises for government to create employment prospects for FHHs and extend more handouts to those not employable due to various factors.
- The study found that equality was essential to create an environment where female heads can penetrate the male labelled job environment and make a living or get equal educational opportunities with prospects of future better jobs.

6.3. Recommendations based on the study findings

The following recommendations are made based on the study's findings:

- The government should ensure transparency and regular delivery of aid to FHHs to ensure they do not lack financially.
- Various programmes should be implemented by the government, which ensure shelter is provided for female-headed households.
- Awareness campaigns should be undertaken in communities, putting together their heads to aid disadvantaged female-headed households.
- Free of charge, developmental programmes should be availed to female heads so that they are taught how to capitalise on their skills and make a living for themselves.
- Community projects should be introduced aimed at FHHs to have an income; these projects can be, for example, big irrigation gardens, poultry or even fish farming.
- The female heads themselves should not rely on handouts or remittances but try to identify their strength and bring forward a proposal to the government that might take it into cognisance.
- The Renosterberg Municipality and other municipalities must perform at their full capacity rendering the best services, considering not doing so will be holding some of the female heads' initiatives back.

6.4. Limitations of the study

The study's main limitation is that it consisted of a small sample from the Pixley Ka Seme District whose views may not be a fair reflection of the whole of the rural Northern Cape Province. Furthermore, the sample size of 22 participants can also be seen as insufficient to capture the views paramount to the plight of female-headed households. However, it is worth noting that the researcher made the best of the responses provided to explore the sustainable strategies of female-headed households, also making probes and follow-ups on questions to gather detailed responses from the sampled female heads of Renosterberg Municipality.

6.5. Conclusion

The study concludes that female heads are yet to receive the full attention and aid they should in South Africa. There still remains a huge gap between their sustainability and livelihood. The study revealed that the community and government do not fully support the initiatives of the female heads trying to make a living for themselves as well as their dependants. It will not be doing justice, though, not to acknowledge the developmental programmes that enabled female heads to acquire qualifications that led to employment. However, as long as societies cling to the patriarchal way of

thinking, most female heads who happen to be women will continue suffering in low paying jobs and low education. Hence, the South African government recommended acting upon their policies of equality, not just theorising on them. FHHs should be prioritised as a target group when any socio-economic programme and project are designed and implemented in South Africa. It is recommended that further studies be carried out in different South African settings to add more literature to the sustainable livelihood strategies of female-headed households.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

1. Why do you consider your household as headed by a female?

.....

2. How do you as a household make a living? Employed/self-employed/farming/social grants/remittances/etc.

.....

3. In addition to your main source of income, what other activities do you engage in to maintain your household?

.....

4. Is your income enough to support your household?

.....

5. If no, what plans do you make to survive? For example, relying on natural resources like wild plants, wood for fire, community gardens, etc.

.....

6. Do you receive any support from elsewhere? Remittances/social grants/food gardens/skills training, etc. Please explain? (From whom, from where, what kind of support?)

.....

7. What is the biggest livelihood challenge do you and your household currently face?

.....

8. Can you explain the skills that you have that have helped you the most to make a living?

.....

9. Do you think there are anything those in authority should do to support female-headed households?

.....

10. What do you think you have achieved in life?

.....

Thank you very much!!

AANHANGSEL A: ONDERHOUDSGIDS

ONDERHOUDSGIDS VIR VROULIKE HUISHOOFDE

1. Waarom beskou u hierdie huishouding as onder beheer van 'n vrou?

.....

2. Hoe maak hierdie huishouding 'n bestaan? Voltyds werksaam/eie besigheid/
boerdery/maatskaplike toelaag/betalings uit ander bronne/ens.

.....

3. Behalwe vir u hoofbron van inkomste, watter ander aktiwiteite onderneem u om hierdie
huishouding in stand te hou?

.....

4. Is u inkomste genoeg om hierdie huishouding te ondersteun?

.....

5. Indien nie, watter planne maak u om te oorleef? Byvoorbeeld, afhanklik van natuurlike
hulpbronne soos plante, hout vir vuur, gemeenskapstuine, ens.

.....

6. Ontvang u ondersteuning uit enige ander plek? Betalings/maatskaplike toelae/ kos uit
tuine/vaardighedsopleiding, ens. Verduidelik asseblief? (van wie, van waar, watter soort
ondersteuning?)

.....

7. Wat is die grootste bestaansuitdaging vir u en u huishouding op die oomblik?

.....

8. Watter vaardighede het u wat u die meeste help om 'n bestaan te maak?

.....

9. Wat dink u kan die in gesagsposisies doen om vroulike huishoofde in hul huishoudings te
ondersteun?

.....

10. Wat dink u is u grootste prestasie tot dusver in die lewe?

.....

BAIE DANKIE!!

ISIHLOMELO A: UMGAQO WODLIWANONDLIBE

UMGAQO WODLIWANONDLIBE MALUNGA NEMIZI EKHOKELEWE NGABASETYHINI/ABAFAZI

1. Kutheni ucinga ukuba elikhaya likhokelwa ngumntu wasetyhini?

.....

2. Ingaba liphila ngantoni elikhaya? Uqeshiwe / Uqashishile/ Uyalima/ Ufumana izibonelo zikarhulumente, etc

.....

3. Ukongeza ingeniso onayo zeziphi ezinye izinto ozenzayo?

.....

4. Ingaba ingeniso onayo yanele na?

.....

5. Ukuba ayenelanga zithini izicwangciso zakho? Umzekelo ukuxhomekeka endalweni njengemifino yasendle, iinkuni zokubasa, izitiya zoluntu

.....

6. Ingaba ufumana inkxaso kwezinye iindawo? Izibonelo zikarhulumente, iizitiya / uqeqesho lwezakhono

.....

7. Yintoni olona celomngeni lokuphila olujongene nalo olusapho?

.....

8. Zeziphi izakhono ezanceda elikhaya ukuze liphile?

.....

9. Yintoni ocinga ukuba abasemagunyeni bangayenza ukunceda amakhaya akhokelwa ngabasethyini?

.....

10. Yintoni ocinga ukuba uyiphumelelisile ebomini?

.....

Enkosi kakhulu!!

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the insert specific data collection method.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

Full name(s) of researcher(s): _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____



APPENDIX C: FACULTY CLEARANCE LETTER



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

16-Sep-2021

Dear Mr Bonakele John Phuzi

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Understanding Sustainable Livelihoods Strategies of Female-Headed Households: The Case Study of Renosterberg Municipality, Pixley Ka Seme District, Northern Cape

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2020/1819/21

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Adri
du
Plessis

Digitally signed
by Dr Adri du
Plessis
Date:
2021.09.17
16:58:09 +02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401
9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za



APPENDIX D: GATEKEEPER APPROVAL LETTER



Department:
Social Development
NORTHERN CAPE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

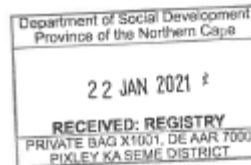
Private Bag X 5042, KIMBERLEY, 8301. Lathi Mabile Complex, Barkly Road, KIMBERLEY
Tel (053) 874 9200, Fax (053) 871 3612

Engqulelo : Ms T Booysse
Dipatlisiso :
Noms :
Imibuzo :

Date : 22/01/2021
Letiba :
Datum :
Umhla :

Tshupelo : H2.5.1
Verwysings :
Iselathiso :

Mr B Phuzi
1 Simon Street
Hadison Park
KIMBERLEY
8301



Dear Mr Phuzi

REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE NORTHERN-CAPE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Your letter dated 14 January 2021 bears reference.

The Department of Social Development (Northern-Cape Province) noted your letter confirming your studies towards a Master Degree in Developmental Studies. It further notes the subsequent research required in partial fulfilment of the said degree, namely obtaining a better understanding of the livelihood and survival strategies of female-headed households in the area of the Renosterberg Municipality.

Approval is hereby granted to be furnished with a list of female headed households in the area of the Renosterberg Municipality.

Furthermore the Department requires that the outcome of your research on the above should be shared with the Department.

The Department wishes you all the best with your studies and in conducting your research project.

Yours faithfully


Ms H Samson
Head of Department



Building a Caring Society. Together.
A Caring and Self-reliant Society.





social development

Department:
Social Development
NORTHERN CAPE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 1001, DE AAR, 7000. ORION HOSTEL BUILDING, ALPHA ROAD, DE AAR 7000
Tel (053) 632 7800, Fax (053) 631 1875 EMAIL: HSR@gsd@ncpp.gov.za

INTERNAL MEMO

TO:	Ms. H. Samson Head of Department Department of Social Development Northern Cape Province Lathil Mabilo Complex Kimberley, 8300	FROM:	Mr. Henry Nkosomzi Biko Acting District Director Pbdey ka Seme District Orion Hostel Building Alpha Road De Aar, 7000
CC:	Mr. I.D. Manyane Executive Manager IFM & District Management	ENQUIRIES:	H.N. Biko
DATE:	2021/01/20	REF NO:	H2-2020

SUBJECT: Request for Conducting Research on Female Headed Households and a List by DSD Pks District – Mr. B. Phuzi

Dear HOD Samson


Above mentioned is a student with the University of Free State who is participating in his final year for his Masters in Development Studies. The final year student has requested to conduct a research on above subject matter. Therefore, the Department of Social Development as Custodians to matters that relates to Women in particular and working with vulnerable groups is hereby as part of the University processes requested to give assistance to the Researcher Student.

We hereby wish to solicit support from your office to assist the above-mentioned process. The communication from the above mentioned is clear that the research will bases itself solely on academic purposes, all the matters out of the research will be treated with Caution and the Highest Confidentiality.

Further based on your permission, we will allow a process between the Social Workers and Probation Officers at Renosterberg Municipality to source a list from their file caseload of Female Headed Household, the officials affected will consult the affected Female Headed Household in good time and source permission from them as well, as this will be a voluntary process.

Please consider the Research as a process that we may draw some lessons as Department of Social Development for our future work to improve our society at the Renosterberg municipality.

Compiled by:


.....
H.M. Biko
Acting District Director
Pixley ka Seme District

Research -

~~Recommended / Not Recommended~~


.....
Mr. T. D. Manyane
Chief Director
IFM & District Management

To request the researcher
to share the results with
the Dept

~~Approved / Not Approved~~


.....
Ms. H. Samson
Head of Department
Department of Social Development
Northern Cape Province

Mr. Bonakele Phuzi
1 Simon Street Hadison Park
Kimberley 8301
Mobile: 0795105004
Email: phuzib@gmail.com
14 January 2021

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Dear Manager

RE: Request a permission letter and list of Female- headed households.

I am a final Master in Development Studies student at the University of the Free State. I am conducting a research to better understand the livelihood and survival strategies of female-headed households in Renosterberg Municipality in Northern Cape, understand the challenges they face on their daily lives, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for my studies. As a department that works with vulnerable group of people, I am kindly requesting a list of Female Headed household in Renosterberg Municipality and grant me permission to visit them for only study purposes.

Your permission and their information will used for academic purpose only and will be kept confidential.

Your cooperation with this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Please feel free to ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you.

Yours Faithfully

Researcher: Bonakele Phuzi

Signature of Researcher:



Date: 15/01/2021



