

**THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA:
A CASE STUDY OF DRIEFONTEIN, KWAZULU-NATAL**

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that **THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF DRIEFONTEIN, KWAZULU-NATAL** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DATE

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First and foremost, I would like to thank the Lord, Jesus Christ, the creator, the one who makes everything possible. Thank You for keeping me afloat. You must be exalted as Head over all. Yours is the victory.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my companion, Llewellyn Dirks. Thank you for believing in me and for your invaluable support. I wouldn't have done it without you. Thank you for not only giving me hope, but also working long hours side-by-side with me. All your hard efforts and encouragement enabled me to complete this work.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the development challenges that rural women are facing in South Africa and the three Southern African Developing Countries (SADC) namely, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach since this design was deemed most appropriate.

The objectives of the study are to explore how women assess their situation in South Africa and the three SADC countries with regards to their socio-economic realities. It is widely known that in many households, especially blacks, men leave home for urban areas in search of employment, leaving behind women to maintain the entire household on their own. Despite the significant role played by women, they are faced with problems such as those experienced by rural women in Sub-Saharan countries.

The study also endeavours to explore the most important development challenges of rural women in relation to education, health facilities, food insecurity, poverty, access to water and sanitation, the participation in the economy and politics, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the impacts of climate change.

Focus groups discussions and face to face interviews were conducted with information rich informants in the Driefontein rural area of KwaZulu Natal. Findings from the study show that Driefontein faces challenges which are interrelated. The findings further highlight that unemployment, failure on the part of local government to provide knowledge, training and monitoring of co-operative ventures.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET	-	Adult Basic Education and Training
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANCWL	-	African National Congress Women's League
ARVs	-	Anti-Retrovirals
BEE	-	Black Economic Empowerment
BLPARW	-	The Better Life Program for the African Rural Women
BMC	-	Basin Management Committee
CBD	-	Central Business District
CBM	-	Community Based Management
CCA	-	Complementary County Assessment
CCGs	-	Community Care Givers
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
CGE	-	Commission on Gender Equality
CRDP	-	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CSG	-	Child Support Grant
CSW	-	Commission on the Status of Women
DAWN	-	Development Alternatives with Women for the New era
DDA	-	Department of Development Aid
DRDLR	-	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
DRFN	-	Desert Research Foundation of Namibia
DWCPD	-	Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FASW	-	Federation of South African Women
FPE	-	Free Primary Education
GCN	-	Girl Child Network
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	-	Gender Entrepreneurship Markets
GL	-	Gender Links

GPF	-	Gender Policy Framework
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IANWGE	-	Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technologies
IDPs	-	Integrated Development Plans
IFAD	-	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
IMAGE	-	Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equality
ITC	-	Information Technologies Communication
ITE	-	Information Technology Education
IWY	-	International Women's Year
KZN	-	KwaZulu-Natal
LFS	-	Labour Force Survey
MIG	-	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
MIMS	-	Multiple Indicator Monitoring Survey
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
MoHSS	-	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MoHTE	-	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education
NAC	-	National Action Committee
NDP	-	National Development Plan
NDS	-	National Development Strategy
NER	-	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGM	-	National Gender Machinery
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHIES	-	National Household Income Expenditure Survey
NSF	-	National Strategic Plan
ORAP	-	Organisation of Rural Association for Progress
OSW	-	The Office on the Status of Women
PEPUDA	-	Promotion of Equality, Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
PRSAP	-	Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan

RDF	-	Rural Development Framework
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Plan
SA	-	South Africa
SADC	-	Southern African Development Community
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SHIES	-	Swaziland's Household Income and Expenditure Survey
SNL	-	Swazi Nation Land
SPEED	-	Smart Program of Economic Empowerment and Development
SWAPO	-	South West African People's Association
TDL	-	Title Deed Land
UN	-	United Nations
UNAIDS	-	Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS
UNCT	-	United Nations County Team
UNDAF	-	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Plan
UNFPA	-	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNWFP	-	United Nations World Food Program
VOICE	-	Voluntary Organisations in Community Enterprise
WASH	-	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	-	World Bank
WDR	-	World Development Report
WFP	-	World Food Program
WID	-	Women in Development
WHO	-	World Health Organisation
WSSD	-	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTW	-	Water Treatment Works
ZAN	-	Zimbabwe Aids Network
ZDHS	-	Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey
ZIMTA	-	Zimbabwe Teacher's Association
ZimVac	-	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
ZWRCN	-	Zimbabwe's Women Resource Centre Network

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodological approaches used to gather information for this study in order to answer the key question. It discusses the motivation for the study and presents the research design, research question, data collection techniques, data analysis and recording of interviews. Ethical considerations are also discussed.

1.1 Motivation for the study

The motivation to research this topic stems from the researcher's early upbringing in a rural setting which was male dominated and where women had very little, if any, say. It is the view of the researcher that after 20 years of democracy not enough has been done to empower rural women. Even with all the policies put in place to improve the lives of rural women since democratisation, they effectively remain policies on paper. South Africa is still one of the world's countries with high levels of income inequality in spite of pro-poor policies (World Bank Report 2006). The social safety net is not encompassing the majority of the unemployed, thus having failed to provide them with income security (Taylor 2002). Economic policies in South Africa have not yet resolved the crisis that there are more unemployed people than job opportunities. In spite of its pro-poor policies which are especially aimed at rural communities, the government is failing to address structural unemployment and its Achilles heel is the lack of vision and political will in decisively fighting against poverty and inequality as a result of unemployment.

According to the twenty year review (1994-2014) of the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, government's affirmative action policies and targeted programmes, despite their achievements in focussing on the needs of women, it has still not met employment equity targets in the public sector. Employment equity targets in the private sector, especially at the level of senior management, still remains a challenge. *Implementations* of measures to achieve equality in the private sector in the workplace have often met with resistance. The question of the use of quota systems to achieve representation in numbers for targeted groups has been questioned by critics and

activists over the years. However, policy has not influenced and changed the lives of rural women.

For example, the researcher is of the opinion that the efforts to build and strengthen women participation at local government in South Africa have not been meaningful. The 2011 local government elections witnessed a decline in women's representation at the very moment that South Africa should have been redoubling its efforts to achieve gender parity (Morna & Mbadlanyana 2011). This underscores the need for a legislated quota for women in national and local elections. This is the conclusion reached by Gender Links 2011 the Johannesburg-based research and advocacy organisation. The analysis shows that women constitute 38% of councillors following the 18 May 2011 polls, down from 40% in 2006. The meaningful application of sustainable development (to be defined in chapter two) at local level clearly needs a special approach that recognises untapped resources, people and organisations that can partner with government to strengthen the partnership between the communities and local government. Dr Blade Nzimande, the current Minister of Higher Education, said (Nyalunga 2006:1) that community participation was key to promote and instil a culture of good governance at local government level.

According to the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly Resolution 55/2), in Africa, most people live in poverty in far flung rural areas. A Poverty Trends in South Africa report, which was released by Statistics SA in 2014 (2014:12), states that poverty levels improved between 2006 and 2011, reaching a low of 20.2% for extreme poverty and of 45.5% for moderate poverty. This decrease can be attributed to interventions such as social grants and minimum wage policies as well free basic services and taxes favouring the poor (Statistics SA 2015).

The word "rural" brings to mind areas where there are limited or no services at all rendered to communities (e.g. transport, water, sanitation and medical services), as well as non-urban settlements (such as riparian villages) and high incidences of poverty (Ikoja-Odongo 2002). Often, rural areas lack the modern infrastructure associated with urban settlements. Such rural areas are also characterised by communities with high levels of unemployment, low skill levels and poor education (Leach 2001:163).

Historically, women in South Africa have often been subjected to inequality and rated as second class

citizens (Bhana, De Lange & Mitchell 2009:49). This has been the case despite the huge and selfless sacrifices that women made during the struggle for democracy (Christie 2004). Women were involved in the trade unions during the 1930s and were at the forefront opposing Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid in the work place. This was the training ground for women as political leaders.

As early as 1913, the government tried to get women to carry passes, but were met with such massive resistance by women that an attempt was only again made in 1948 when the National Party came to power. As soon as the announcement was made that women must carry passes, they organised a demonstration. Members of Black Sash (an activist anti-apartheid organisation of white women) staged an all-white protest in 1956 in Pretoria where 2 000 African women from the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) rallied with them. In 1954, FSAW was founded, representing some 230 000 women which were drawn largely from the Congress Alliance, but also from the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL). The creation of FSAW marked the expansion of the political involvement of women in boycotts.

The plight of women post-1994 has not changed significantly, despite the policy change within the new democratic dispensation for the redress of gender inequality and oppression. After the 2009 national elections, women representation in politics reached 42%. Post the May 2014 elections, women ministers comprised 43% of the Cabinet, women deputy ministers made up 46% of the total number of deputy ministers, and there was a 41% representation of women in the National Assembly. Despite the increased representation of women in politics, substantive gender equality has been left out of the democratic project (Commission for Gender Equality 2014). Issues such as discussions around race, poverty and economic growth have taken centre stage over and above gender equality. This is not to say that gender equality has not improved since 1994. Much legislation was passed during the first and second Parliaments (1994 - 2004) to promote gender equality; these will be discussed later.

According to Ewang (2013), transformation in gender inequality is essential, but it needs serious political will to be applied for women in rural areas so they can become more productive in the economy and lead a sustainable existence. In his State of the Nation Address in 1994, late President Nelson Mandela emphasised that the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP)

will not be realised

... unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of the women of our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society.
(State of the Nation Address 1994).

Women from different geographical locations face different problems (Ramphela 2009). Rural women have unique problems (such as not having firewood), while urban women will complain, for example, about a lack of access to electricity. Rural women face serious issues of poverty, unemployment, abuse, deprivation, poor sanitary conditions and poor housing.

In most African countries, including South Africa, women make up the majority of the population. According to the Census 2011 data from Statistics South Africa, in 2011 the country's population was 51 770 560, of which 26 581 769 (51.3%) were female and 25 188 791 (48.7%) were male. It is generally accepted that it is the women in African countries who are the nurturers of children and who must provide food. These women are mostly from marginalised rural areas. They live in poor socio-economic conditions, are poorly educated, and infant mortality is usually high in their communities. Their living conditions are of such a poor quality that it subjects them to a life of poverty (Ngimwa, Ocholla & Ojiambo 1997:46).

Many of the inequalities of the past still exist and it is rural women in particular who still bear the brunt of poverty and inequality. Despite the introduction of the RDP in 1995, rural women still face serious socio-economic struggles. The RDP was designed to address and empower the role of women in the development of the economy. Since women are the majority of the poor in South Africa, the RDP was also supposed to have recognised and addressed existing gender inequalities in housing, jobs and land (RDP 1994).

The focus of the South African government after the dawn of democracy was tackling poverty, especially in black communities. To quote former President Thabo Mbeki (2004):

Endemic and widespread poverty continues to disfigure the face of our country. It will always be impossible for us to say that we have fully restored the dignity of all our people as long as this situation persists. For this reason, the struggle to eradicate poverty has been, and will continue to be, a central part of the national effort to build the new South Africa.

Many policies, such as the Social Grants Policy, fiscal policies and the National Minimum Wage Policy, were introduced to alleviate poverty in rural communities. Despite this, studies have shown that rural women still have little to no access to resources and struggle daily to rid themselves of the crippling effects of poverty (Dlodlo 2009; Dyubhele, Le Roux & Mears 2009; Moyo 2011; Oberhauser & Pratt 2004).

The following Acts were also promulgated to serve the interests of all South Africans, including rural women: the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 (to achieve equity in the workplace through equal opportunity, unfair discrimination, affirmative action measures and equitable representation); the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 (advancing economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace) and the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution (Chapter 2 of the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996). This last Act is the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The right to dignity and the right to equality are also set out in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution). The Bill of Rights contains a Human Rights Charter that protects the civil, political and socio-economic rights of all people in South Africa.

Other policies that are intended to guide the government on gender issues include the National Policy Framework on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, which was introduced by The Office on the Status of Women, the South African Office of the Presidency (2000) to give guidelines to the spheres of government with regards to the formulation of gender policies. The Framework recommends gender mainstreaming as an approach towards achieving gender equality, and stresses the importance of women's empowerment as a further requirement for achieving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is a gender perspective process of assessing the implications for women and men of any legislation, policy or programme in all sectors of life. It is a strategy for making the concerns of women, men, girls and boys an integral part of the design, monitoring and evaluation of

policies and programmes so that they benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated (UN Women 1997).

The Beijing Platform of Action, of which South Africa is a signatory, was adopted in September 1995. It focuses on 12 areas of concern regarding the status of women and gender equality. These 12 critical areas include:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision making
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl child

The Platform guides governments on what steps to take to better the quality of life and status of rural women.

In 2004, South Africa celebrated a decade of democracy and the fall of apartheid. While substantial progress has been made in education, housing, health care and the provision of basic services,(Leibbrandt, Poswell, Naidoo, Welch & Woolard, 2004), the general consensus among development practitioners (Meth & Dias 2004) and institutions is that poverty is still widespread in South Africa. Poverty alleviation requires that women acquire access to and control of resources (Aderete 2005; Fletscher & Kenny 2011; Parveen 2008; Sahreiner, Mohapi & Van Koppen, 2004; World Bank 2001). The view is that if women can access resources, it would empower them to provide for their families in a sustainable manner (Kabeer 1999; IFAD 2010). Women play a pivotal role in households, especially rural women who carry the heavy burden of poverty. Women are the most exploited and least privileged members of many households in developing countries (Ngimwa, Ocholla

& Ojiambo 1997:46). According to Census 2011, most women between the ages of 15 and 64 years of age are found in rural areas and they are mainly occupied with agriculture, child bearing, and supporting their families. Many of these women lack access to information, skills training, and computers, and are unemployed and illiterate. However, with the introduction of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP 2009), which will be discussed in chapter four, there has been an improvement in the empowering of some rural communities. “The aim of the Programme is to recognize the value of land as a catalyst for poverty alleviation, job creation, food security and entrepreneurship” (CRPD 2009).

According to the 2011 Census (2011:181), men are more likely to migrate in search of employment than their female counterparts. The Census (2011:159) also states that women are increasingly participating in migration in search of employment opportunities in urban and surrounding areas (Collinson & Kok 2006; Posel & Casale 2003). However, the women who remain behind in the rural settings have to maintain and support the household. These women also face the challenges of very poor service delivery in transport, water, sanitation, electricity and healthcare.

Rural women are not only affected by poverty as discussed above, but also by a lack of access to health care, education and other social factors, which will be discussed below. Today, most public health systems in Africa are located in urban areas. The extensive experience of the late founder of The Better Life Program for the African Rural Woman (BLPARW), Maryam Ibrahim Badamasi Badangida, indicates that it is necessary to provide effective and comprehensive healthcare in rural areas, especially to women and their children (Ondo State Directorate of Women Affairs 1989:3). In many African countries, the capacity of governments at all levels to meet the health needs of the rural population is overstretched. In order to make a meaningful contribution to society, women need to be equipped through education; they also need to be knowledgeable. Many women’s lives are negatively affected by illiteracy. Some households have no electricity and therefore cannot access information from computers (Warschauer 2002). There are also no libraries in many communities and the infrastructure is very poor, which makes it difficult to bring information to many rural communities (Computers for Africa, 2004). Women living in rural areas are mainly working in the agricultural sector, leaving them little time for studying (Leach 2001:163).

South Africa has many rural communities. After the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal is one of the poorest and densely populated provinces in South Africa, followed by the Northern Province, on the scale of poverty (Hirschowitz 2000:25). According to Leach, Kwazulu-Natal has a high incidence of poverty and the population has limited access to resources (Leach 2001:163). Leach critically states that the majority of people in KwaZulu-Natal are poor and that this poverty inhibits their ability to access information. Warschauer (2002) states that unemployment is higher than the national norm. According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 4 (2014:xiii), the expanded national unemployment rate in 2014 stood at 34.6%, while the KwaZulu-Natal expanded unemployment rate stood at 37.9% (the expanded unemployment rate includes job seekers who have given up looking for employment).

According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 1, 2015 the unemployment rate amongst men in KwaZulu Natal stood at 24,4 %, whilst that of women was found to be 28,7 % (age group 15-64). This illustrates that the ratio of unemployed females is higher than that of males in KwaZulu Natal and thus this trend hampers the socio-economic empowerment of women in the province.

Hay (2008) is of the view that rural women share many common aspects such as lack of proper access to information, illiteracy, and early pregnancy which all affect their empowerment. There is also the issue of language that hampers their development, since many speak little to no English. The women's cultural background places them in subservient positions to men and they are often excluded from decision-making in the family or community (Hay 2008; Wells 2006; 2008; 2012). Rural women are therefore marginalised in terms of participating meaningfully in social structures and leadership roles in their communities (Hay 2008).

Marrying at a young age and motherhood are two other social factors which can prevent rural women from obtaining a formal education. Many women in rural areas do not even have education at secondary level. They are burdened with raising children and taking care of their households (Isike 2009). The work that rural women must perform in their households demands their time and obstructs their socio-economic growth (Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology 2004).

1.2. Problem statement and research question

The importance and significance of this study lies in the fact that its findings could be used to accelerate the improvement of the conditions and circumstances of women in rural areas. This study could also be used to identify the reasons and factors why the government's efforts may have failed, or at the least, have not helped to transform the situation of rural women. A specific case study in the rural area of Driefontein, KwaZulu-Natal will be examined. The researcher will also look at three neighbouring countries from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely Swaziland, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to ascertain the challenges and progress made in the socio-economic development and empowerment of women in rural communities in these countries.

The research topic is framed as follows: The efforts of the South African government in improving the conditions of rural women with a focus on the case study of Driefontein, a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal. The main problem underpinning this study is the lack of change in the circumstances of rural women. The research question is: How far has the South African government come in meeting the needs of the poor rural women in Driefontein since democratisation in 1994?

The problem statement relating to the researcher's case study in South Africa has been divided into the following sub-questions:

- What are the policies that govern rural development in South Africa?
- What are the South African government's initiatives aimed at rural communities in general and rural women in particular?
- What are the problems faced by rural women in South Africa?
- How do rural women think the South African government should intervene?

1.3. Aims and objectives

The research will focus on a rural town, Driefontein, in KwaZulu-Natal. The Driefontein area is situated within the administrative boundaries of the Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality in ward 14 -19. According to the Driefontein Local Area Plan, Driefontein was initially proposed to be a farming area. In the early 1800s, the Colonial Administration assigned the 13 parent farms which make up this land to its first owners. In 1845, Reverend J. Allison of the Wesleyan Mission formed a

partnership with three African Evangelists (Johannes Khumalo, Jonathan Xaba and Abraham Turala) who came from Endaleni near Richmond. Together as a syndicate they purchased Driefontein Farm in 1867.

This study aims to identify the factors that characterise the success or failure of government initiatives to improve the condition/s of rural women in Driefontein, KwaZulu-Natal. It also aims to increase the amount of knowledge around the issue of rural women in general. The following are the research objectives that underpin the study:

- To examine the laws dedicated to rural development with a special focus on rural women;
- To explore the government initiatives aimed at addressing rural women's conditions;
- To explore the expectations of rural women;
- To explore legislation that has been designed to facilitate the improvement of lives of rural women. Examples of such laws are the Employment Equity Act, the Gender Equity Act, and the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996).

1.4 Literature review

The following section will discuss studies conducted on women.

In their study conducted in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State, Kongolo and Bamgose (2002) note that rural women faced multiple challenges. The most important among these challenges were insufficient resources, education and skills, information, assistance from government, discrimination and cultural values. Their study supported the need that women should be empowered through suitable interaction. Titterton and Smart (2008) agree with their view and state that the knowledge of members of a community can improve implementation of development strategies and increase ownership.

McEwan (2003) points out flaws of developmental processes that the South African government initiated at local government level. These flaws refer to governments' poor handling of participatory

processes in the communities, governments' lack of involvement and consultation of the affected people. McEwan argues that the top-down approach does not promote development since targeted groups should be meaningfully consulted and engaged in processes which have a direct influence on their development in order for needs to be meaningfully addressed. The author states (2003:20) that women participants in this study indicated that they felt left out from decision-making processes and were unaware of some programmes which were initiated in their communities.

A study conducted by Oberhauser and Pratt (2004) in rural Limpopo found that women have benefited from collective economic initiatives such as sewing, farming and pottery-making. The study revealed that despite these benefits, the women still experienced challenges such as access to markets, micro-finance services, credit programmes and social grants.

The International Finance Corporation's Gender Entrepreneurship Markets (GEM) programme carried out a study on behalf of the Gender and Women's Empowerment Unit of the Department of Trade and Industry (Naidoo, Hilton & Melzer 2006). The study found that women have more difficulty in acquiring loans than their male counterparts, even though women had better repayment records than men. The study also revealed that women lack understanding of credit processes and the function of credit bureaus. The study pointed out that women lack proper understanding of financial institutions' products, terminology and services of microfinance. According to the study results, the products of financial institutions were often not affordable to women. The study states that because the banks' lending is based on collateral and asset ownership, most women are excluded from accessing loans.

Another study, this one undertaken in the rural areas of the Sekhukune District, Limpopo, by the Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equality (IMAGE), found that some women have benefited from various post-1994 government initiatives (Pronyk *et al.* 2006). According to the study, women were granted small business loans in order to advance their economic independence. The study revealed that programme implementers were of the view that women's economic independence would make them less vulnerable to domestic and sexual abuse, thereby decreasing the incidence of HIV.

Oglethorpe and Gelman (2008:93) concur, pointing out that if women are empowered to start their

own independent businesses, they are less dependent on sexual favours in order to improve their lives. The number of sex workers in Limpopo is estimated to be between 11 150 and 14 059. As in the predominantly rural and small town provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, sex work in Limpopo is widely dispersed (Impact Consulting September 2013).

Evidence presented here details the importance of involving women actively in the decision-making processes of the development intervention, in solving issues which affects their lives, and to drive their own development agenda.

Jiyane and Mostert (2008) conducted a study in the informal sector in the Umhlatuze Municipality of South Africa. These researchers state that not knowing how to access knowledge and how to run their businesses hinder women's empowerment efforts. These rural women lack information on how to market and grow their businesses, how to attract customers, where to obtain raw materials, how to price their products, as well as how to network. One of the main challenges that hamper rural women from realising their empowerment goals is illiteracy. Owing to this, they have to rely on relatives, neighbours, friends, employers, and their own personal experiences to gather information because they cannot use libraries. The rural women who were participants of this study complained that the lack of assistance from government and support agencies, such as banks and educational institutions, are some of the challenges they have to deal with.

Mathaulula (2008) conducted research in the rural wards of Makhado Municipality in the Vhembe District of Limpopo on the empowerment of rural women. Her study led to the realisation that women are still facing multiple difficulties in gaining empowerment. Their challenges include low self-esteem, lack of resources, lack of decision-making powers, and lack of knowledge and skills. These women are also prevented from participating meaningfully in development projects due to socio-cultural restrictions and being victims of abuse at the hands of their spouses. This study, which comprised of men, women, and community leaders, reinforced the idea that if sustainable change is to be achieved, rural women should be more involved in development processes.

Dlodlo (2009) conducted a study in the village of Moutse in Mpumalanga. Dlodlo wanted to assess the impact of socio-economic conditions in a rural environment on women and girls to access information

communication technologies (ITCs) in education. The study revealed numerous challenges which hamper women's access to ITC education in rural communities. A shortage of ITC educators was one of the obstacles. Dlodlo (2007) also found reluctance on the part of women to enter the world of technology as they regarded it as male dominated. As a result of their negative attitude, women were found to be more technologically challenged than their male counterparts. This impacts negatively on efforts for women to be empowered and it supports the views of Mosedale (2005) who states that empowerment comes from within a person and that the inner power interacts with external challenges such as education and financial resources.

1.5 Research methodology

In order to achieve the above objectives, the study will employ the qualitative research approach. The chosen approach is based on the researcher's need to understand the issue of rural women and government intervention from what they (women) themselves feel is the case. Qualitative research is explained as a research method that describes events and people scientifically without using numerical data (Best & Khan 1989:89). The use of the qualitative research also leads to a much better understanding of the research problem as the researcher collects data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected participants in their natural settings (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:395). The researcher will use the qualitative method as a way of approaching the empirical world (Schurink 2002:243). Mason (1996:4) states that qualitative research is concerned with how the social world is interpreted and understood. This study is, therefore, naturalistic or interpretative research undertaken within the habitat of the participants, in order for meanings and intentions that underline human action to be understood and interpreted in relation to their context (Schurink 2002:240). Qualitative methodologies have three assumptions which are:

A holistic view: By means of qualitative methods, the researcher tries to make sense of the phenomenon in its totality to understand the situation (White 2005:86). By using this method the researcher will be able to gain access into the real life world of rural women and elicit responses from the women on what assistance they need from the present day government.

An inductive approach: Qualitative research starts with a specific observation and moves to the

development of general patterns that emerge from the study (White 2005:85). The specific observation in this study is that disempowerment leads to poverty. The results of this research will therefore, hopefully, lead to finding out how effective government initiatives have been in empowering rural women.

Naturalistic inquiry: White (2005:85) states that in qualitative research the objective is to study phenomena in its natural setting. To gain an understanding of the subject at hand, the researcher will collect empirical data from participants who were purposefully chosen and also by entering the life worlds of the subjects. To gain entry to the life worlds of the participants, the researcher needs to go into the communities and conduct individual and focus group interviews.

This study will use the qualitative approach whereby the researcher will be able to study the phenomenon as it unfolds in real life situations without manipulation (Terblanche & Durrheim 1999:42). The researcher will use personal interaction with the participants in order to obtain the most reliable information. To avoid manipulation, the researcher will refrain from asking participants leading questions during the interview.

According to Mouton (2003), reality is a socially constructed truth. Each person has his/her own truth about anything. The qualitative design is best suited to this type of study because in qualitative studies, people go through experiences. They attach feelings to their experiences and attribute meaning to them. People might go through the same experience, but will interpret it differently. The researcher will let rural women tell their own experiences while government officials from local government will speak about the effectiveness of their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to fulfil the needs of rural women.

Qualitative methods place little importance on developing statistically valid samples, or on searching for statistical support for hypotheses, or on measuring the size or scope of phenomena. This method focuses on describing and understanding the phenomena within their natural occurring context with the intention of developing an understanding of meaning(s) imparted by respondents. As a result, the phenomena will be described in terms of the meaning that they have for the participants. This study will focus on the views of participants with regards to the effectiveness of government improving their

(rural women's) lives. According to Neuman (1997), qualitative data involves documenting real events, recording what people say (with words, gestures and tone), observing specific behaviours, studying written documents, or examining visual images.

The advantage of the qualitative research method in this study guarantees that the data collected is more subjective due to the open-ended nature of the questions (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey 2005). Data was gathered directly from the subjects by means of various data gathering instruments, as will be discussed later in this chapter. The researcher purposefully entered the life world of the participants with the intention of collecting information on their experiences and understanding how the rural women felt the government had played a role in empowering their lives.

The researcher was able to interact with participants in order to understand their view on the effectiveness of the government's efforts to improve their lives. Polkinghorne (2005:138) states that the main intention of qualitative research is to describe and explain experiences lived through, and to develop awareness.

1.5.1 Research design and layout

According to Mouton (2001), a research design illustrates the kind of study that the researcher will be conducting and the plan of how the research is to be followed through. The purpose and nature of the research problem gives direction as to the methods used in collecting data.

The empirical nature of this study advises that the researcher makes use of the qualitative method. The researcher is thus able to study subjects in their natural environment. McRoy (in De Vos, Strydom & Fouché 2005:74) states that qualitative research methodology comes from an antipositivistic, interpretative approach, and is idiographic, and therefore complete in nature. By using this method, the researcher is able to make meaning of the social life and the meaning that subjects attach to their daily lives.

According to Bless and Smith (2000), research design relates directly to the testing of hypotheses, and is a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test specific hypothesis

under given conditions. In view of this, the researcher will use the narrative inquiry to select people for the interviews who have knowledge on the topic, i.e. information rich participants, to provide the necessary data to help answer the research question. Narrative interviews will be used as the main data collection technique. Wengraf (2013) states that narrative interviews are most appropriate because they help people to tell stories about their own experiences, in their own way, and from their own perspective, remembering how it felt at the time. In this study, the choice is based on the following active participants: rural women in Driefontein who run a farming co-operative, a poultry co-operative, a cattle co-operative and a sewing co-operative, the ward councillor, the chairperson of the Luncheon Club, and an unemployed woman (they are the same women who experience life in a rural area and make or find meaning in their lived experiences).

The qualitative research design will be used which will elicit participants' accounts of meaning, experience, or perceptions by producing descriptive data in the participants' own spoken words (De Vos, Strydom & Fouché 2005:79). The qualitative research method was decided on so as to enable the researcher to interact with participants when gathering data so that the different perspectives can be captured accurately.

Sampling means a particular way of choosing subjects or people who will be studied (Baker 1999). Neuman (1997:203) views population as a group of cases where the researcher will draw a sample from. Neuman (1997:203) also states that sampling is a systematic process where cases are selected to be included in the research. Nachmias (1992:170) is of the opinion that collecting data from a target population can be expensive, difficult, or sometimes impractical. For this reason, sampling is an option. The researcher will use primary sources to gather data by using information-rich informants.

The qualitative method will be employed where participants will be part of face-to-face focus groups and partake in one-on-one interviews so as to evaluate the effectiveness of the research.

Polkinghorne (2005:141) maintains that the main intention of qualitative research is to gather evidence, making clear the nature of an experience. A qualitative researcher has to select the data collecting method that will produce descriptive qualitative data to comprehend human life experiences. There are three types of data accumulation methods. They include:

- Interviews: These could be either individual or focus group interviews. They are open-ended and produce first hand descriptions of the participants' experiences.
- Direct observation: According to Henning (2004:85), direct observation means that the observer becomes part of the subjects and becomes engaged in some of the everyday activities, while observing what participants do and say.
- Documents: Documents are written sources about a lived experience and can be beneficial to the study in question.

A researcher chooses a type of data gathering strategy depending on the study in question. This will allow for the researcher to discover in-depth experiential accounts to supply qualitative data. For this study, individual and focus group interviews will be used.

1.5.2 Individual interviews

An individual interview is where two people take part in a conversation, which is led by the researcher, for obtaining information relevant to the study. The focus of this information must be on the aims and objectives of the research problem. Best and Kahn (1989:201) believe that interviews are the best option when compared to other data gathering options. This is because people are more eager to talk than write. Interviews are used for collecting information that has a direct impact on the research objectives. Tuckman (1978:237) best describes interviews as being afforded the opportunity to get to know what is inside a person's head, making it possible to determine a person's attitudes and beliefs, as well as his values and preferences.

Accordingly to Henning (2004:57), the advantages of open-ended interviews are that:

- they offer flexibility;
- the researcher makes sure that the interview does not go off-topic;
- they encourage participation and establish good rapport;
- the interviewer can probe to go more in depth;

- the interviewer has control over the order of questions;
- the interviewer can analyse the limit of the interviewees.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with the councillor of the area, the chairperson of the senior citizens group, and an unemployed woman. Group interviews were also held with four co-operatives in the area. Face-to-face interviews were appropriate for this study because the interviewer was able to obtain primary information through oral interaction. To develop trust with the subjects, the researcher lengthened her stay in the research setting and reassured them of confidentiality by assigning each participant a pseudonym. Enthusiastic participation and ownership of the study was accomplished by allowing participants to ask questions and raise different opinions so that their expectations and concerns were observed. The researcher made sure to conduct the interviews without emotion as this could result in bias and interfere with the research. The interviews were open-ended and allowed the interviewer to ask probing questions. An interview guide was organised and participants were encouraged to respond in their own language, which is IsiZulu, in order for them to express themselves properly. Field notes and a tape recorder were used to record data and all communication was later transcribed into English.

1.5.3 The focus group interview

A focus group interview consists of a small number of participants who discuss topics relevant to the study. The researcher guides the discussion (Horberg 1999:136). For this study, a maximum of six participants from the selected co-operatives engaged in a discussion. Where the co-operatives were non-functional, (non-functional meaning that the co-operative exists, but the members are not actively participating in any activity, the co-operation is dormant) the researcher had to engage with only those members who were still interested in continuing with their co-operative. In order to select the participants from each co-operative, the researcher invited women who were engaged in the co-operatives. The researcher wrote numbers and the word "focus group" on alternate pieces of papers and put them in a box. Each woman had to draw a paper from the box. The women who chose pieces of paper with the word "focus group" on were involved in the discussion.

According to Merton and Kendall (103/2002:17), the advantages of using focus groups are:

- The focus group discussion allows each participant to actively participate in an open conversation. In this study, because the researcher was actively involved in guiding and interacting with the rural women, it made them feel comfortable, and they were much more cooperative.
- In this study, the focus groups involved in the discussion were similar in nature. The groups had expectations regarding how government should assist them to improve their livelihood and were thus able to focus their discussion on problems/challenges faced and suggestions on how government could assist them.
- The interview focused on the subjective experience of the study's participants who had at some time received help from government. In some cases the participants were still involved with their projects and in other cases the projects no longer existed.

Morgan and Krueger (in De Vos 2005:303) believe focus group interviews comprise of four fundamental levels, which are planning, recruiting and conducting the group, analysing, and reporting. The following analysis demonstrates how the researcher planned to conduct the group discussion:

- The researcher phoned participants who had knowledge concerning the topics that would be discussed. This was to encourage them to attend as they are busy people and could view this as a waste of their time.
- The discussions were held at the Thusong Centre in Driefontein, therefore they felt at home in their own environment.
- The seating arrangement was organised in such a way that participants faced each other. Refreshments were served after the discussion.
- An interview guide was designed and the researcher asked questions ranging from general to specific (see Appendix A).

1.5.4 The role of the researcher and the participants in qualitative research

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes an integral part of the research process and has to win the trust of the participants. According to Haverkamp (2005:246), qualitative research is relational. Essentially this means that the researcher has to develop ethical principles and standards by building strong relationships and creating a sense of trust with the subjects to be studied. The researcher has to be considerate of factors such as context, culture, and rapport.

According to Mack *et al.* (2005), before, during, and after the research process, the researcher should consider ethical considerations such as consent, harm, privacy and deception. The researcher clearly explains the procedures to be followed and what the study is all about in order for the subjects to participate knowing what is expected from them. They would, thus, have to suspend some of their activities to support the researcher and the research process.

The researcher, during the research process, should deal with biases. Morrow (2005:254) states that in order for researchers to be trustworthy, they should be self-conscious, critical, and participatory examiners. Qualitative researchers have to be proficient and display professionalism when collaborating with participants so that they can gather information-rich data. A relationship built on trust must be forged, whereby both the researcher and the participants accept responsibility.

Tuckman (1978:226) affirms that the researcher has the duty of defining a population and must choose a representative group from this population to serve as participants. In this study, the researcher included the ward councillor, a farming co-operative, a cattle co-operative, a poultry co-operative, the chairperson of the senior citizens, and an unemployed woman. The researcher used purposive sampling to select cases which were information rich about issues that were important for the study, as recommended by Heppner and Heppner (2004:177).

The researcher wrote a letter to the ward councillor to request permission to carry out the research. This was done so that the participants could prepare and set time aside for the investigation.

1.5.5 The research instruments for gathering data and data collection

According to Neuman's (2006:224) definition, the researcher must focus on a particular population with a specific number of cases. As noted, data will be collected from various rural women, as well as councillors in the communities.

In this study, the sample will be women from co-operatives, individual women, and leaders in the rural community of Driefontein. The interviews will be of a narrative nature. The interviews consist of open-ended questions so that the researcher can ask follow-up questions, if need be (Jeanfreau & Jack 2010).

This method will be chosen because the researcher needs to interview women who are involved in a farming co-operative; women who are involved in a chicken co-operative; women running a cattle co-operative; a woman who is self-employed; a group of women who make a living by sewing; unemployed women; and a leader from the community. The aim of doing this is so that the researcher can determine how the government assists these different women.

Bailey (1994:84) states that interviews yield better results than questionnaires. He is of the opinion that illiterate people will not be able to fill in questionnaires, but will be able to answer questions when interviewed. The researcher is in control and can ensure that all questions are answered and can ask follow-up questions because of the flexibility of interviews (Bailey 1997:14).

During the interviews, the answers will be recorded on paper and on a tape recorder. The tape recorder will assist the researcher to transfer responses onto paper at a later stage. Information from the tape recorder will be stored on a memory stick and be placed in a safe place where only the researcher will have access to the data.

1.5.6 Reliability and validity of the research

Reliability is described by Best and Khan (1989:160) as the level of consistency that a procedure shows, while validity is that the quality of the data collecting technique enables it to measure what is

supposed to be measured. There are biases and expectations that researchers must be wary of so that they are accurate and represent reality. In qualitative research the amount of bias must be kept to a minimum in order to achieve validity.

Ways in which to achieve reliability and validity in qualitative research are set out by Merton and Kendall (2002:12). Questions must be formulated clearly so that the meaning is clear, thereby achieving reliability and validity.

1.5.7 Data capturing and editing

Handwritten notes play an important role in capturing data. A tape recorder can also be used. De Vos, Strydom and Fouché (2005:298) are of the opinion that tape recorders are more reliable than writing notes, because the researcher is able to be fully focused on the discussions with participants. With regards to this study, prior arrangements were made for the participants' consent to make use of a tape recorder for research data collection during the interviews. These tape recordings were later transcribed. The researcher also captured data by means of handwritten notes.

1.5.8 Analysing qualitative data

Tim (2002:168) is of the opinion that data should be organised, described, classified, and interpreted prior to it being analysed, thereby preventing the researcher from losing important information that could assist in answering the research question. According to Tim (2002:168), during interviews, the most important part of the editing process is to record the articulated words and then to transcribe them. The field notes should also be interpreted and organised. In this study, the researcher captured the data in an indigenous language (Zulu), which then had to be translated into English. The services of an interpreter were utilised in this regard.

In this section, the researcher discussed the research methodology and the design of this study. Data collection techniques such as individual and focus groups interviews were explored. The researcher pointed out the reasons for using these data collection techniques.

1.5.9. Ethical considerations

Primary research involves collecting data about a given subject directly from the real world. The researcher should have the permission of the people who will be studied to conduct research involving them (White 2005:212). During the interview the researcher will ensure that no physical or emotional harm is done to the subjects under study. This could be something as simple as being careful and sensitive when asking difficult questions during the interviews.

Ratner (2002) suggests that objectivity versus subjectivity in research is another important consideration. The researcher should ensure that personal biases and opinions do not get in the way of the research and to give both sides fair consideration. It should be made known to subjects whether research results will be anonymous or not. When doing research, the researcher must ensure not to take advantage of easy-to-access groups of people (such as children at a day care centre), simply because they are easy to access. Subjects should be chosen based on what would most benefit the research.

1.6 Outline of the study

Chapter one covered the research problem, research question, aims and objectives. The chapter also provided an overview of the study's method of enquiry and techniques used for data collection, analysis, and recording. Chapter two will concentrate on theoretical departure points by exploring concepts and feminist theories. In Chapter three, the focus will be on the challenges and the progress made with the socio-economic development and empowerment of rural women in Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe in order to ascertain lessons that could be learnt in the South African context. Chapter four will present the findings of the research by exploring the South African government's efforts to empower the marginalised rural community of Driefontein. The final chapter will provide a summary of the study, and offer conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALISATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two will outline the theoretical and legislative frameworks, such as various feminist theories and approaches which highlight the participation of women in development. Under the theoretical framework, theories and concepts pertaining to women in development will be discussed.

2.2 Definition of terms

The title of this study, *The empowerment of rural women in Southern Africa: A case study of Driefontein, KwaZulu-Natal*, contains several key terms which the researcher will clarify below.

2.2.1 Empowerment

The meaning of 'empowerment' differs for different individuals because it is multi-faceted (Makofane 2001). Empowerment is "an ongoing process in which people see themselves as having the capacity and right to act and influence the circumstances they find themselves in" (Van Driel 2004:49). Van Driel adds that empowerment is about rising above discrimination, unequal, unfair and oppressive circumstances.

The empowerment process requires that the affected group must be actively involved in the development initiatives designed to better their lives (Chambers 2001; Mayoux 2005; Chambers 2005). Fonjong (2001) agrees that empowerment should take into account basic needs and women should be actively in control of processes to realise these needs, as well as the gains resulting from their endeavours. Mosedale (2005) puts forward the argument that empowerment must come from within a person, a family, or a community. Mosedale (2005) goes on to say that an enabling environment must first be created in order for empowerment to take place and when conditions are favourable, to promote empowerment where women should be at the forefront of the social change process. An enabling environment is an environment that offers skills training, financial support, and

access to markets which should be provided by the government.

Studies conducted in South Africa (Kongolo & Bamgose 2001; Makofane 2001; McEwan 2003; Oberhauser & Pratt 2004, Jiyane & Mostert 2008; Mathaulula 2008) and elsewhere (Fonjong 2001; Umashankar 2006; Omorodion 2007) have shown that women still face challenges to become more empowered. These challenges include having more difficulty than men in accessing public services, social protection, employment and markets due to cultural norms, security issues and the lack of identification documents (UN Commission on the Status of Women 2012).

Morodion (2007) puts forward the argument that a needs assessment should be done at grassroots level to gauge the concerns of women. This is also necessary because the needs of women will differ according to the cultural and social realities where they live. Most of the challenges women face in being empowered are as a result of cultural beliefs and practices which have their roots in patriarchal systems (Makofane 2001; Kongolo & Bamgose 2002; McEwan 2003; Izugbara 2004; Ansoglenang 2006; Omorodion 2007; Chaudhry & Nosheen 2009).

2.2.2. Rural

The Rural Development Framework (RDF) describes 'rural' as the sparsely inhabited areas where people engage in farming or rely on natural resources, including the villages and small towns scattered across these areas. Rural clusters found in the former homelands are also taken into account in the definition (South Africa 1997).

In the rural areas of South Africa, unemployment and poverty have always been a major problem. The development problems of the rural areas cannot be clarified without referring to their ongoing socio-economic needs. The numerous problems that rural communities face emphasise the need for intervention development programmes where the community members are active participants. According to the World Bank (1995), a community is a collection of people who live, work and interact with each other, which may give rise to organised activities, opinions and views. A community is a combination of groups having social and economic differences based on age, gender, political affiliation, land, wealth, and other factors (Hoogersvorst 2000:26).

In order for rural areas to develop, careful consideration should be given to the development of rural women. In spite of the South African government's efforts to improve the lives of rural women, Billy (1996) states that there is little sign of improvement. The burden of poverty is mainly carried by women. Rural women strive to survive by engaging in subsistence farming on land that is not owned by them. In KwaZulu-Natal, many of the rural women have to take on the full responsibility of subsistence farming as their husbands and sons are obligated to leave their rural homes and seek employment in urban areas. Rural women are forced to rear their children alone in the absence of men and are faced with the tiresome duties of seeking fuel and collecting water (Billy 1996). When the rural women's husbands die or their marriages end, the women are often left homeless. Widowed women may be forced to live the life of squatters (Billy 1996). During the period of the apartheid regime and even today, many rural women are left behind to work on land that is unproductive. Rural women in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province are the worst affected by the scourge of poverty in South Africa (Baden *et al.* 1999).

2.2.3 Sustainable development

According to *Our Common Future* (1987:43), sustainable development can be described as a type of development that will provide for the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their needs. Sustainable development embraces two main concepts:

- the concept of needs, especially the essential needs of the poor, to which special attention should be given.
- the idea of limitations caused by the level of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to cater for present and future needs.

Sustainable development includes social justice and is a pillar of hope to those affected with poverty and inequalities (Davids, Theron, & Maphunye 2005:226–227). The promotion of sustainable development is given priority by governments and international agencies. By promoting sustainable development, it is hoped that the quality of life of the population will improve, through the equitable allocation and utilisation of resources. According to De Beer and Swanepoel (2000:51) a major

problem is how to sustain such a livelihood among a large population where many people make a living from marginal and fragile environments aiming to reduce poverty.

The Department of Agriculture started a process of developing a Policy on Agriculture in Sustainable Development. This policy is part of the process of incorporating principles and objectives of sustainable development into the ethos of the agricultural sector of the country. This is part of the response to the commitments made by world leaders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) which was held in Johannesburg in 2002. The full integration of rural women in the process and practice of sustainable development would determine the level of success or failure (World Watch Institute, 2013). The importance of gender equality, women's empowerment and the issue of women's rights in achieving sustainable development has been increasingly recognized in recent decades. This is evident in a number of international norms and agreements, which includes principle 20 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, (1992), regarding the full participation of women to achieve sustainable development. The centrality of gender equality has also been argued in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", (2012). It included the recognition of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in the three pillars of sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental, and it promotes gender equality and women's full participation in sustainable development policies, programmes and decision-making at all levels (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex).

2.3 Feminist theories

Feminist theory sets out to understand the meaning of gender inequality. It investigates women's social roles, chores, interests, experience and feminist politics in multiple areas, such as communication, psychoanalysis, anthropology and sociology (Chodorow 1991) as well as philosophy, education, literature, and economics (Brabeck & Brown 1997). Feminism investigates various themes such as sexual objectification, oppression, discrimination, objectification, patriarchy (Gilligan 1977), stereotyping (Lerman 1990), art history (Pollock 2001), contemporary art (De Zegher 1996), and aesthetics (Florence, Penny & Foster 2000). There are many variants of feminist theories:

This section will discuss gender theories, where feminist theories will be used. Gender theories originate from feminist theories. 'Feminism' may be described as an extensive movement enfolding

various phases of women's emancipation. The focus is on women attaining more individual freedom (Berg in Hooks 1984:23). The researcher will focus on the following feminist theories:

- Marxist feminist theory
- Socialist feminist theory
- Liberal feminist theory

2.3.1 Marxist feminism

According to Eisenstein (1979:6), a capitalist society has an aspect of exploitation, where the upper-class benefits from the labour of the working class, thereby oppressing them. Karl Marx regarded the capitalist society as comprising of two classes, i.e. the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which are the elite and the working class. Capitalism refers to a particular type of process of production. The class system is characterised by the relations of production, meaning those who own the working class as well as the forces of production.

The capitalist society exploits the working class citizens who generate surplus value for the elite through productive labour. The infrastructure, also called the economy, forms the foundation for the class structure that is found in social, cultural and political structures, identified as the superstructures (Stichter & Parpart 1988:42).

The family's social life is also divided into bourgeoisie and proletariat. Men symbolise the bourgeoisie and women the proletariat. The reason for this is that men have a greater material base because the forces of production are owned by them. The woman is an instrument of production, whereby she is a labourer earning a wage outside the home and does unpaid domestic work in the home. Hence, according to Marxism, women encounter double oppression and exploitation, that is, in the workplace and at home (Donovan 1992:70-74).

The Marxist feminist theory became significant in the mid-1970s when a new policy to accommodate women in development grew considerably. One of the authors of this theory is Hartsoek (Donovan 1992). This theory sought the participation of women in development by making use of their labour, but the women were not stirred emotionally as they were already working, that is, in the fields for

their families, doing productive work, performing household chores, and raising children, and felt that the theory was inadequate in regards to involving women in decision-making.

The Marxist feminist theory, in essence, does not promote the advancement, development and empowerment of rural women. Critics like Kollonotai (1909) believed liberal feminism would undermine the efforts of Marxism to improve conditions for the working class. Marxists supported the more radical political program of liberating women through socialist revolution, with a special emphasis on work among women and in materially changing their condition after the revolution. Kollonotai (1909) is opposed to forms of feminism that reinforce class status. The feminist does not see a true possibility to unite across economic inequality because she argues that it would be extremely difficult for an upper class woman to truly understand the struggles of the working class. Brenner (2000) is of the opinion that to gain political and economic power is a tool to reinforce the feminist movement. She argues that progress for women will revolve around challenging corporate capital's political and economic power.

Socialist feminism will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Socialist feminism

Socialist feminism pointed out the relationship of the oppression of women with oppression based on race, class and social, cultural, political and economic factors. In order to achieve the aim of women's empowerment, much work needed to be done on different levels and by different means (Karl 1995:35).

These theorists state that oppression and exploitation are not the same concepts, particularly for women. Exploitation occurs to men and women in the labour force; a woman's oppression results from her exploitation as a wage labourer and from the relations that characterise her life in the patriarchal sexual hierarchy as mother, domestic labourer, and consumer. She is further faced with racial oppression in the racist division of society, together with exploitation and sexual oppression (Eisenstein 1979:22).

Theorists also point out that the oppression of women takes place in different settings in different forms and that these differences are of critical importance (Evans 1995:108). One of the fundamental authors of this theory is Michelle Barrett (1992).

It is difficult to perceive the difference between Marxist feminism and Socialist feminism. Socialist feminism may be explained as transformed Marxism. Tong states, "Although it is possible to distinguish between Marxist and socialist feminist thought, it is quite difficult to do so".

The social theory is an important perspective for the social advancement of rural women. The theory advances human rights and social justice and adds to the critical awareness of individuals in social and political contexts. Social feminism sees all social systems as built on the oppression of women, especially rural women, and calls for fundamental change in all our systems, such as education, legal, and social welfare.

In the next section liberal feminism will be discussed.

2.3.3 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism began in the 1960s. This theory is based on the belief that all human beings are equal (equal in this case means equality of opportunity). These theorists also believe that men and women have identical moral and intellectual foundations. Thus, men and women are the same (Barrett 1992). This theory further states that women must be treated equally and receive equal opportunities as men (Van Zyl & Emeritus 1998:138). This is in line with one of the principle objectives of the South African Equity Bill, which is "to achieve equity in employment through promoting equal opportunities ..." (Boezak *et al.* 1999:137).

The special treatment of women is rejected by liberal feminists because it reinforces the differences between men and women, which may perpetuate the myth and reinforce the stereotype that women are only responsible for homemaking. Employers, on the other hand, will rather employ men instead of women.

These theorists see affirmative action as a temporary measure only. This theory does not allow for sexes to be given different treatment or for one sex to be given preference above the other. They believe that this will result in human development being hampered. Affirmative action is nevertheless seen as a temporary measure developed to do away with the inequalities of the past (where men were placed above women). Once these obstacles have been done away with, men and women will be able to compete equally (Donovan 1992:25).

This theory states that the different treatment of men and women formed the foundation for women's exploitation. It raises the point that if women are given preferential treatment, it will put them in a weaker position. Thus, to solve this issue, the treatment of men and women must be the same. If women's oppression, such as unequal access to resources and opportunities, such as education and political rights, are upheld, equality will be achieved.

Liberal feminist theory supports the equality of women, access to options (Alstott 2004:52), freedom to make their own choices in their empowerment, and granting women all the rights that promote their dignity and humanity. Women's access to options is frequently and unfairly restricted due to economic deprivation, in particular due to the "feminisation of poverty" (Pearce 1978; Cudd 2006:119-154).

The liberal theory places much emphasis on women participating in economic development. Women and Development (WAD) is one of the dominant liberal approaches to gender and development. WAD arose out of a shift in thinking about women's role in development. The WAD paradigm stresses the relationship between women, and the work they perform in their societies in both the public and domestic spheres. Some development institutions have identified women as a key to successful development through financial inclusion. An example is the Women's Development Business (WDB) in South Africa. According to WDB, the goal is to ensure that rural women are given the tools to free themselves from the chains of poverty through the allocation of financial resources directly to women, including enterprise development programmes.

In the following section, the researcher will concentrate on the aspects of the theoretical approaches that clarify the participation of women in decision-making as it is more relevant to the study. The

section will be divided into two main parts; the first will discuss theories, and the second, policy approaches.

2.4 Women's participation in development as related to feminist theories

In this section, the researcher will discuss the participation of women in economy and politics and its relation to feminist theories.

2.4.1 Marxist feminism

There are a number of factors that affect participation, as illustrated in this theory, for example women being responsible for all the chores in the home and working outside the home. This places an additional burden on women, leaving them with little or no time to participate in economic or political processes (Karl 2001).

2.4.2 Socialist feminism

This theory examines the image of women being only homemakers and how this hinders their participation in politics. Socialist feminism also opposes the inequalities with regards to employment opportunities. Consequently, gender inequalities in all areas need to be addressed so that men and women can have equal participation (Adhiambo-Oduol 2003).

2.4.3 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminists agree that men and women are equal. They believe that equality will only be attained if certain restrictions placed on women are removed. They make mention of the fact that if special treatment is given to women, it will affect them negatively in the workplace, which is the greatest obstacle for women to participate meaningfully in the economic sector (Gutsa *et al.* 2011).

Next, the researcher will discuss gender and development approaches that elaborate on the involvement of women in development and how they relate to feminist theories.

2.5 Gender and development approaches

Much international research has pointed to the fact that rural women, in a Western agricultural view, have not identified with the ideas of politics and feminism (Alston 1995; Fink 1992; O'Hara 1998; Sachs 1983, 1996). This issue has troubled feminist scholars in the field since research has shown the subordinate position of rural women. However, into the question of why rural women have not adopted feminism can be read assumptions of progress that gender equality and the emancipation of women will eventually take place once the agricultural sector has reached a higher stage of development, or that there exists a common women's identity and experience of male oppression that forms the basis for identity politics (Brandth & Elin 2001).

Why rural women seem reluctant to identify with feminism is a question that is frequently asked by feminist researchers. Feminism grew out of modernity with its focus on progress, equality, and rationality. The influence of post-structuralism has, however, led to what can be described as a 'paradigm shift' within feminism (Barrett 1992), resulting in greater emphasis on difference, variation, and positionality with regard to feminism and modernist values.

Research on rural women has documented inequalities within rural households, in agricultural industries, in organisations, and in rural communities (Alston 1995; Fink 1992; O'Hara 1998; Sachs 1983, 1996). It has shown how the patriarchal power structure and masculine dominance structure rural women's lives (Shortall 1992, 1999; Whatmore 1991).

Sachs (1996:15) states that women do the majority of work in agriculture at the global level but older men, for the most part, still own the land, control women's labour, and make decisions in patriarchal agricultural systems. Feminist research on rural women has documented the extent of women's work, and shown the ways in which it is invisible and unvalued (Sachs 1983; O'Hara 1994).

Women's entry into farming has traditionally been through marriage. Women rarely inherit land. Shortall (1999) observes that women's whole relationship with agriculture is shaped by their route of entry and position within the farm household. Women are under-represented in agricultural organisations, in training programmes, and in the decision-making processes of farming. The

intentions of feminist research on rural women in agriculture have been to make women and their work more visible to conceptualise, improve their lives, and open up the way for new policies (Sachs 1993; O'Hara 1994, 1998; Brandth & Verstad 1993; Burg & Endevelt 1994; Shortall 1999).

Against this background it might seem strange that feminist ideas and politics have not been of interest to rural women. For instance, rural women's organisations have not spoken up for rural women themselves. The question becomes even more puzzling because as Sachs (1996:1997) points out, rural women are by no means powerless, which is revealed by their ability to cope, survive, work together, and change their lives.

Feminism has very much been a silent issue in agricultural institutions, and at times there has been open resistance on the part of rural women towards equality principles. Some rural women's organisations, aiming to enhance the situation of women, have rejected the label 'feminist' (Brandth & Haugen 1997; Grace & Lennie 1998) and resisted alliances with the women's movements (Brandth & Haugen 1997). Within the context of a conservative farming/agriculture culture, it is hard for women to express feminist goals.

There may be several explanations for the rejection of feminist ideas and politics by women in rural farming areas. An explanation may be partly found in the way in which popular conceptions of feminism have been viewed as destabilising and a threat to social relationships which are valued in rural life. Alston (1995:23) points out that "being hostile towards men is unacceptable in a system that depends on a high degree of co-operation" between women and men. According to Grace and Lennie (1998), the label 'feminist' relates to matters of identity, and contend that a feminist identity is more problematic for rural women than it is for their urban counterparts.

Grace and Lennie (1998:356) add that because feminism is largely associated with urban women, it might represent potential ideological divisions and conflicts between urban feminists and rural women. Whatmore (1991:87) points out that feminist theory does not provide a readily transferable theory to the farming sector in rural areas since it is for the most part informed "by an urban research context located in the wage-labour economy of advanced capitalist countries".

Another possible reason why feminism has not grabbed the interest of rural women might lie in the academic nature of contemporary feminist thinking (Grace & Lennie 1998). It may well be that the academic character of feminism has confirmed the rural women's belief that feminism is not for them, and that it has increased the distance between feminism and rural women even more. Sachs (1996:16) points out that "a feminist viewpoint does not immediately derive from women's experiences" and that the experiences of oppressed groups are not necessarily perceived as oppression. Within a patriarchal community, where men define the world, women are unable to understand their situation in an undistorted form. In such situations, a feminist consciousness needs development, for example, consciousness-raising groups (Smith 1987).

Feminist consciousness develops from the links between cultural experiences of gender and the everyday struggles of poor rural families and communities to survive, compelling women to political action. While nevertheless, "emphasising roles they accept as wives and mothers, they also demand the freedom to act as they think their obligations entail" (Kaplan 1997:6). It is the ideological interventions of feminist activists that enable the shift from feminine to feminist consciousness, when the aim of the consciousness shift is to eliminate power relations based on gender.

In South Africa, there are many associations that provide solidarity networks for women, such as women's religious groups, *stokvels*, and burial societies. Solidarity associations such as these, although without the existence of feminism as a distinct ideology, often provide a climate in which women can develop a collective consciousness that can be mobilised when the survival of communities is at stake. Kaplan (1997) points out that although the activities within these organisations are "unspectacular" and may seem politically insignificant; they can be important places for the emergence of social movements (not only women's movements). A definition of women's movements should therefore not be so prescriptive that it excludes the types of organised activities that involve the majority of poor women. Another problem which had persisted for decades in women's organisations is the urban focus of organisational strategies. Despite the high proportion of women living in rural areas, and their highly disadvantaged position economically and politically, rural women remain outside the mainstream of the women's movements (Zondo 1994). Significantly, the formation of the Rural Women's Movement gave a strong organisational form to rural women's interests. After 1994, the Rural Women's Movement was on the verge of collapse as a result of loss of leadership and funding,

but was later revived through concerted efforts to mobilise members.

2.6 Policy approaches to women in development

Some concepts relating to the development of women originated in the 1950s and 1960s. These concepts have been shaped by developmental theories, as well feminist theories in the mid-1970s (Boserup 1970).

Researchers are now in agreement about the fact that women are part of the “vulnerable group” whose access to and control over local and national assets must be ensured to prevent harm to their wellbeing (Moser 1993).

There is, however, less agreement among economists about the approaches that should be designed to solve the problem (Moser 1993). The following section identifies and discusses three of these approaches, namely the anti-poverty, the empowerment, and the equity approaches.

2.6.1 The anti-poverty approach

The anti-poverty approach to women in development relates to the shift in concern with absolute poverty and the basic needs theories that were designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1976 and the World Bank (WB) in 1981. The aim was to increase the productivity of women and the poor. The ILO and the WB viewed poverty of women as a problem of underdevelopment and not one of subordination. Thus, the focus shifted from inequality between men and women to decreasing income inequality (Moser 1993:67). Because women and their children dominate the poorest groups, this became the control focus of strategies to overcome the hunger and malnutrition that accompanies poverty.

Organisations such as the WB also targeted women from the perspective of population control, which was essential for their anti-poverty strategy. The preoccupation with basic needs strategies and population control resulted in the recognition that employment programmes and education could simultaneously increase the economic contribution of women and reduce fertility (Moser 1993:68).

However, fertility rates did not decrease since women had no reproductive rights (advanced by the equity approach). Men still controlled women's reproduction because they had the power to decide how many children had to be born.

Moser (1993:69), highlighting the limitations of income generating initiatives, states that, "unless an income generating project also alleviates the burden of women's domestic labour and child care for instance, through the provision of adequate socialized child caring, it may fail to meet even the practical gender need to earn an income".

In 1998, an initiative called the Flagship Programme was introduced by the South African government. The Flagship Programme was piloted in several provinces of South Africa to affect the developmental approach to social welfare with its emphasis on job creation and the advancement of social and economic independence (Department of Welfare Annual Report 1995-1996:5). The Flagship Programme was intended to address the needs of unemployed mothers with children under the age of five years. Its emphasis was on capacity building and the economic empowerment of women while also providing child care facilities, early childhood development, and social support for single-parent households involved in the Programme. Fifteen pilot projects across the nine provinces were implemented and included income generating activities such as poultry farming, communal gardening, a bakery, and leather works. There are 1 043 rural women and 1 045 children participating in the Programme (Department of Welfare 1998). The impact of the Programme has not been significant and is still to be evaluated in the concept of social development goals because the pilot project has not been replicated in all communities.

Some of the anti-poverty strategies put in place by women and by development programmes are income generating and entrepreneurship projects. There has been a large number of income generating projects for low-income women in some African countries since the late 1970s. They have tended to be small scale and to be developed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are frequently made up of only women (Moser 1993:68). Moser (1993:68) highlights the problems experienced by anti-poverty programmes in their implementation due to the tendency to move towards welfare orientation projects. These projects mostly aim to increase productivity in activities traditionally undertaken by women, rather than to introduce women to new areas of production

activities (*ibid.*). These traditional activities are often time consuming, domestic in character, and small scale, with limited access to marketing. The ILO (1997) identifies a number of constraints to women's self-employment, especially in terms of the initial setting up of their enterprises. The ILO (1997) summarises the constraints and barriers women face as follows:

- Behavioural barriers, e.g. many women have little self-confidence and a negative self-image;
 - role barriers, e.g. conflicting role demands and time constraints;
 - social and cultural barriers, e.g. the existence of negative attitudes towards women in business, the perception of men that women are supposed to fulfil their productive roles, lack of family support, lack of mobility, amongst others;
 - educational barriers e.g. many women have relatively lower education levels and usually have limited access to vocational training and opportunities;
 - infrastructural barriers, e.g. limited access to credit technology, support services, and information;
- and
- legal barriers, e.g. independent legal actions are limited for women.

Many of these barriers require vigorous attitudinal changes in the socio-cultural environment which is a long-term process, since they are socio-cultural in origin. The lack of political will and commitment among the developing societies themselves and the development authorities, however, perpetuates these problems. Moser (1993:65) points out that:

Productivity programmes for women usually require some restructuring of the cultural fabric of society, development agencies do not like to tamper with the unknown and unfamiliar social variables. As a rule of thumb they tend to believe in upholding the social traditions and thus are reluctant to implement these programmes.

Despite the barriers experienced, the enterprise projects of the anti-poverty approach made a huge contribution to the spread of community revolving loan funds, therefore opening the question of women's access to institutions such as banks and co-operatives (Snyder & Tadesse 1995:12).

2.6.2 The empowerment approach

The empowerment approach came into its own in the mid-1980s and has its origins in feminism and third world organisations, such as Development Alternatives for Women in New Era (DAWN). This approach acknowledges the inequalities between men and women and the origin of women's subordination in the household/family. The approach further holds that women, amongst others things, experience oppression differently according to their class, race and cultural history. The approach encourages women to challenge oppressive systems in their society (Moser 1993). The empowerment approach also acknowledges the importance of women to enhance their power as opposed to just their status, with power identified in terms of the ability of women to increase their self-reliance and strength and not as domination over others.

Power in this regard, according to Moser (1993:75), is the freedom to determine one's own choices in life and to influence the direction of change through the capacity to gain control over crucial processes and non-material resources.

Moser (1993:75) states that the best known articulation of the empowerment approach has been the formation of DAWN, which focuses on active projects for women in Africa. The movement advocates the transformation of the "structures of subordination" such as a change in the laws, property rights, control over women's bodies, and the social and legal institutions that underwrite male dominance and privilege as key, if women are to achieve justice in society.

DAWN, within the process of achieving empowerment, points to personal autonomy for women, the poor, and communities in the developing world, which means that they must be able to make their own choices in the realm of economics, politics and society (Moser 1993). The approach requires participation, and endeavours to create self-reliance, ensuring that targeted initiatives reach women through autonomous women's organisations (Snyder & Tadesse 1995:14). With the focus of the approach on women's organisations, the empowerment approach may appear similar to the welfare approach, which also emphasised these in respect of reproductive roles (*ibid.*). But, on the other hand, the empowerment approach superficially recognises the triple role of women's organisations, to increase women's consciousness to challenge subordination (Moser 1993:76).

The empowerment approach utilises practical gender needs as a foundation on which to build a secure support base and a strategy through which essential needs may be realised (Moser 1993:77), unlike the confrontation method of achieving the strategic gender needs of women used by the equity approach.

To summarise the impact of the approach, it can be said to be limited because of a lack of support from national governments. There is widespread growth of Third World women's groups and organisations, whose approach to women is essentially empowerment, but they are under-funded and rely on the use of voluntary and unpaid women's labour and time. They are mostly dependent on the resources of a few international NGOs and First World nations who are prepared to support this approach to women and development (Moser 1993:78-79).

The subordinate status of women – which emanates from their powerlessness, lack of resources and of property, class, race, ethnicity, the male attitude, religion, and gender – must be eliminated through empowerment. This is key to the goal of gender sensitive development planning. If women are empowered and if an enabling environment is created for them to gain access to resources, technology and social services, to name but a few, women are able to take care of themselves (Thwala 2004).

In the late 1980s, the term 'gender' became popular as a replacement for 'women and development'. Because gender more easily accommodates race, class and ethnicity, and acknowledges male-female power relationships, 'gender' is preferred over 'women and development' (Snyder & Tadesse 1995:14). This thinking has been influenced by feminist theories because power is a central concern within feminist analysis (Van den Berg & Cooper 1994:25).

Feminist theories and the empowerment approach both advances human rights and social justice and add to critical awareness of individuals in a socio-political context. The empowerment approach and feminist theories serves as an assessment and intervention in redressing unequal access to power and resources. As with the feminist theories, the empowerment approach helps women to gain control over their environment, develop self esteem, self- efficacy and adopt new positive behaviours. Feminist theories and empowerment approaches helps women to develop critical consciousness, skills

and actions to become involved with others who have similar goals.

2.6.3 The equity approach

The equity approach was the original approach to Women in Development (WID) and was used during the Decade for Women (1975 to 1985) (Snyder & Tadesse 1995; Moser 1993). It has its origins in Western countries as women there exerted pressure on international development. The main focus of the equity approach is equality between the sexes and relies on legal processes. The primary approach of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was to gain equality for women through the 1960s, and it is the focus of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) today (Snyder & Tadesse 1995:11). Moser (1993:62) points out that the equity approach not only recognises women as active participants in development, but also realises women's triple role and endeavours to meet key gender needs through direct government intervention, giving economic and political autonomy to women, and reducing their inequality in relation to men.

This approach has been criticised and labelled as Western feminism and is considered threatening and unpopular with governments (Moser 1993:63). This reaction seemed to have arisen from the general reaction against feminism in the 1970s, including particularly what Smith (1994:45-59) refers to as "the black feminist movement". Black feminists themselves in Western countries and in the Third World persistently believe that feminism provides the theory that clarifies the nature of women's experiences, allows for positive support from other black women, and promotes political action to change the very system that has oppressed them (Smith 1994:56).

Critics of the equity approach argue that women in Africa prefer to focus on increasing their income rather than on confronting their menfolk because the women's main priority is to provide for their children's well-being. In the equity approach, this opinion is not justified. The equity approach acknowledges that women must be encouraged to participate in the development process through access to employment and the market place. It therefore accepts women's practical gender need to earn a livelihood (Moser 1993:63-64). The equity approach meets an important strategic need by focusing on reducing inequality between men and women in the gender division of labour; this is in line with feminist thought.

The majority of development agencies were in fact politically hostile to equity programmes because of the intention not only to meet practical gender needs, but also strategic gender needs whose success depended on an implicit redistribution of power (Moser 1993:65). Therefore, this approach threatened the status quo in a fundamental manner. Third World men, according to Smith (1994:47), desired to maintain power “over their women” at all costs, and they have been amongst the most willing to reinforce fears and myths about the women’s movement, “attempting to scare us away from figuring things out for ourselves“. As a consequence, the Plan of Action of the International Women’s Year (IWY) in 1975, which firmly mirrored the equity approach, was in trouble since its inception. A negative attitude towards the IWY was also adopted by many Third World governments, legitimated by their belief in the irrelevance of Western “exported” feminism to Third World women. In fact, one of the outcomes of the 1975 Conference was the labelling of feminism as ethnocentric and divisive to Women in Development (WID) (Moser 1993:65). In the same period, black feminists in the United States, among others, were organising and articulating their views in support of “black” feminism which aptly explains the events of 1975. Smith (1994:47) wrote the following in this regard:

Feminism is potentially the most threatening movement to Black and Third World people because it makes it absolutely essentially that we examine the way we live, how we treat each other and what we believe. It calls in question the most basic assumption about our existence and this is the idea that biological, i.e. sexual identity, determines all, that it is the rationale for power relationships as for all other levels of human identity and action. An irony is that among Third World people biological determination is rejected and fought against when it is applied to race but generally unquestioned when it comes to sex.

Like “black” feminism, equity must be understood and never be seen as a threat to the visibility of black society, but instead as having great potential to promote the quality of life and guarantee the survival of every man, woman and child in the community (Smith 1994:59).

“Women’s rights and human rights” or “gender equity” are aspects of the equity approach which gained worldwide recognition in the 1990s. Priority was given in South Africa to reform inheritance laws for widows and children, land ownership, health care, prevention of violence against women and

children, sexual harassment, amongst many other reforms (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa). This is evident in legislation which has been promulgated. However, society must be constantly conscientised to respect these rights and they must be demanded in order that they are implemented and enforced.

In South Africa, an enabling environment has been created for the equity approach to women in development because of the country's Constitution and political climate. The gender mainstreaming resulted in the introduction of numerous gender machinery across government. However, the gender machinery has not been able to adequately address women's issues for two inter-related reasons. Firstly, the gender machinery framework has not been legally binding. Secondly, government departments often did not properly institutionalize gender programmes in terms of location, level of authority, integration, perceived importance and allocation of resources. There is also disparity in levels of appointment and location of gender and focal persons, thereby having a limited impact on the extent to which they can affect gender mainstreaming of government processes.

Government is striving to achieve fair distribution of resources between men and women, the redistribution of power and care responsibilities, and freedom from gender based violence. It is thus important to effectively implement policy decisions that impact on women's empowerment and gender equality (ANC 2012).

The participation of women in all spheres of life is crucial for development and empowerment. Development agencies became aware that leaving women out of the development process resulted in the failure of development interventions because women constituted the majority of the poor. As a result, development approaches such as WID and GAD (Women and Development) were introduced. GAD was a form of mainstreaming women into the development process.

Unfortunately, some of these approaches did not have the desired results because they did not focus on the gender element of development. Some of these development agencies forgot that women have to participate from the policy stage of development for it to succeed. It was also realised that women have been participating, in their homes, in the workplace, socially and politically, though they do not have decision-making powers in these areas of participation. As they participate, they meet

challenges such as their triple role, patriarchy, lack of skills and illiteracy.

2.7. Legislation and other procedures for the empowerment of women

The United Nations General Assembly's Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions have addressed rural women's needs and priorities in various resolutions. The enhancing of agricultural and rural development, and the crucial role that rural women play to improve food security and eradicate poverty, has been recognised in Resolution 64/140 of the General Assembly. It indicates that these rural women play a vital role in the well-being and development of their families. The Economic and Social Councils 2010 Ministerial Declaration emphasises the important role and contribution of women and reaffirms that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is part of an interconnected framework that underpins the work undertaken to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women (World Conference, Beijing 1995). In its 15 year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Commission on the Status of Women addressed issues related to the circumstances of women (UN Women 2011).

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the 2009 Gender and Agriculture Source Book by the World Bank have all emphasised the important role of women in agricultural development to address food insecurity and promote the eradication of poverty around the globe. Moreover, in 2012, the Commission on the Status of Women, in its 56th session, critically reviewed the progress made by women in the implementation of agricultural programmes, to further develop policies, and put forward vital recommendations in this crucial area.

In both developed and developing countries it is rural women who play a critical role in rural economies and communities. Rural women in most countries have shown that they are resourceful and they find new ways through innovation to improve their own lives and those of their families and society (General Assembly Resolution 65/1).

Nevertheless, women in rural areas continue to face serious challenges in carrying out their multiple roles within the family and community despite the attention given to rural women in international

frameworks. The rights and priorities of rural women are often also insufficiently addressed by gender equality policies and national development strategies (United Nations 2008).

The Rural Poverty Report of 2011 of the IFAD (2010) indicates that 70% of the world's very poor live in rural areas. Disadvantages rooted in social and political inequalities, lack of assets, limited economic opportunities, and poor education and capabilities are at the root of rural poverty. Such inequalities often hamper the empowerment of rural women. Gender-based stereotypes and discrimination prevents many rural women from access to opportunities, services, and resources (United Nations 2008). For this reason, rural areas and communities in most regions of the world are hampered from reaching the Millennium Development Goals. It is therefore vital that policies are adopted to enhance rural women's gender equality and the empowerment of women for poverty elimination, economic growth, rural development and the achievement of the International Millennium Development Goals (MGD Report 2008).

The significant role rural women play in agriculture has also received renewed attention because of the impact of global food insecurity. In many areas of the world, women are responsible for a large proportion of agriculture and food production (A/64/190 FAO 2007). This role is vital in developing countries to ensure food security and to eliminate poverty and hunger. At household level, many women play a role in the contribution of food production and food security, but this is hampered by lack of access to resources, land ownership and assets, and essential services. It is therefore important that attention to food security and nutrition brings about gender equality for rural women. It is for this reason that the increased and improved collection of gender-sensitive data is needed to tackle hunger and to ensure that women farmers have equity and equal access to agricultural resources and can play a leadership role in decision-making (FAO 2009; United Nations 2008).

Rural women's necessities and needs have been addressed in different resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. In Resolution 64/140, the Assembly recognised their key role in advancing agricultural and rural development, enhancing food security, and eliminating rural poverty, as well as the crucial contribution rural women make to the prosperity and advancement of their families and communities. The critical part played by rural women and their commitment to enhancing agricultural

and rural development was underlined in the Council's 2010 Ministerial Declaration which called for coordinated action to bolster rural women's economic empowerment. The Commission on the Status of Women was founded in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, and has reliably attended to issues identified with the circumstances of rural women, incorporating in its 15 year audit the usage of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The 2009 Gender and Agriculture Source Book by the World Bank, the FAO, and the IFAD have conveyed new regard for the essential role of women in the agricultural sector and in reducing broad-based poverty worldwide. The 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2012 was used to survey progress in execution, further create strategy direction, and set forward key suggestions in this essential area.

2.7.1. The critical role of women

According to the United Nations Report of 2008, rural women assume critical roles in rural economies in both developing and developed countries. Across regions, rural women, unlike their male counterparts, have demonstrated that they are ingenious and focused on better approaches to enhance their own lives, those of their families, and their communities. Regardless of this information and the consideration given to rural women in international frameworks, such as The Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs, rural women continue to experience genuine difficulties in carrying out their various roles inside their families and groups. In addition, their rights and needs are most often inadequately attended to by national development strategies and policies on gender equality.

The Rural Poverty Report of 2011 by IFAD estimates that at least 70% of the world's very poor are found in rural areas. Poverty in rural areas is the consequence of a lack of assets, limited economic opportunities, and poor education, as well as disadvantages caused by social and political disparities. Such inequalities often disproportionately hold women back from participating in the economy. In many countries, gender-based stereotypes and segregation deny rural women fair access to opportunities, services, and assets. However, as we reach the end of the MDG period, the global community has reason to celebrate. This is thanks to the concerted international, national, regional and local efforts through the MDGs which have improved conditions for many women living in rural

communities (MDG Report 2015). Policies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women are therefore pivotal for rural development, economic growth, poverty alleviation, and the achievement of the MDGs.

The global food crisis (2007 to 2008) gave a genuine indication of the significance of sustainable agriculture to food and nutrition, security, and improvement. It additionally conveyed consideration regarding the critical part rural women play in agriculture. In many parts of the world family farms, mainly managed by rural women, is the solution to achieving food security and can serve as the catalyst for sustainable rural development (FAO Report 2015). The role of rural women in agriculture in developing countries is key for guaranteeing sustenance and nourishment security, and eradicating poverty (FAO 2009). Not only are many rural women food producers, they are also responsible for food distribution at family level. Rural women's role in food production and security, however, is being hampered by their inability to gain access to essential services, resources, technologies and information, including the difficulty of owning land (United Nations 2008). To meet the future demand of a growing world population with changing consumption patterns, it is estimated that agricultural production needs to be increased by 70 to 100% until 2050 (International Journal for Rural Development 2015).

The greater part of the rural poor, specifically women and the youth, are found in the sector of low productivity employment of the rural economy. They engage in subsistence farming, work for agricultural wages, or are self-employed (FAO 2011). Access to better than average work stays constrained in both agricultural and non-agricultural work. Work is by and large more inclined to be either unpaid or low-wage, casual or vulnerable, and there is a need for social insurance (FAO 2011a). For rural women, numerous hindrances prevent them from having equal access to decent employment, such as their lack of education and training, poor transportation and child-care services, and the burden placed on them by their household responsibilities (FAO, IFAD 2009). According to Fontana and Paciello (2009:92), global advances in information and communications technologies (ICT) could hold huge potential for encouraging rural women to strengthen themselves financially through the procurement of new abilities and access to job opportunities and markets. Activities for measuring, decreasing and re-conveying the weight of unpaid work are crucial both for perceiving and making more noticeable the rural and non-farming work of rural women and for expanding their

access to all types of paid employment.

Advancing and guaranteeing the rights of rural women and growing their access to services, assets and opportunities needs comprehensive action at all levels. It is more improbable for rural women to own property than their urban counterparts (United Nations 2010). According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Global Land Tool Network (2008), rural women own less than ten % of land in the developed world and two % in the developing world. In various nations in Sub-Saharan African and South Asian countries, women are still at a disadvantage because of the disparity in statutory and standard laws on access to land proprietorship and different sorts of property and legacy.

Evidence suggests that lending to women is more financially savvy when compared to men, but women still experience barriers to equal credit access (United Nations 2010). Researchers point out that female loan officers are better equipped to build trustworthy relationships with borrowers and the loans they make available have a lower chance of turning problematic (Beck *et al.* 2013). Also, as compared to male clients, female clients are more resourceful at managing the money loaned to them and to save (D'Espallier *et al.* 2011). It is estimated that in some regions women are given less than ten % of all loans going to small farmers and that they get only one % of the total credit given to the agricultural sector. Smaller scale funding and microcredit have been perceived as helpful instruments for giving chances to rural women to move out of extreme poverty. However, even in these areas, women keep on being confronted by discrimination with regards to access to credit, and they are usually allocated smaller amounts compared to men. Many countries emphasise the importance of capacity building, access to information, gender-sensitive policies, support in enhancing women's rights, legal assistance and access to productive assets (United Nations 2009).

Also, despite the fact that there has been advancement in women's participation in decision-making globally, the under-representation of women from rural areas in political and public life stays high in many social orders. The 2011 UN General Assembly Resolution on Women's Participation notes: "Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalised from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women". In a

few areas, discrimination and social practices confine the space within which women can engage in politics within their communities. Rural organisations, for example, women's associations, agricultural producers, rural worker associations, water users' groups, self-help groups, and rural credit unions can assume a key role in advancing the economic empowerment of rural women and political representation (United Nations 2010).

These and various issues that affect the empowerment of rural women, including particular groups of women, for example, young women, indigenous women, older women or women with disabilities, should be further considered. Lessons gained from different settings that have delivered substantial results should be better shared to improve on successes such as the MDGs.

2.7.2. Rural women worldwide

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was established by the United Nations General Assembly which created UN Women (2010). This organisation was instrumental in furthering gender equality and the empowerment of women in numerous countries. In India, for example, with backing from the UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality, the Dalit Women's Livelihoods Accountability Initiative has helped women who were marginalised by the caste system to take part in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Between 2009 and 2011, their involvement grew from 2 800 to more than 14 000 in eight districts. Numerous Dalit women are now unionised to defend their rights and have bank accounts in their names (UN Women 2010).

In Zimbabwe, along one of the poorest sections of the Zambezi River, UN Women supplied women from the Tonga ethnic group with new equipment and training to enter into the fishing industry, which was male dominated. Rather than offering fish obtained from men's water crafts, they now advertise their own catch. Sales have multiplied, and the women are organising collectives, extending their business scope to bigger towns and urban communities, and taking an interest in a revolving fund giving small loans (UN Women 2010).

Women farmers ordinarily have less access to watering system innovation (UN Women 2010). In

China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous region, UN Women helped guarantee that scores of women agriculturists have the capacity to find out about, gain, and keep up with cutting-edge watering system technology. Climate change has made the flow of local rivers unpredictable. Numerous men have left their towns for occupations in urban communities, with women staying behind to take up farming. To underscore better approaches, local drama troupes have organised exhibitions showing the value of women's participation in water administration. Surveys have shown that local women have become increasingly willing to voice their opinion in village affairs because of their empowerment and newly-acquired skills.

Important partners working with rural women include the World Food Programme, the FAO, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development under the initiative Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women. The latter's focus is on enabling rural women to assert their rights to land, authority, opportunities and decision-making, as well as participating in shaping laws, policies and programmes. Evidence demonstrates that this promotes gains in productivity, advances growth, and improves prospects to develop for present and future generations. The initiative also draws in governments to create and actualise laws and policies that advance equal rights, opportunities and support so that rural women can benefit from trade and finance, advertise their merchandise, and make a major contribution to economic growth (UN Women 2010). Research has indicated that if women had more rights and the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by between 20 and 30%, thereby rescuing approximately 100 to 150 million people from hunger (FAO 2011).

According to the 2008 WDR report on agriculture, 86% of rural women and men derive their livelihood from agriculture. Agriculture also provides employment for around 1.3 billion smallholder farmers and landless workers, of which 43% are women. Their rights and contributions have to a great extent been disregarded to date. The UN's World Food Programme Gender Policy and Strategy stresses that gender inequality is a major contributing factor to hunger and poverty, assessing that 60% of chronically hungry individuals are women and girls. According to the Inter-Agency Report on Rural Women and the Millennium Development Goals (2010) men's normal wages are higher than women's in both rural and urban areas.

Rural women regularly work longer hours than men, in addition to domestic and child care obligations. In Benin and Tanzania, women are said to work 17.4 hours per week while men work 14 hours per week (FAO, IFAD, ILO 2010). In some countries, the amount of time women spend collecting water impacts negatively on their chances of employment opportunities. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women collectively spend around 40 billion hours a year gathering water (UN Women 2009). If rural women had equal access to productive resources, agricultural yields could decrease the number of chronically hungry individuals by between 100 and 150 million. Be that as it may, studies show persistent gaps that affect the lives of rural women (FAO 2011).

2.7.3. South African government policy

Feminist academics strongly supported women's organisations to establish government structures and state institutions to forward the advancement of women's empowerment and gender equality. These feminists provided input on the design and functions of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) (Gouws 2011). South Africa, in 1997 began the institutional machinery for gender and established the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) in The Presidency. The OSW was responsible to develop a national gender policy framework and to oversee and coordinate policy development on women at the national level.

Parliament passed legislation in 1997 to establish the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) as one of the Chapter 9 institutions outlined in the South African Constitution to promote respect for, protect, develop and achieve gender equality. The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) guided by the Gender Equality Act of 1996, was tasked to monitor, evaluate, research and investigate complaints, as well as to conduct public awareness and education on women's rights and gender equality.

The National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, referred to as the Gender Policy Framework (GPF), outlined the goals of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment in order to attain the goal of gender equality. This framework emphasised the demands of women's organisations, human rights activists, feminist researchers and political activists. It had far reaching effects in putting women's rights on the political and economic transformation agenda.

The issue between constitutional rights and cultural rights has not been resolved with regard to accessing communal land by women in rural areas. Even though the Constitution guarantees equal recognition to the right to cultural practices, women still struggle to gain access to land because of traditional and cultural practices. In rural areas, women who were not household heads or married to a household head were more vulnerable (had less access to livelihoods, assets and decision-making) than women who were heads of households Bob (2013).

Tenure and land reform are seen as instruments to prevent social exclusion of women (Bob, 2013). An enabling environment has been created for women to access, own, control, use and manage land, and also to access credit facilities through a gendered focus on reforming on access to land. This resulted to an increase from 1.2 % of recipients being women heads of households in 1994 to 13.3 % by 2007, but for rural women the struggle of accessing land, still remains dominant (Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, 2013).

Protective legislation, such as the Promotion of Equality, Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act have improved access to justice for rural women. There are currently 382 equality courts throughout all nine provinces in South Africa to handle cases of unfair discrimination, hate speech or harassment.

The hosting of the SADC conference of Women Ministers for Gender Affairs brought about a position paper on women and the environment, which includes the Green Economy (Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities 2013). The Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities (DWCPD) has launched the implementation of projects on the Green Economy, with rural women at the forefront, serving the dual purpose to generate income and to manage the environment.

Gender-based violence which refers to violations and control through violent acts and use of masculinity (Mkhize, Bennet, Reddy & Moletsane 2012) is a social ill that is prevalent in many societies in South Africa and the world at large. Since 1994, key interventions in South Africa were aimed at victims of all forms of violence. The National Crime Prevention Strategy of 1996 was developed to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and children. This was

further strengthened with the adoption of an integrated approach in 2005 through the establishment of an Interdepartmental Management Team.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007 aimed to review and amend all aspects of the laws and implementation relating to sexual offences. Children remain particularly vulnerable to sexual crimes. The vulnerability to sexual abuse of children and persons who are mentally disabled was recognised through the inclusion of comprehensive provisions in the act with the definition of certain new and amended sexual offences (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development 2013).

Without effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place it could result in the continued risk of under-reporting and prevention or protection measures not being given priority. Findings in the report on The War@home has shown that increased violence is occurring between intimate partners, i.e. the victims are acquainted with the perpetrators (Gender Links 2012).

According to Moletsane, Reddy, Ntombela, Dayal, Munthre, & Wiebesiek (2010:163) South Africa's approach to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is comprehensive and aims to address the monetary aspects as well as applying its multidimensional nature. South Africa's socio-economic development interventions are more comprehensive than the minimum standards laid out by the United Nation's MDGs. Government departments (Social Development, Education, Health, Trade and Industry, and Labour) have been implementing programmes aimed mainly at improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable and marginalised citizens, particularly African rural women and children.

The Social Assistance Programme is an important strategy for poverty alleviation in South Africa. Evidence points out that, after salaries which is 62.6 %, grants form 44.8 % of the sources of income nationally, with regional variations (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The National Planning Commission's Diagnostic Report concurs , noting that income for the poorest 40 % of members of society is derived mostly from social grants (not from salaries or remittances) (National Planning Commission, 31 2011a). The decrease in food insecurity, together with the increase in the Child Support Grant (CSG), shows that this intervention is a significant poverty alleviation strategy.

International Women's Day (8 March) in 2012 was used as a platform to highlight the empowerment of rural women in order to end hunger and eradicate poverty worldwide. The 56th

session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations headquarters in New York concentrated on the subject of strengthening rural women and their role in the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development. Lulu Xingwana, the Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, led the South African delegation at the CSW, which looks at ways to make a difference in the lives of millions of rural women. At the CSW, Xingwana stated that through the efforts of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, South Africa has focused on the empowerment of rural women through gender equality. According to Xingwana, efforts have been made to give rural women better access to subsidising, training, exchange of innovation, building partnerships, guaranteeing food security, access to land, and monitor disparity in the redistribution of land. According to UN Women (2012), rural women, who constitute one-fourth of the world's population, keep on encountering more difficulties than men in accessing social protection, employment, public services, and markets because of security issues, cultural practices, and lack of identification papers. As indicated by the United Nations, rural women represent a large portion of the world's agricultural labour force, are producers of the majority of food grown, particularly in subsistence farming, and are mostly unpaid for care work in rural areas.

2.7.4. Poverty trends in South Africa

Statistics SA (2014:7) identifies three types of poverty. Extreme poverty is termed as a "food poverty line" below which people are unable to purchase enough food for a decent diet. Less extreme poverty is defined in terms of a "lower-bound poverty line", below which people can afford to buy food at the expense of non-food items; and an "upper-bound poverty line" at which level people can purchase food and non-food items. About 10.2-million South Africans were living in extreme poverty (below the food line) in 2011, compared to 12.6-million in 2006; and 23-million living in moderate poverty (below the upper line), compared to 27.1-million in 2006. The lower poverty line – which is higher than the food line but lower than the upper-bound poverty line – translates to 32.3% of the population, or roughly 16.3-million people, living in poverty in 2011, down from 42.2% or 20-million people in 2006. It is this line that the country's National Development Plan (NDP) aims to target by eliminating poverty by 2030.

The poverty trends in the above-mentioned report also take into consideration the effects that the

global financial crisis of 2008/2009 had on the livelihoods of South Africa's poorest. This in effect caused the number of people living below the food line to escalate to 15.8-million in 2009 before dropping below 2006 levels again by 2011. This was driven by a combination of factors ranging from a growing social safety net, income growth, above inflation wage increases, decelerating inflationary pressure, and an expansion of credit. Testimony to this is the rural poor (who mainly are women) who bear the brunt of poverty.

According to the Census 2011 data from Statistics South Africa, in 2011 the country's population was 51 770 560, of which 26 581 769 (51.3%) were female and 25 188 791 (48.7%) were male. Only 28.4% of South Africans over the age of twenty years had completed the 12th grade, 33.8% entered high school and 8.6% had no schooling at all, while 12.1% had a tertiary qualification. The illiteracy rates (people 15 years and older with no education or a highest level of education less than grade seven) had dropped from 31,5 % in 2001 to 19,1% in 2011. Census 2011 shows that the percentages of adults aged 25 years and above without formal schooling are highest among black African women at 14,8%. Most illiterate rural women lack the confidence to initiate dialogue that could empower themselves (Leach 2001:163).

Taking these statistics into account, self-empowerment and development in rural areas can only take place if women have access to information and education (ILO: 2009). Educating women would also mean that the large gender gap in their access to decision-making and leadership can be curtailed (Hughes 2014; ILO 2012; *The Economist* 2015; UN Women 2011).

2.7.5. Education, the key to literacy

Much has to be done in the area of education to reduce the rate of illiteracy. Globally, of the 796-million illiterate people, two-thirds are women. Global statistics shows that only 39% of rural girls attend secondary school compared to 45% of rural boys. Even in urban areas, the %age is 59% girls compared to 60% boys. Just by completing primary school, a girl's chances increase every year to better her eventual wages by 10 to 20%. Staying longer in school encourages girls to marry later in life, have fewer children, and make her less vulnerable to domestic violence (FAO, IFAD, ILO 2010).

The UN Report of 2010 states that advances have been made in closing the gender gap in urban school attendance. However, data from 42 countries indicate that the likelihood for rural girls to not attend school is twice as high as the likelihood for urban girls.

In Egypt, Indonesia and some African countries, the building of schools in rural areas has increased the number of rural girls attending school. The educating of girls and women will eventually lead to them having access to leadership roles and making decisions in their communities (World Development Report 2012).

2.7.6. Women and climate change

According to a report by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (March 2009), climate change has visibly impacted on women, especially women living in rural areas. It states that climate change results in natural disasters that affect the livelihoods, health and education of rural women differently to men. This is because of the social roles of women, their marginalisation and poverty.

Rural women assume a fundamental part to adequately mitigate and adjust to climate change and to guarantee sustainable rural development. Rural women regularly rely upon access to natural resources for food and fuel, and they are more mindful of the criticalness to oversee natural resources in a sustainable manner and to preserve the natural environment (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2007).

When Xingwana led the South African delegation to the CSW in 2012, they were seeking to map out actions to make a real difference in the lives of millions of rural women. Xingwana stated that because women are intense operators of progress, it must be ensured that they are guaranteed active participation and consultation in policy making, environmental planning, financing and budgeting procedures. She also stated that rural women have the indigenous knowledge to increase food security, avert ecological debasement, and maintain agricultural biodiversity. According to Xingwana (New York 2012), rural women should be involved in all aspects of the adaptation and mitigation of climate change in their communities.

The following section will discuss how the issue of women and gender in development would be better understood if theories and approaches to women in development are clarified. While most of the theories seem to be economic or political, they have a few dimensions that are outside of women's control, yet they have a huge influence on women's ability to contribute to the well-being of their families. Todaro (1997:81) reasons that if women are not actively involved and their perspectives not incorporated in all levels of decision-making, the aims of equality and peace cannot be achieved.

Development is basically about people taking control of their own destinies. This is inclusive of both men and women (Kellerman *et al.* 1997:37-38). In spite of this, some people do not have control over their own destinies. In the growth of development, some groups of people, particularly men, profit more than others because the structures put in place allow for more male participation. This could be as a result of the fact that groups for development were considered as gender-less in the past. Development planners and donor organisations regarded the poor as men only, when in fact the larger part of the poor are women (Karl 1995:94).

Although women have always contributed to the development process, their contribution was not acknowledged because they were perceived as only benefitting from social and welfare services (Ostergaard 1992:2). Both men and women need to actively participate for successful development to be achieved.

2.8. Conclusion

Since 1994 South Africa has travelled a promising, but difficult journey to achieve gender equality. In comparison to where the country was before 1994, it is evident that improvements have been made post-democracy in realising the rights of women. Families, communities and society at large benefit directly when women are empowered, especially when the focus is to increase the capability of women and in recognising their productive and reproductive roles.

Extensive and progressive policy developments have been made in South Africa, which are aligned to international best practice and the government is trying to renew its efforts in the implementation of

the legislative aspects of these policies to achieve a minimum level of equality. The Gender Policy Framework of 2000 was used as the national benchmark and it includes key elements to advance women's empowerment and gender equality. National government's understanding of the differing needs of the realities at local grassroots level, especially rural women, requires an inter-departmental co-ordination to the develop a policy of change how gender equality is to be achieved in South Africa. The National Development Plan (NDP) needs a gendered focus in the implementation of programmes if its social and economic objectives of reducing poverty and inequality are to be realised.

Chapter two outlined the theoretical and legislative frameworks. The theoretical framework theories around women empowerment were discussed. Chapter three will examine three SADC countries, namely Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, paying attention to the challenges and progress made in the socio-economic development and empowerment of rural women.

CHAPTER 3: SADC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN RURAL AREAS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on the challenges and the progress made with regards to the socio-economic development and empowerment of rural women in Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. South Africa and the three above-mentioned neighbouring countries are members of SADC. At one of its summits, SADC adopted the Protocol on Gender and Development, which had committed signatories to achieving 28 progressive targets aimed at promoting gender equality. South Africa and its neighbouring countries have made similar laws and policies to promote gender equality in line with the Protocol. Other gender equality programmes which these countries follow include the SADC Gender Programme and the Regional Gender Policy. These four SADC countries were signatories at the adoption of the UN MDGs and committed to help achieve the eight MDGs by 2015. Therefore, the SADC countries have been implementing similar policies and legislation relevant to the MDGs. In response to the HIV and Aids pandemic, SADC adopted the HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework in 2010. The framework was developed in order for the Southern African countries to meet their MDG targets and regional priorities in their response to HIV/Aids. The above-mentioned legislation and policies of SADC were introduced with the view to empower and develop rural women. At SADC summits, South Africa and its three neighbouring countries can learn lessons from each other on the successes and challenges of policies and programmes that have been put in place for the development and empowerment of rural women.

In the discussion that follows, the three SADC countries will be compared in terms of their political, economic and social variables of women empowerment in rural areas in order to assess the achievements and challenges experienced. According to the Human Development Report (2005:39), the MDGs' three main points focus on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women (Cogill & Kiugu 1990; UNPD 1989).

SADC's Heads of State held a summit in 2008 where they adopted and signed the Protocol on Gender and Development. Three of the most important targets, of the 23 progressive targets set out in the Protocol, were:

- That women will hold 50% of decision-making positions in the private and public sector by 2015;
- The revision, amendment and repeal by 2015 of all sex or gender discriminatory laws; and
- The adoption of integrated approaches to reduce gender-based violence by half by 2015 (Chamuka 2011).

3.2 Political participation and transformation

In this section, the political variables of gender equality, laws and policies, and women in decision-making will be discussed.

3.2.1 Gender equality in legislation

SADC acknowledges gender equality as a basic human right and a fundamental part of regional integration, economic growth and social development. SADC is thus committed to eradicating all forms of gender inequality at regional and national levels. SADC adopted the following policies in line with advancing gender equality and equity: the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development in 1997, and the Protocol on Gender and Development in 2008 (SADC 1997; SADC 2008).

3.2.1.1 Swaziland

According to the 2007 Progress Report on the MDGs for Swaziland, the Constitution makes provision for gender equality. There is evidence that definite advancement is been made, but challenges are still evident. These include:

- The Education Policy which grants boys and girls access to education impartially. The participation, at basic education level, of boys in urban and rural areas still exceeds that of girls, though the difference is slight – female participation stands at 49.2%.
- The percentage of women employed in the formal sector is considerably lower than for men, which results in women being far worse off in terms of poverty prevalence.
- Some laws and practices still continue to undermine women. Women still find it difficult to

access Title Deed Land (TDL) and Swazi Nation Land (SNL).

- Gender-based violence is a serious problem that affects mainly women and children. About one-third of the female population experience some sort of sexual violence in their lifetime.
- The government's aim to reach the target of 50% of women representation in decision-making positions and structures is merely an aim on paper since women are very poorly represented.
- Women carry a far greater load of caring when it comes to HIV and Aids than men. Women and girls are also far more at risk to the pandemic because of unsafe sexual practices and behavioural, socio-cultural and economic factors.

Concerning gender equality, the Constitution assures equal rights for both men and women. Various essential national and sectoral policies and strategies are in place to address gender inequalities (CEDAW 2012). A Gender Policy, drawn up with the approval of the UN system, was submitted to Cabinet for endorsement in 2009. Swaziland is also a signatory to various international conventions and agreements that promote gender equality and equity (UNDAF 2011-2015). The Plan of Action that promotes the implementation of policies and programmes include legislation such as the Marriage Act, the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill, the Draft Land Policy, and the Deeds and Registry Act. Gender equality concerns have also been included in the PRSAP, the Population Policy, the Children's Policy, and the National Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS. Government has set up the Gender Coordination Unit to further strengthen organisations in their capacity. In addition, the Sexual Offences Unit run by the Swaziland Police Service has been organised in such a way that more people can enjoy access to competent crime prevention and management services (SADC Gender Barometer Protocol 2012 Barometer, Swaziland).

3.2.1.2 Zimbabwe

Just like many other countries in the developing world, Zimbabwe has not escaped gender inequalities, power imbalances in education, and economic interdependence between men and women (Human Development Report 2005).

Zimbabwe, like many African states, has endorsed protocols and policies where heads of state have acceded to end gender inequality and empower women at regional and international level.

Even though Zimbabwe has national laws for reducing gender inequality by supplying a legal framework to handle problems such as domestic violence, inheritance, and child marriage that affect women, especially rural women, their implementation has been insufficient (United Nations Population Fund 2010). Reasons that may have affected the implementation of these laws include negative cultural norms, women being afraid of being cut off from their families for reporting domestic violence, religious beliefs, ignorance of the law, and dependence on their male partners. Only 37% of rural women who suffer physical or sexual violence undertake to seek assistance (Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey ZDHS 2010/11).

According to the MDG Progress Report (2012), to speed up the achievement of the gender equality empowerment of women, several systems need to be put in place. A few of these are:

- a) Empowering women entrepreneurs with enterprise skills and management training, and allowing them access to credit, financial resources and markets.
- b) The Women's Parliamentary Caucus, Women in Local Government Forum and Parliament Portfolio Committees need to be made more powerful.
- c) Enacting and immediately implementing the National Women's Council in order to reduce or remove systematic barriers which are prejudicial to women's equality such as the participation in matters of policy (UNDP Zimbabwe 2012).

According to a Synthesis Report of the Africa Region (1995:15), in the late 1980s, rural women in Zimbabwe still had problems in obtaining legal access to land in communal areas, despite extensive legislation in favour of women. Upon divorce, many women were still forced to vacate land as if they had secondary land use rights because traditional attitudes and customs were practiced.

According to a Synthesis Report of the Africa Region, a number of legislative measures have been formulated to enhance the status of women in the past decade. Rural women benefitted from this legislation which included the Matrimonial Causes Act, which allows the court to divide assets and property equitably when marriages are dissolved by divorce. The Deceased Person's Family Maintenance Amendment Act enables a widow to claim a share of her husband's estate, like the use

of crops and animals. The Deeds Registries Act has also made it possible for women to have equal rights to their marriage counterparts with regard to the acquisition of immovable assets, including land. A number of different NGOs working on legal literacy in rural areas have also been formed since 1985. These include the Legal Resources Foundation and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (Manase 1992).

3.2.1.3 Namibia

The Namibian government has set up a legal framework for the advancement of women and rural women in particular. Under Article 10 of the Namibian Constitution, women are guaranteed equality before the law. Namibia's government has also enacted gender-related laws and policies such as the Married Person's Equality Act No. 1 of 1996, the Combating of Rape Act No. 8 of 2000, and the Domestic Violence Act No. 4 of 2003. The Namibian parliament adopted the National Policy and the Plan of Action as a guiding document two years after the Beijing Platform of Action (1997).

Some of the critical areas which the National Policy have identified include gender, poverty and rural development, gender balance in education and training, gender and reproductive health, gender and economic empowerment, violence against women and children, and the girl-child. Progress has been made in all areas of concern through the Government Poverty Reduction Strategy which targeted gender, poverty, and rural development. The National Policy Commission (NPC) forecasted a reduction in poverty in poor rural households from 28% to 19% (between 2008 and 2012) as well as in extremely poor rural households from 4% to 3.5% (during the same period) (National Planning Commission of Namibia 2008).

Significant progress has been made in the area of gender balance in education and training. Education has been made compulsory and primary school education is free. Statistics have shown that in rural areas more girls than boys attend primary school. The Gender, Trade and Economic Empowerment Policy has ensured that the %age of women who own small and medium enterprises stands at 38% and that women account for 52.6% of those in the informal sector. The Development Bank of Namibia has introduced a micro-finance scheme which targets rural women who cannot access loans because of a lack of collateral. The government has also instituted a Credit Guarantee Scheme to enable rural

women to access loans from commercial banks. Furthermore, the Namibian government has been actively involved in empowering and protecting the rights of the girl-child. Some of the policies the government has introduced include the Education Sector, HIV and AIDS Policy, the National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children, and the Education for All Policy. The government has also partnered with relevant stakeholders to form a joint initiative to assist rural, economically disadvantaged girls to be exempted from paying school fees and tertiary education fees. A policy was also adopted to allow rural and urban teenage mothers to return to school (National Gender Policy Namibia 2010).

Namibia is a signatory to the Millennium Declaration of 2000, and as such is taking part in the process of achieving the MDGs of the United Nations. These goals promote gender equality and strengthen the rights of women (UNDP 2000). Equal rights are also guaranteed by the Namibian Constitution, but it states that common law and customary laws that were in force before the Constitution must remain in force. Therefore, there are still discriminatory laws that affect women in rural areas in particular. These rural women have limited access to property, estates, and financial institutions. For these women, gender equality is still a challenge and it is difficult for them to have equal participation in the economy, politics and society, as reflected in the National Development Plan (NDP3) and Vision 2030 (Government of Namibia).

Despite all these achievements, Namibia is still experiencing challenges in implementing its policies and programmes. Gender equality is still being hampered by factors such as gender-based violence, HIV and Aids, poverty, and negative cultural practices. Many rural women in Namibia are still denied legal identity and capacity on par with men, equal rights in marriage and divorce, as well as equal rights to conclude contracts and administer property. Women are also not treated equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals (Becker, H. and Hinz, M. 1995).

In view of the above facts, the researcher is of the opinion that these four SADC member states have not progressed sufficiently in achieving many of the 23 progressive targets set out in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development for 2015. The statistics above show that more still needs to be done at grassroots politics in the SADC region to facilitate the participation of women in leadership positions.

3.2.2 Laws and policies aimed at women's empowerment

Leftwich (1993:611) points out that: "Governance ... refers to a looser and wider distribution of both internal and external political and economic power. Governance thus denotes the structures of political and crucially, economic relationships and rules by which the productive and distributive life of a society is governed". Bad governance contributes to the spread of poverty and underdevelopment. Good governance promotes the representation of the welfare, rights and interests of citizens; the introduction and implementation of policies and laws; the administration of programmes and service delivery; and consultation with governments and other groups (De Alcantara 1998; Bardhan 1997).

3.2.2.1 Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean government is a signatory to various regional and international conventions, declarations and protocols that seek to promote and created an enabling environment for the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment. These include, amongst others, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) of 1991, the Global Platform for Action, the Beijing Declaration of 1995, and the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR).

Zimbabwe signed the SADC Declaration on Gender Development as well as its addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children. The Sexual Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Legal Age of Majority Act, the Matrimonial Causes Act, and the Sexual Discrimination Act are some of the legislation put in place to promote gender equality and to protect women's rights in the country (UNFPA, Zimbabwe).

Zimbabwe has established 17 laws to promote gender equality and protect women's rights, especially those of rural women. Some of these include laws that will help develop rural women such as the Legal Age of Majority Act, the Labour Act, the Matrimonial Causes Act, the Administration of Deceased Estates Act, the Maintenance Act, the Marriages Act, and the Domestic Violence Act. As signatory to various regional and international conventions, treaties, declarations and protocols, Zimbabwe has pledged its commitment in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Zimbabwe has a bill in place to develop a National Women's Council. This will improve the lives of rural women in areas of social, economic and political status. Another policy aimed at improving the circumstances of Zimbabwean women is the Broad-Based Women's Economic Empowerment Framework of 2012. The Framework is focused on improving the participation of women in the three economic sectors: agriculture, tourism, and mining. The Government's Gender Responsive Economic Policy Management of September 2011 is directed at formulating and implementing economic policies and strategies that are gender-sensitive (UNFPA, Zimbabwe).

Despite the significant progress made in the enacting of policies and legislation, the socio-economic, legal and political status of women in Zimbabwe remains relatively low (UNFPA, Zimbabwe).

3.2.2.2 Namibia

Namibia is signatory to international, continental and regional laws such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol) (United Nations 2010).

In addition to its Constitution, Namibia has enacted national gender-related laws and policies such as the Married Person's Equality Act No. 1 of 1996, the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act No. 29 of 1998, the Maintenance Act No. 9 of 2003, the Communal Land Reforms Act No. 5 of 2002, the Labour Act No. 11 of 2007, the Combating of Rape Act No. 8 of 2000, and the Combating of Domestic Violence Act No. 4 of 2003 (United Nations 2010).

With these laws and policies in place, there have been impressive changes in access to support services for rural women and increased encouragement in decision-making processes. The Communal Land Reform Act (No. 5 of 2002) provides for the equal allocation of land. This Act resulted in remarkable improvements in the area of the development of women in rural areas. The National Gender Policy of 1997 serves to enhance the participation of women in political and decision-making processes. The Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996) ensures that women married in community of property have equal access to bank loans and equal power to administer joint property.

The Combating of Rape Act (2000) provides greater protection to young girls and boys (United Nations 2010).

Namibia provides robust legal protection for women through its Constitution and legislation (such as Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, Labour Act 1992, Affirmative Action Employment Act 1998, Local Authorities Act 1992, and the National Gender Policy). They provide mechanisms and guidelines for all relevant stakeholders to facilitate gender equality and women's empowerment in implementing developmental policies and programmes (United Nations 2010).

However, despite the positive institutional and legal framework, rural women in Namibia continue to be economically and socially marginalised. Women are 1,23 times more likely to be poorer than men and they are disproportionately affected by unemployment, HIV/Aids, and lack of access to land (Poverty Dynamics in Namibia).

3.2.2.3 Swaziland

The circumstances of many rural women in Swaziland are untenable; circumstances are harsh for married and single women. The majority of married women in Swaziland have the status of legal minors, according to Amnesty International (2014). "Women married under the civil law provisions of the 1964 Marriages Act are subject to the 'marital power' of their husbands." Married women are also not permitted to manage property or sign contracts independently (Kingdom of Swaziland 1964).

Dlamini (Swaziland Vigil, UK 2015) writes that women in Swaziland still experience inequality socially, politically, legally and economically. She added that women are treated as minors and second class citizens, despite the Bill of Rights of 2005.

Although the House of Assembly in Swaziland passed the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill in 2009, it has still not been signed into legislation by King Mswati (UN Treaty Collection). In Swaziland, there have been major human rights abuses with the government using the Suppression of Terrorism Act of 2008 to suppress dissent from human rights activists (Dlamini 2015). Rape is widespread in Swaziland. However, the law against rape is not consistently pursued. The Girls and

Women's Protection Act (Kingdom of Swaziland 1920) does not include marital rape in its list of offences. When women are sexually assaulted in a rural community, they often find that opportunities for medical, legal or psychological services are very limited, or even non-existent. Their geographic isolation and economic circumstances may further limit their options. In other words, a victim of sexual violence in a community is not likely to report the offence to the police or to find or access services (Lewis 2003).

The Swaziland government has adopted a Gender Policy that provides guidelines for addressing inequalities between women and men. It has also launched the Decade for Swazi Women in line with the African Union's Decade for African Women (2010 to 2020) (UNDP). Under this programme, Swazi women launched the Women Working Together programme (WWT). The main objective of the WWT is to create a transformative, inspirational and empowering social networking platform for Swazi women. The initiative aims to showcase rural and urban women's talents, ideas and market their businesses (Annual Review of the African Women's Decade 2014.)

However, many challenges remain, such as gender-based violence, inequality before the law, and exclusion from political decision-making (UNDP). Domestic violence is also a common occurrence in Swaziland. It is widely tolerated as it is viewed as acceptable. There is a discrepancy between rape cases reported by urban women and rural women. Urban women report domestic violence with some frequency and are taken seriously by the Western-style courts. On the other hand, the few rural rape cases are generally trivialised by tribal courts. The Swazi High Court (Kingdom of Swaziland 2010) ruled that a portion of the Deeds Registry Act (Kingdom of Swaziland 1973), under which women could not register property in their names, was unconstitutional. This ruling was later supported by the Supreme Court. Despite the ruling, no new legislation has been enacted. The government introduced a new Deeds Registry (Amendment) Bill in parliament in 2011. This was a belated effort to attempt to conform to the court decisions. The new law was finally passed in 2013.

Movement is slow to repeal discriminatory laws. Bills have remained Bills for an unjustified period of time. These include the Marriage Bill, the Deeds Registry Act, the Administration of Estates, and the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill. Despite a Supreme Court instructing the government to align property laws with the Constitution by 28 May 2011, it was only on 9 June 2011 that the Amendment to the Deeds was tabled in Parliament for debate. The minority Status of Women is

maintained by both culture and some aspects of traditional and civil law. Laws have, however, not been promulgated to abolish the minority Status of Women (Gender Links).

An increasing number of women are participating at the highest levels of public life in Zimbabwe and Namibia, although huge challenges remain in Swaziland for women representation in decision-making.

3.2.3 Women in decision-making

The SADC region has recorded achievements for gender equality and women's empowerment that include the increase in numbers of women in politics and decision-making positions. Despite the progress made in the advancement of gender equality in the SADC region, implementation still falls short of stated commitments. Most member states have adopted and ratified regional and international instruments on gender equality, but they have not incorporated these instruments fully in their national laws, policy documents and development programmes and processes.

Several feminist groups have used these instruments to lobby national governments on the ratification and enforcement of appropriate legislation to protect women's rights and economic positioning (Mekonen, Y. 2010).

3.2.3.1 Zimbabwe

Although gender laws and policies have been put in place in Zimbabwe, women participation and representation in decision-making has been found wanting. The major challenge in improving women's participation in decision-making is a lack of implementing the laws and policies. In 2012, a mere 20% of Cabinet Ministers, 9% of Deputy Ministers, 14% of members of Parliament's Lower House, and 24% of members of the Upper House of Parliament were women (Gender Links 2011). Rural women are mainly represented on the Rural District Councils (RDC), although their representation is only 19% of the total councillors (LFS 2011). The 2012 MDGs Progress Report indicates that the participation of women in decision-making in all sectors requires much more work. The legislative framework for the empowerment of women has resulted in some advancement, but more affirmative action is needed to promote gender parity in higher positions.

3.2.3.2 Namibia

A report drawn up for Namibia, the National Sectoral Report (Republic of Namibia 2013), states that since independence, women's involvement in decision-making has increased significantly. This is an important step to ensure that Namibian women, who make up over half of the population, contribute and benefit from development. Be that as it may, top leadership and policy-making positions within the government and rural organisations are still held by men.

Before independence, women were practically non-existent in the ruling government structures. Presently in the National Assembly, there are 43 women representing 41% of the total 104 seats (Namibia National Assembly 2015). These women use their positions to campaign for gender equity. In spite of their efforts, their male counterparts, who show a lack of commitment, believe that women's issues should be handled by women (Bauer 1993).

According to the Namibia Country Report, the number of women in politics and decision-making positions still leaves much to be desired (Devereux & Naeraa 2003; Republic of Namibia 2013). Since independence the %age of women in Parliament increased from 6% in 1990 to 27% in 2005. This %age dropped to 25% between 2010 and 2013 (Shejavali 2013:8-9). Being a signatory to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, the government aims to accomplish gender equality (50/50) by 2015.

Namibia has narrowed the gender divide in education, politics and public service, although challenges remain. The ruling South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) party has adopted a "zebra listing" from which the next government will be drawn. This policy is expected to nearly double female representation in parliament, which did not surpass the 30% mark at National Assembly level before the November 2014 elections (National Gender Policy 2010-2020).

3.2.3.3 Swaziland

Women's representation in the 2013 Swaziland government elections was poor. Government appointments were made by King Mswati and the traditional local councils, just when the country was supposed to be exerting its final effort for gender equality before 2015. Swaziland was not successful in attaining the goals set by the SADC Gender Protocol of 50% women in all areas of decision-making

in 2015 due to the Tinkhundla system. Basically, the Tinkhundla system is a form of governance based on traditional administrative sub-divisions. In Swaziland there are 55 Tinkhundla scattered around the four districts. One of the main problems with the Tinkhundla system is that it restricts political participation and violates the freedoms of the Swazi people to form associations or assemble. This system can be regarded as a manifestation of the “fallacy of electoralism” in which elections are merely used to entrench dictatorship or privilege the royal family over others (Mashala 2013).

The elections of 2013 left women and gender activists highly disappointed. The electorate voted in only one woman, out of 55 parliamentary candidates. Only four women, compared to 61 men, occupy parliamentary seats. Women now represent a mere 6% of Parliament, which is a dramatic decline from 22% after the 2008 elections. Swaziland has the lowest number of women in Parliament in the SADC region. This perpetuates discrimination against rural women and further challenges the equality principle as provisioned for in the Constitution (Cangos Gender Consortium 2014).

Swaziland continues to fall well short with regards to women’s participation in political life. After the 2013 elections, King Mswati appointed three additional women to the House of Assembly, resulting in four out of 65 members being women, reflecting a regression from the 2008 elections. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) ranks Swaziland 132 out of 189 countries with regards to women representation in Parliament (Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 147).

The electoral system, together with the cultural practices that discriminate against women, hinder them from participating in elections. Women still need approval from their spouse if they wish to part take in the elections. Added to this is the ‘pull her down syndrome’, where the female electorate do not want to support women who pursue a political career and challenge the status quo (Zwane & Robinson 2013).

Until women are financially empowered and while government employs legislated quotas and the Constitution overrides discriminatory customary laws, women will not be successful in the selection process. Gender Links states that stronger measures need to be taken to change mind sets regarding female leadership; and until women sit at the table with men who debate and determine their future, commitments to gender equality will just remain spoken words (Gender Links News Service August

2015).

3.3 Social development

In the section below, the following variables will be discussed: education, the HIV/Aids challenge, and water and sanitation.

3.3.1 Education

Education has important benefits to human development as well as other sectors. An educated population is better equipped to address issues affecting the nation, such as poverty eradication.

3.3.1.1 Namibia

The Namibian Constitution declares that primary education must be compulsory and provided free of charge at public schools (Article 20). However, under the Education Act of 2001, parents are required to contribute towards the School Development Fund (SDF) in addition to paying the private costs of education such as school uniforms, transport, hostel fees, sports and extramural fees (Namibian Ministry of Education).

The SADC Gender Protocol 2015 Barometer Namibia made the following observations:

- Namibia achieved gender parity at primary, secondary and tertiary schooling before the 2015 deadline.
- There is free primary education in Namibia and free secondary education was under discussion before 2014.
- Literacy levels between women and men are close at 78% and 74% respectively.
- Namibia has a pregnancy policy to re-integrate girls who fall pregnant back into the schooling system.

All these above observations are positive since education and training are two of the most

powerful weapons in the fight against rural poverty and for rural development (FAO, UNESCO 2003:29).

The first ever Vision School in Namibia was officially inaugurated on 22 July 2013 by President Pohamba. In his inaugural speech, he urged the Ministry of Education to work hard to establish more Vision Schools in other parts of the country. Pohamba added that the plan is to establish Vision Schools in selected rural areas of the country as a way of addressing issues of access to education, quality and equity. These elite schools offer high quality secondary education and specifically target disadvantaged learners from rural communities (*The Namibian* 26 July 2013).

3.3.1.2 Swaziland

The female literacy rate in urban areas stands at 97%, while it is only slightly lower in rural areas at 95%. The %age of women who can read is 81% among women aged between 45 and 49, and 97% among women aged between 15 and 19.

Primary school attendance stands at 82% for children between the ages of 6 and 12 (81% of boys compared to 82% of girls). Therefore, some gender parity in favour of boys can be observed in primary school gross attendance rates.

The Swazi Ministry of Education implemented Free Primary Education (FPE) in grade one and two in 2010 and rolled out the programme to a grade each year, while all primary grades received FPE by 2015 (Ministry of Education and Training 2011).

One major weakness is that education has not been made compulsory by the Swazi Constitution. Hence, the ten year basic education programme is neither free nor compulsory, as the government has not gone beyond offering basic, free and compulsory education for primary school-going age children.

Currently, an adult Swazi receives 7.5 years of schooling on average. The primary school completion rate in Swaziland is just over 60%, which is lower than in many neighbouring countries, such as

Zimbabwe (81%).

The above developments reflect poorly on schooling in Swaziland. Approximately 16% of children of primary school-going age, most of them in rural areas, are not enrolled in primary education. Even more alarming is that 74% and 88% of youngsters at appropriate age for junior and senior secondary education respectively are not enrolled in these levels of education (Ministry of Education and Training 12 January 2016).

3.3.1.3. Zimbabwe

More than 75% of primary school age children attend school in Zimbabwe and gender parity has been achieved in attendance. A total of 86% of girls aged 6 to 12 attend school compared to 85% of boys and altogether 85% of children aged 6 to 12 attend primary school. There is also no gender disparity in either net or gross attendance rates. However, many children attending primary school are outside of the official age range, resulting in a huge impact on educational infrastructure, the experience in the classroom, and educational planning. The %age of male primary school learners who are over-age stands at 62% and the %age of female primary school learners who are over-age is 56% (Demographic and Health Survey 2006).

The Zimbabwean Constitution provides for free primary education. However, the policy of free education has become a policy on paper only as some Zimbabweans complain that they are still compelled to pay school fees. Simba (2014) criticises the Zimbabwean government for flouting the Constitution and demanding that parents pay for school fees. The economic situation for the average rural Zimbabwean has worsened during the past decade. This has had a direct negative impact on their ability to send their children to school and pay for school fees and uniforms. Fewer children in rural areas attend school than children in urban areas. The primary school drop-out rate is also much higher in rural areas, which accounts for 78.9% of the total number of drop-outs (UNDP Zimbabwe 2013).

The presence of children on the streets in urban areas is an indictment against any claim that education in Zimbabwe is compulsory and free. The high costs of books and uniforms have also led to

high drop-out rates in rural areas (The 2010 National Budget Statement; Biti 2010).

As a result, Zimbabwe may not achieve the aims of the Dakar Declaration of which Zimbabwe is a signatory, that is, “Education for All by 2015” as pointed out in 2008 by Tendai Chikowore, President of Zimbabwe Teachers’ Association (ZIMTA).

The state of education in Zimbabwe will have a negative impact on rural women. According to Nai (2003:47), it is education that will provide the necessary literacy and financial skills for rural women to succeed in the modern world. Rural women’s gender disempowerment is rooted in the minds of both men and women, and it is strengthened and protected by social cultural norms. Education therefore presents girls and women with the ability to question and develop a strong will to change the status quo. Through education, the cultural and social norms that dictate rural women’s place as being in the kitchen are challenged.

Many schools charge development levies that some parents cannot afford. The Minister of Finance, Tendai Biti, in his budget statement indicated that there was a dropout rate of 8% in 2010 among children aged 6 to 17 years. Given that there are higher drop-out rates in rural areas, it cannot be said that all children have equal access to primary education. In 2010, approximately two-million youth were excluded from the education system, with no viable alternatives (United Nations Children’s Fund, Zimbabwe Situation Analysis (Draft) UNICEF 2010).

3.3.2 The HIV and Aids challenge

One of the greatest challenges facing the SADC member states is the effects of the HIV/Aids epidemic. The region has the highest levels of HIV prevalence globally (SADC HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework 2010-2015 2009). Responses to the epidemic in the SADC region began in the mid-1980s. Most member states have developed national policies or National Strategic Plans on HIV and Aids.

3.3.2.1 Swaziland

HIV and Aids has exacted a tragic toll on the population of Swaziland. The pandemic has become a

major cause of illness and death in families, communities and the nation at large, thus depriving households and society of the critical human resource. This scourge has a negative effect on the social and economic gains the country has made. Also, because of feminisation of the disease, young women are more at risk of contracting HIV than young men. This has resulted in the altering of productive sectors. The Smart Programme on Economic Empowerment and Development (SPEED) is one of Swaziland's major policy documents in the fight against HIV and Aids and the achievement of the MDGs which require urgent attention. The National Multi-Sectoral HIV and AIDS Policy was introduced by the government in 2006 as a national response to the HIV and Aids epidemic (UNCT, Swaziland UNDAF 2011-2015). A 2004 survey showed that HIV prevalence among women living in urban areas is higher than among rural-based women (46.4% compared to 41.4%) (National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA), Health, Economics & HIV/AIDS Research Division (HEARD) 2006).

3.3.2.2 Namibia

The Namibian Policy on Gender and Reproductive Health has adopted a National Policy on HIV and Aids to address the special needs of marginalised rural groups such as girls, women, and people with disabilities. Over 100 000 orphans and other vulnerable children are currently receiving financial aid from the government to ease the burden of caregivers by supplementing their income (Madam Penehupifo Pohamba, March 2010; Ministry of Gender Equality, October 2007; MoHSS and UNAIDS June 2011).

The 2008 Sentinel Survey Report (which is a report on HIV prevalence trends amongst pregnant women) found that HIV prevalence is the same in rural and urban areas. Sixteen new infections occur each day (25% amongst infants aged less than one year; 31% amongst youth aged 15 to 24, and 37% in persons aged 25 or older) (MoHSS 2009 Estimates and Projections of the Impact of HIV/AIDS in Namibia 2008/9).

The HIV/Aids epidemic is the most pressing health issue in Namibia, which is one of the ten countries most affected by it in the world (UNAIDS June 2011:7). HIV prevalence contributes to the country's high maternal mortality rate, as well as infant and child mortality. The epidemic has a

disproportionate impact on women, and poor women are vulnerable to HIV infection (UNAIDS 2010:130). Women's economic marginalisation forces them to depend on men, which increases the likelihood of involvement in transactional and inter-generational sex (which are explained below), both of which are key drivers of the epidemic.

Transactional sex: Qualitative data suggests that transactional sex (sex in exchange for gifts or favours) is common and even the norm in some parts of Namibia (De la Torre *et al.* 2009; HIV and AIDS in Namibia: Behavioural and Contextual Factors Driving the Epidemic MoHSS). Transactional sex is much broader than sex with a sex worker and is commonly associated with poverty and income inequalities, where a power imbalance exists and as such in a partnership puts one person in a vulnerable position where he/she is less likely to be able to negotiate condom use.

Inter-generational sex: A working definition of inter-generational sex is a sexual partnership between a young woman (15 to 24 years) and a man of 10 or more years older. Close-grained studies have shown complex reasons that cause both men and women to engage in inter-generational sex. It is perceived as beneficial at a number of levels such as social, physical, psychological, economic and symbolic (Leclerc-Madlala 2008).

Inter-generational sex and transactional sex are more prevalent in rural than urban areas because of the higher incidences of poverty in the rural areas. Inter-generational sex is used by rural women mainly because they need money for schools fees, food and household goods (Taylor and Francis Group 5:2010).

3.3.2.3 Zimbabwe

Women living in the rural areas of Zimbabwe find it more difficult to access ARVs than their urban counterparts. Zimbabwe's Women's Resource Centre Network (ZWRNCN) has found that three-quarters of women using ARVs live in urban areas, yet most of those who need it live in rural areas. These rural women are often forced to rely on herbal remedies. With Zimbabwe in its eighth year of recession, ARVs have become unaffordable for rural women. Tariro Katadza, the provincial co-ordinator of the Zimbabwe Aids Network (ZAN), states that the financial burden on rural women goes

beyond the high cost of the ARVs. They also have to travel long distances to health centres to obtain them and cannot afford transport costs (IRIN/PlusNew Harare, 15 January 2008).

According to ZAN, most rural men discourage their wives from taking ARVs (Sida Evaluation 04/10, Mupindu, Maposhere & Changunda 2004). As a result, according to Betty Makoni, the Director of the Girl Child Network (GCN), women who have experienced domestic violence hide their ARVs from abusive husbands. They only take the ARVs when their men are not watching or when they (the women) go in search of water or firewood. Some rural men also view their HIV-infected wives as shameful and chase them away from their homes. Katadza points out that this creates further problems for women registered to receive ARVs at their local health clinics since they are forced to live somewhere else. Fear of stigma and discrimination discourages many from seeking treatment, with some claiming to have been bewitched. According to ZAN, young rural girls are especially vulnerable because they become sexually active at a relatively early age and are not empowered to make informed decisions.

The statistics on the HIV/Aids epidemic remain grim. Sub-Saharan Africa remains at the centre of the HIV/Aids epidemic. However, there is some good news: the number of new HIV infections decreased from 2001 to 2012. The number of adults living with HIV/Aids has declined and the number of Aids-related deaths has dropped since 2005. Access to ARVs has increased the survival rate of millions of people infected with HIV (World Bank 2013).

The prevalence of HIV and Aids tends to be greater in urban areas compared to rural areas, with the urban-rural ratio estimated at 1.7:1.0. (Garcia-Calleja, Gouws & Ghys 2006). However, there are also unique factors to rural life that contribute to disease transmission. For example, HIV/Aids clinics and other related health services are not as prevalent in rural areas, thus limiting the amount of care as well as disease and treatment-related knowledge that reaches rural women (Wilson & Blower 2007).

3.3.3 Water and sanitation

The single most essential resource to sustain human life is potable water, yet an estimated one billion people living in developing countries do not have this vital resource (United Nations 2011). A lack of

clean water generally stems from a nation's inability to properly manage water that is present in a given region (Wall, Mezak, Gray & Careau 2008).

The serious effects of poor water supply and sanitation on health and human dignity are reasons why one of the MDGs was to halve "the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation" (Goal 7: 'Ensure Environmental Stability.' UN).

In many rural areas, piped-in water is non-existent in the poorest 40% of households, and less than half of the population use any form of improved water sources (MDG Goals Report 2012). Sub-Saharan Africa has 30% sanitation coverage, with only a 4% increase from 1990. This is a serious concern for rural households because many people who lack basic sanitation engage in unsanitary activities, such as open defecation (Drinking Water and Sanitation in Africa 2012 Update).

3.3.3.1 Namibia

According to the Namibian Population and Housing Census Basic Report (2013), approximately 80% of all Namibian households have access to clean drinking water. However, there is a huge disparity between urban and rural areas in Namibia. Access to clean drinking water is 98% in urban areas, while in rural areas the %age drops to about 59%.

The Namibian government is spending 2.6-billion Namibian dollars on working to bridge this disparity in order to improve rural water access and sanitation. The aim is to provide rural households access to flushing toilet facilities and erect a second desalination plant. A desalination plant removes the salt from seawater, making it a usable water source (Hooks 2013).

Presently, approximately 16% of rural households make use of unsafe water from local water supplies, such as streams and rivers, while another 13% utilise unsafe water from wells. Decreasing these %ages is the primary goal of the Namibian investment into improving rural sanitation and water supplies. By these conditions being eliminated, major improvements in health (for example, combating the presence of diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera) will result (Hooks 2013).

In Namibia, particular efforts have been made to ensure that access to clean water for women and children is provided. Women and children form a major part of the rural population and have traditionally relied on open water sources. Health risks can decrease with the improvement of the supply of clean water (Matengu 2013).

According to UNICEF (2010:16), Namibia's sanitation coverage is the lowest in eastern southern Africa. It states that only 33% of the population has access to improved sanitation, with the rural population significantly lower at 14%. UNICEF estimates that around 1.4-million people living in rural areas and informal settlements in urban areas lack access to improved sanitation facilities.

The 2009 Ministry of Education (MoE) Report states that approximately 23% of the 1 641 schools in the country do not have toilets and that many new sanitation facilities have to be built.

Water-borne sewerage is the main system used in Namibia, with 57.8% of the population living in urban areas and 13.3% living in rural areas connected to sewers (WHO). The annual number of sanitation facilities built each year may reach a few thousand, compared to the 25 000 needed to meet the 2015 MDGs requirement.

Small local municipalities have difficulties in managing sanitation systems and water purification plants effectively. Local authorities and regional councils are responsible for water supply and sanitation in rural settlements. The councils implement and support rural water supply and sanitation (Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry July 2008).

A major challenge in many rural communities is the pollution of water sources. These isolated rural communities rely heavily on groundwater as their primary water source. Recent research has identified that livestock and community impacts are the main causes of pollution (Simataa 2010). Preliminary reports suspect contamination is as a result of open human and livestock defecation (Wall *et al.* 2008). Often the most common sanitation practices are the 'bush' or 'bucket'.

The Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) is a NGO dedicated to the advancement of Namibia in the area of water, energy, and land development. The DRNF has designed projects to work

with Namibians in select rural communities to identify and manage problems in their water and sanitation systems.

Namibia recognises a basin as the fundamental 'unit' to which a water management committee should be assigned (Amakali 2003). The term 'basin' generally refers to the area that supplies and drains into a river; synonyms include watershed or catchment. Therefore, it is logical that the people who live within the communities of a basin are responsible for its management. Consequently, Community Based Management (CBM) is a supported and effective approach to maintaining health within rural water systems.

In order to implement an effective CBM strategy, the Water Resources Management Bill has proposed to establish Basin Management Committees (BMC) (Amakali 2003). These committees provide communication between the government and community to promote the health of the basin environment. The main function of the BMC is to protect, develop, conserve, manage and control water resources within its water management area (Amakali 2003).

3.3.3.2 Swaziland

The Ezulwini Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Services Delivery Project (ESWSSDP) of Swaziland will have a positive impact on women according to the African Development Bank Appraisal Report, 2014. The project reinforces rural women's role in decision-making in the water and sanitation sector. With regards to gender roles and responsibilities, the National Water Policy recognises women as the main custodian of water in their society. The focus of the project will be on creating an environment that will promote gender equality in the management of SWSC to reach 50% women from currently 40%. During implementation, the project will create opportunities for the employment of skilled and unskilled labour; employing mostly the youth and women (more than 30% for women). Furthermore, most of the water kiosks will be managed by women (African Development Bank Appraisal Report 2014).

In March 2012, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children/Education Fund (UNICEF) completed the Joint Monitoring for Water Supply and Sanitation study in Swaziland.

Their study confirmed that 25.3% of homesteads in rural areas had access to piped water; 59.4% had improved water sources, e.g. wells; and 26.8% were using surface water, e.g. dams, ponds, streams. This varied considerably from urban areas where 75% of homes had piped water; 90.6% on improved water sources and only 5% using surface water.

Taiwan's International Co-operation and Development Fund in co-operation with the Swaziland Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy undertook the drilling of wells and installing of hand pumps at 80 sites in rural areas of Swaziland. The construction of 80 wells between 2009 and 2011 has provided more than 15 000 people with access to potable water. Water minders were assigned and trained to manage each well and local communities were made aware that potable water can help reduce diseases and infections, such as diarrhoea or cholera.

WASHing Away Poverty study has identified a link between the levels of poverty and the types of facilities used (2011). The study indicates that an estimated 78% of people living in poverty defecate in the open as they do not have access to facilities, 66% use traditional pit latrines, 53% use ventilated pit (VIP) latrines, and only 23% of people living in poverty are using flushing facilities.

Sanitation coverage is estimated at between 89% and 63% of the urban parts of the country, while rural areas have only 46% coverage.

3.3.3.3. Zimbabwe

Diminished water and sanitation access, particularly in rural areas, means that 33% of all Zimbabweans must practice open defecation (MIMS 2009; UNICEF 2009). The deteriorating water supply and sanitation sectors caught up with Zimbabwe in 2008 and 2009 with a massive outbreak of cholera, during which almost 100 000 were infected and over 4 000 died. According to UNICEF, over 60% of the rural water supply infrastructure is in a state of disrepair and as a result many boreholes and wells contain unsafe water. The provision of improved water supply and sanitation facilities lends women's lives greater agency. It is often women who have to trek long distances to collect water. By having a safe water supply in close proximity, women can spend more time pursuing their own ambitions or doing other work (Water and Sanitation Program 2002). UNICEF aims to provide reliable access to a safe water supply as well as proper sanitation and hygiene services in cholera-prone

communities in rural and urban Zimbabwe.

At the launch of the National Action Committee (NAC) on Water on 22 October 2012, a programme aimed at revitalising water, sanitation and hygiene in Zimbabwe, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) representative, Dr Peter Salama, reflected that much still had to be done to prevent a repeat of the cholera epidemic of 2008. He added that 60% of water hand pumps in rural areas require repairs and 50% of the rural population practices open defecation as their only form of sanitation. Salama did, however, acknowledge that progress has been made, which has ensured that 73% of Zimbabweans now have access to improved water, while 60% can now access improved sanitary facilities.

MDG 7 includes the target of decreasing by 50% the number of people without access to improved sanitation and water sources by 2015. However, access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation remains a problem for many people in developing African countries.

3.4 Economic transformation

In this section, the following economic variable will be examined: women and poverty.

3.4.1 Women and poverty

As noted at the start of the study, poverty is one of the major challenges facing the SADC region. This is reflected by, for example, high levels of malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, underemployment, declining life expectancy, lack of access to basic services, and lack of infrastructure needed to sustain basic human capabilities.

3.4.1.1 Namibia

Under the Rural Poverty Reduction Programme, which was carried out by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement between 2007 and 2013, 45% of land rights belong to women. The better conditions experienced by rural women bode well for their children. The well-being of the majority of Namibia

children is tied to women's roles as farmers and food producers. Recent regional studies suggest that 60% of households have food security. Namibian households derive food security from the production and food stores of the household from agriculture and food gathering; and the ability of households to purchase or acquire food, either from cash income or food transfers (FAO 2012; FAO 2014). However, the researcher is of the opinion that Namibia has some way to go before it can reach acceptable standards of women empowerment, especially for rural women.

According to data from the National Household Income Expenditure Survey 2012 (NHIES), poverty is more prevalent among the 44% of female-headed households in rural areas (Republic of Namibia 2012). The sex ratio in the rural population is skewed in favour of women. This is because of the migration of men to urban areas looking for employment (Devereux & Naruseb 2010). The women, who are mainly involved in subsistence agriculture and the upkeep of rural homesteads, are left behind to take care of the children and the elderly. Most rural Namibians make a livelihood from subsistence farming, supplemented with cash income and pension remuneration, and 36% of rural Namibians earn an income from only subsistence farming.

Namibia continues to face poverty challenges resulting from its inability to successfully implement its existing policies, plans and strategies created for poverty relief (FAO 2012). The challenge now is to make the programmes work and not just be programmes on paper. Determined efforts need to be made in the areas with the highest poverty and inequality levels, which are rural areas, female-headed households and children, the disabled and informal settlements in urban areas. According to the NHIES, Namibia still has a long way to go in eradicating poverty, even though there has been some improvement since the 1990s.

3.4.1.2 Zimbabwe

Most rural Zimbabwean women resort to subsistence farming for a livelihood to overcome food insecurity. In the absence of men who leave home in search of urban employment, women are often left to struggle to produce enough food for their families (Maringira & Sutherland 2010). The authors state that on the one hand women are faced with controversial land reform programmes which benefit mainly men and rich women, and on the other hand there is the food crisis because of the

recession in the country. This leaves some rural women and girls vulnerable. They may resort to prostitution out of desperation to support their families. This further exposes many women, especially young girls, to the risk of contracting HIV. Thus, the government should emphasise addressing symptoms of poverty and the cultural attitudes of rural men in order to support rural women.

Moreover, the Zimbabwean government has been unable to address food insecurity and its causes. This has had a negative impact on the lives of many rural women in terms of access to land and other food related resources such as food aid. Although the Legal Age Majority Act of 1982 clearly states that women and men are equal citizens, social and material inequality continues at national and household levels.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is of the opinion that the food crisis is caused by a decrease in agricultural production, late rains, long dry spells, and poor access to crop inputs; this led to cereal production decreasing by one third (WFP, 2003 and Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment establishment of the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVac) (ZimVac 2002).

ZimVac (2013) states that the government's efforts to help were minimal because of the low assistance of its grain loan scheme. Although assistance from the WFP is expected to ease cereal shortages in areas experiencing drought, the food prices are expected to rise with every dry season. According to ZimVac, conditions may worsen as below-normal rainfall is forecast for the southern regions of Zimbabwe.

Other forms to help include food-for-work schemes, in which people work on government projects in exchange for food. ZimVac states that by the end of 2012 the number of people needing assistance had increased by 60%. The WFP and other aid partners are planning on rendering more assistance in helping the vulnerable. Zimbabwe has seen the worst food security prospect for the period 2012 to 2013. The 2013 Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVac) rural livelihoods report, which estimates food insecurity levels, predicts that 2,2 million Zimbabweans will be unable to access sufficient food during the peak hunger period, January – March 2014.

A study by Maringira and Sutherland (2010) found that food aid from the government and NGOs is

distributed by the headman. The distribution of food aid is a political task. Rural women, in order to receive aid, if supporting the wrong politicians, have to engage in extramarital affairs or perform sexual favours for those who distribute food aid (Maringira & Sutherland 2010). This results in the increased spread of HIV and Aids amongst Zimbabweans.

3.4.1.3 Swaziland

Swaziland's socio-economic conditions and major challenges have been identified by the Complementary Country Assessment (CCA). The CCA was prepared by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC), Msisianga T. Bandora. The preparation of the Complementary Assessment Analysis was based on an adequate body of information regarding the development changes facing Swaziland. The UNDAF (2005-2010) and the government also released its Ten-Point Development Programme. In addition to this, some UN agencies and development partners, including the WB, the EC, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the government itself, conducted comprehensive analyses of development challenges facing Swaziland. These assessments, together with the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP), and the country's overall vision articulated in the National Development Strategy (NDS), formed the basis of reference for the Complementary Assessment. One of its functions was to outline the development challenges that are faced by Swaziland and to identify the priorities to be addressed under the UNDAF (2011-2015).

Income distribution within Swaziland is largely unequal, yet the country is ranked as a lower middle-income status. In Swaziland, there is an ever-widening gap between urban and rural development. About half of the country's total consumption is accounted for by the richest 10% of the population and there are clear signs that poverty and unemployment are on the increase. This is especially the case in rural areas where 84% of the country's poor live. In the rural areas, the per capita income is almost four times lower than in urban areas and food consumption is two times lower. Rural households practice subsistence farming where about 66% of the population is unable to meet their basic food needs, while 43% experience chronic poverty. Major droughts that hit the country in the past have caused Swaziland to receive emergency food aid from the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP).

According to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2011-2015:12), Swaziland has experienced a decline in food production over the last ten years due to severe droughts, lack of modern technology to improve agriculture, and the dependence on rain-fed conditions for production. This has resulted in the widening of food disparity at national level and the country's dependence on food imports. Malnutrition and hunger are mostly prevalent among the rural poor of the country. The CCA estimates that a quarter of the population of Swaziland is food insecure and depends on assistance, and that 39% of children have stunted growth because of malnutrition.

Despite Swaziland's relatively high GDP per capita income of US\$2 415, about 1.018-million or 69% of the country's population live below the national poverty line. Swaziland's Household Income and Expenditure Survey (SHIES) of 2010 reported that about 63% of the population live in poverty, down from 69% in 2000. Income inequality remains high with a Gini co-efficient estimated at 0,5. The Gini co-efficient ranges between 0 (complete equality) and 1 (complete inequality) (SHIES February 2011). The aim of Swaziland's MDGs is to reduce the inequality in income from 51% in 2001 to 25 % in 2015.

The Cabinet of Swaziland approved the policies as presented in the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Programme (PRSAP) in September 2007 and it runs over the period 2007 to 2015. Policies under the PRSAP focus on, amongst others, rural development to stimulate agricultural and non-agricultural activities, equitable access to production assets, creation and acceleration of job opportunities, development of business and income-generating opportunities, and infrastructure improvement. Access to markets, provision of social and financial services, and improvement of technology are also targeted by PRSAP to facilitate sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation. The Government Programme of Action 2008-2013 has prioritised the following main areas:

- poverty reduction;
- improved governance;
- macro-economic stability and fast, sustainable economic growth and development;
- equitable access to, and delivery of, basic social services; and
- protection of the vulnerable groups such women, children, and people with disabilities.

Rural poverty is still very high in Sub-Saharan Africa (IFAD 2010; Rural Poverty Report 2011). Rural development, good health, and education systems can contribute to exits out of poverty. Poverty alleviation will require governments to facilitate individual and collective access to physical assets such as land, houses, credit and occupational inputs, while at the same time strengthening the rural population's capabilities, e.g. through better education, access to information, and effective participation in dialogue and decision-making. This should be complemented by the creation of economic opportunities and investments in rural infrastructure such as water, sanitation and transport (Rural Poverty Report 2011).

3.5 Conclusion

Chapter three discussed the experiences of three SADC countries, namely Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. The chapter discussed the initiatives that are being implemented by these countries to improve the situation of women. The success and/or the ineffectiveness of those efforts were also outlined in this chapter.

All SADC member states have shown achievements in some part of the spectrum of governance, however, the goal of reaching 50% representation and participation of women in political and decision-making structures by 2015 remains a major challenge. Poverty alleviation remains a huge challenge for most SADC countries. Although measures have been put in place to develop women, the majority of the poor remain women and girls who live in rural areas. With regards to education as a whole, SADC countries have narrowed the gender gap and some have even reached gender parity in school enrolment. No SADC country has achieved gender equality. Some progress has been made, albeit slow. Although major advances have been made in preventing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are continuing to decline, this success rate has not been shared equally. This is a direct result of gender inequality, poverty, harmful cultural practices, and unequal power relations. While water supply sources have improved in the SADC countries, disparities are found between those living in rural and those in urban areas.

The next chapter will explore the policies put in place by the South African government to improve the lives of rural women, as well as gender empowerment initiatives. The results of interviews held with

rural women and a government official will also be discussed.

CHAPTER 4: SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT POLICY AND EVALUATION OF RESULTS OF THE EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN DRIEFONTEIN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three, the researcher reviewed the literature which discussed the challenges and progress made in the socio-economic development and empowerment of rural women in Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. It was found that poverty and illiteracy resulted in women being voiceless and not been able to contribute to the reconstruction, development and social transformation of their communities and countries as a whole. In this chapter, the researcher will investigate how the South African government assists rural women in uplifting their status and livelihood.

This chapter will focus on the South African government's efforts to empower women in marginalised rural communities. The aim is to answer the research question, which is: How far has the South African government come in meeting the needs of poor rural women in Driefontein since democratisation in 1994?

This chapter will present the responses from rural women and rural informants in Driefontein, and the results of the study based on primary data.

4.2 The South African government's efforts to empower the marginalised rural communities

Over the years, the participation of women in matters linked to their empowerment and development has been viewed as vital in ensuring that their aspirations are realised (Kongolo & Bamgose 2002; Oberhauser & Pratt 2004; Omorodion 2007). Democratic South Africa has been involved in empowering women, especially women living in rural areas (Mbeki 2001; Booysen-Wolthers 2007). This is because, as stated previously, rural women are considered as one of the most vulnerable groups of people who bear the burden of poverty (Motteux, Binns, Nel & Rowntree 1999).

The Office on the Status of Women (2000) and Oberhauser and Pratt (2004) state that this problem arose because of apartheid policies which limited African women to rural areas where there was poor

infrastructure and the land was unproductive. Women were also confronted daily with suppressive customs and traditions (OSW 2000). The rural women were left behind to take care of themselves and their families, while the men headed for urban areas in search of employment and a better quality of life (Kongolo & Bamgose 2002). Despite various initiatives (discussed below) developed in South Africa after 1994 to address the plight of women, their empowerment still leaves much to be desired, especially in rural areas.

4.2.1 Empowering women: Initiatives in post-apartheid South Africa

According to Banda (2006), South Africa has ratified and consented to several SADC legislative policies in order to protect the cause and rights of women and to improve their standard of living. As noted previously, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 is an example of one of these legislations. Article 2(e) of CEDAW points out that the South African government, as a participating member, has the responsibility to safeguard all women in the country from all forms of discrimination by any enterprise, organisation or individual. Article 3 further instructs that in order for the development of women to take place, South Africa has to commit to using suitable measures, not excluding legislation, particularly in the political, social, economic and cultural fields. This would further develop women's enjoyment of human rights and equality with men.

South Africa also endorsed and approved the Beijing Declaration of 1995 which affirmed that women's rights are human rights. All the governments that signed the Beijing Declaration, South Africa included, were required to develop five programmes that would advance the cause of women. Women empowerment was identified as a vital approach for the reduction of women poverty and rectifying inequality between men and women. Through this programme, women should be empowered so that they have the ability to make use of resources, gain knowledge and skills, and take control of their lives by making informed decisions in relation to their well-being.

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) launched the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) in July 2009. The CRDP is a complete government programme involving numerous government departments and all three spheres of government (local, provincial

and national).

The CRDP has made limited progress towards mobilising and empowering communities due to inadequate consultation with the wider community. Low levels of skills and education have also impacted negatively on the extent to which rural communities are empowered for participation in their own development processes. Opportunities created by the CRDP have been infrastructure-related short-term jobs with relatively low wages and which did not result in permanent entry into the labour market.

The CRDP has also had limited success in the supporting of sustainable co-operatives. The CRDP has focused mainly on registering co-operatives and structural support, with very little attention on providing capital for start-up costs, technical training, mentoring, and providing viable profitable markets. The Food Garden initiative was one of the CRDP's more successful components and was, for the most part, found to be a good strategy for improving household access to food. In some cases, households could even sell surplus crops for cash (DRDLR 2012).

Another aim of the CRDP is to improve community access to basic needs. The CRDP has had the most success with this goal. Enormous investments have been made in some of the pilot sites and in many cases these have transformed the lives and living standards of communities. The CRDP, however, needs to have a clear maintenance strategy in place to ensure the sustainability of investments (DRDLR 2012).

For the CRDP to improve, maintain and upscale its successes, provincial and local government should show more commitment and adopt a hands-on approach to CRDP co-ordination and monitoring. The monitoring of the CRDP structures and processes has also been weak and this has had a negative impact on implementation and delivery (DRDLR 2012).

4.2.2 State of women empowerment in rural South Africa

The Mathaulula (2008) study revealed that rural women believe that although there has been improvement in some aspects of their lives through government interventions, they are still

marginalised and have not fully benefitted from government initiatives post-1994.

Government initiatives such as Social Grants, Universal Access to Primary Health Care, Affirmative Action, and Black Economic Empowerment were introduced after 1994. Dlodlo (2009) points out that women and girls in rural South Africa lack access to information and therefore cannot take advantage of some of these opportunities to better their lives.

Even though women have made significant progress in their empowerment through strategies established for them, they still continue to be confronted with substantial challenges. According to the OSW (2000), the greatest challenge has been the poor implementation of policies established to empower women, especially rural women, due to budget constraints, the slow initiation of Gender Focal Points in some departments, lack of support from male counterparts, and patriarchal attitudes. Rural infrastructure still persists in being inadequate to efficiently address the numerous challenges that will enhance women empowerment. Immediate attention needs to be given to women, especially rural women, to be able to have access to information that will improve their livelihoods.

Other challenges which are mostly felt in rural areas and should be addressed are inadequate employable skills, lack of resources, a suitable scheme for co-ordinating women empowerment, communication, and accountability (OSW 2000). Should these challenges not be addressed, sustainable women empowerment will be nothing more than a dream.

Many rural South African women, like their counterparts in Swaziland, Namibia and Zimbabwe, have limited access to agricultural resources such as marketing, land, credit and information that would help advance their contribution to farming (OSW 2000). In many instances, the mindset of traditional leaders, customary practices and rules, patriarchal demands as well as relations within the community prevent women's access to land and knowledge about their rights. Kongolo and Bamgose (2002:82) suggest that there has been a lack of commitment by local authorities and governments to meet the economic needs and interests of most rural women (as in the Driefontein case study which will be discussed in chapter 5).

4.2.3 South Africa makes progress

According to Xingwana (28 February 2012), the South African government has gained ground in assisting women to become empowered. There is 44% female representation in parliament and 43% of cabinet ministers are women. South Africa is continuously striving for gender parity in the political arena.

The government has promised to spend greatly on infrastructure development programmes, as stated by President Jacob Zuma in his State of the Nation Address in February 2015. He added that this will take place over a number of years and will lead to employment opportunities for women as well.

In his speech, Zuma said that government perceives the education of women and girls as essential in order to break the cycle of poverty, allowing women better access to health facilities, and to decrease maternal and child mortality and the impact of HIV/Aids on women and girls (State of the Nation Address February 2015.)

The following section will focus on the challenges and the progress made with regards to the socio-economic empowerment of rural women in Driefontein, KwaZulu Natal. In the discussion that follows the political, economic and social variables of women empowerment in Driefontein will be focussed on to assess the achievements and challenges experienced.

4.3 Case study of Driefontein

As stated in chapter one, the Driefontein area is situated within the administrative boundaries of the Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality in ward 14-19. According to the Driefontein Local Area Plan, Driefontein was initially proposed to be a farming area. In the early 1800s, the Colonial Administration assigned the 13 parent farms which make up this land to its first owners. In 1854, Rev. J. Allison of the Wesleyan Mission formed a partnership with three African evangelists (Johannes Khumalo, Jonathan Xaba and Abraham Turala) who came from Endaleni near Richmond.

This group of people purchased Driefontein Farm in 1867, Kleinfontein Farm in 1868, and DoornHoek Farm in 1878. The area gradually became heavily populated as a result of the forced removal of

Africans from nearby white farms. Rentals on the land were cheap and the area is within close proximity to Ladysmith CBD and Ezakheni Industrial Complex.

The area was earmarked as a black spot in 1985 under the combined proposals of the 1970s. Nomhlangano Beauty Mkhize was an active member of the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) and led the Rural Women's Movement which played a vital role in forced removals being halted. She risked her life to improve the conditions of women, particularly rural women. Her family was forcefully moved from Sophiatown to Meadowlands. When Mkhize relocated to Driefontein, history was to repeat itself where the community was threatened with forced removal from the land they legally owned. Because of Mkhize's efforts and commitment, the community of Driefontein was victorious over the forced removals.

Over a period of years, the area gradually extended and grew into an underdeveloped settlement. The increase in the number of people and animals resulted in the decline in the farming potential of the land (Driefontein Local Area Plan, Development Strategy 2011:1).

The Department of Development Aid (DDA) was instrumental in the formation of the Driefontein Structure Plan in 1990. This was to address the degradation problem and advise on the future development of the area. In the same year, an interim report was drawn up. It is uncertain whether the study was ever completed and there is no evidence that it was put into effect.

The growth of settlements eliminated any possibility of agriculture on a large scale in the area. The Emnambithi-Ladysmith Municipality has realised it has an obligation to establish a concise and all-inclusive Local Area Plan for Driefontein Complex. This plan is designed to accomplish the broader development aspect of the Integrated Development Plan and meet the goals as set out in the Spatial Development Framework.

The most important development issues for the Emnambithi-Ladysmith Local Municipality are physical infrastructure, social development and services, economic development, and land reform. According to Census 2011, a clear imbalance in service provision is displayed as urban areas have far more services than rural areas.

The Driefontein area has been pinpointed as an area for priority spending by the local municipality. This area has the highest population concentration but the lowest service standards. Driefontein covers an area of 41, 44 square kilometres. The population consists of 6 774 people – 99.9% are Black Africans and of these 96.5% speak Zulu (Census 2011). The high population density in this area provides an opportunity for infrastructure, rural development and social services. Driefontein wards have high population densities which provide good conditions of where the Comprehensive Rural Development (CRD) can be implemented.

Driefontein has over the years evolved as peripheral to the economy of Ladysmith. Despite this location, the area remained relatively isolated from the mainstream economy and has grown as a poverty pocket which is just outside of the main town. Driefontein can be classified as a Tertiary centre on a municipal scale. This small centre serves as a location point for community facilities serving the local community such as; primary and secondary schools, clinics, pension pay points, community hall and other community facilities (Driefontein Local Area Plan, 2011).

4.3.1 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND TRANSFORMATION

In this section, the political variables of gender equality in legislation, laws and policies and women in decision-making will be discussed.

4.3.1.1 GENDER EQUITY IN LEGISLATION

Developments with a focus on the status of women included the adoption of a Charter for Effective Equality (1994), the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), participation of South African delegations at regional and international human rights, women's and development conferences (including the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995) and the international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995.

Nevertheless, the Government's commitment to the promotion of the constitutional principle of equality has been demonstrated by the establishment of the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) in

accordance with Act No. 39 of 1996 (Constitution of South Africa). This is an independent public body which is making explicit a gender framework within which to conduct its work, and it identifies key indicators that will be used to monitor and evaluate progress in gender equality.

In 2013 Government gazetted the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill with the aim to introduce measures and targets to strengthen existing legislation on the promotion of women empowerment and gender equality. This legislation could promote the empowerment of women in Driefontein and redress gender imbalances if effectively implemented and monitored.

However, while there are all these instruments in place for the protection of women's rights and to ensure the full participation of women in society, women in Driefontein still struggle to access these rights. The case study done by the researcher revealed that while some women have gained a measure of equality with men, and while some women no longer experience discrimination; the majority of women in Driefontein are mired in poverty and face some discrimination in the family and workplace. This discrimination is manifested in numerous ways and in Driefontein gender based violence continues to be a challenge due to customary and traditional practices.

4.3.1.2 LAWS AND POLICIES AIMED AT WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

One has to evaluate the government policies and programs to alleviate the plight of women using the constitution, stated policy of the government and how far it has met its own goals and the demands of the people in Driefontein, women in particular.

In terms of policy and legislation, there is no doubt that the ANC-led government is committed to gender equity. For example, the ANC's 1992 Land Policy document called for special procedures to ensure that women gain equal access to land and participate effectively in policy formulation and decision-making. The RDP also stated that the national land reform programme should address gender inequities (section 2.4.2) and that support services and government assistance for agricultural production should especially benefit women (section 4.5.2.4). This however is not evident where agricultural cooperatives have collapsed in the Driefontein area.

Although the South African government has legislated policy which is clearly committed to gender equity much of these policies and legislation did not filter down to empower women in Driefontein.

4.3.1.3 WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Because some women of Driefontein are engaged in micro-or-subsistence scale activities or in casual, temporary and part-time jobs in the informal sector, they are dispersed, isolated and often lack the means for collective action. The conventional organisational strategies and activities of traditional trade unions and formal organisations elude them.

Women in Driefontein are seldom consulted in the community structures about development projects, and gender issues are not taken forward by formal structures that have the power to deal with them.

The public sphere is traditionally regarded as men's domain in many societies; men are considered the public interlocutors. Local administrative and political structures are dominated by the better-off and better educated male members of the community, and where there are women leaders, by the female elite.

In Driefontein women representation in local government at ward level is insignificant. This is partly due to the traditional authorities and the customary laws they apply still prevail in rural areas in particular (Beall 2005:10). In South Africa some chiefs are openly opposed to gender equality whereas others have just been slow in implementing the regulations and programmes that would reduce inequality (Beall 2005:15). Some rural wards in Driefontein experience similar challenges with no women representation in politics.

Female councillors in local government are generally underrepresented and political parties do not seem to be allowing gender parity in nominating prospective councillors to stand for elections, despite the municipal structures requiring them to do so. An analysis of the gender outcomes of the 2006 and 2011 local government elections shows that KwaZulu Natal had the least women ward councillors at 17 % (Selokela 2014).

Rural women suffer systematic discrimination in the access to resources needed for agricultural production and socio-economic development. Credit, extension, input and seed supply services usually address the needs of male household heads. Rural women are rarely consulted in development projects that may increase men's production and income, but add to their own workloads (FOA 2012). In Driefontein the women participating in agricultural co-operatives had limited success due to lack of adequate access to resources needed for agricultural production. Access to credit, input, extension and seed supply was also limited to the women of Driefontein.

4.3.2 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

4.3.2.1 EDUCATION

Educational levels and skills profile are relatively low within Driefontein. Approximately 20 % of the population did not obtain any formal training and can be considered as illiterate. There is clearly a need in Driefontein to assist adult people who had no formal education through an ABET programme. Statistics shows that 35 % of the population had obtained secondary education, 13 % completed matric and only 3 % of the population had obtained tertiary education with matric (Census 2007). There is a strong correlation between education and standard of living which implies that low levels of education is associated with poverty in Driefontein.

There are approximately 29 schools in the Driefontein Complex of which 20 are primary schools and 9 are secondary schools (Census 2007). The planning standards assume that every 600 households should be provided with a primary school and 1200 households warrant the provision of a secondary or high school. This then implies that the area is adequately provided with schooling facilities. There is, however, a need to extend or renovate most of the schools, as most are unsuitable for proper education purposes.

Tertiary educational facilities are partially available within Ladysmith Town in the form of Further Education and Training Colleges. Many young people in Driefontein cannot afford tertiary education so there are few professionals in the study area. Tertiary education institutions such as universities are however, found outside of Ladysmith in cities such as Pietermaritzburg, Durban and

Johannesburg.

There are no institutions of higher learning within the Driefontein area. After matriculation, children either go to the Ladysmith Technical College to further their studies or move out of the Uthukela district. The latter is always not practical and affordable as most people in the area cannot afford to provide their children with better education opportunities outside of the municipal area. The cost is simply too much (Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2014/2015 to 2018/2019).

Girls and their education are also disproportionately affected by cultural and economic issues like domestic duties, transport, and school fees. Many girls drop out of school before they reach grade 12. Other girls drop-out to head households in cases when the children have been orphaned by HIV-AIDS (Bobo 2011). The school drop-out of girls in Driefontein is largely due to pregnancies or because of domestic duties due to the responsibility of heading households.

4.3.2.2 THE HIV AND AIDS CHALLENGE

The availability of a health infrastructure in the Driefontein area needs to be a developed goal. There are three clinics that exist within the area. These clinics are located in the main settlement areas. Access is limited by distance and transport for some residents who live where public transport is scarce. The 24 hour services with maternity facilities have been terminated because of alleged criminal activities on clinic staff.

The Ladysmith Provincial Hospital, some 60 kilometres away, are for referral patients and serves the entire population of Emnambithi Municipal Area. The clinics in Driefontein are plagued by a shortage of medicines, especially those that are readily available for walk-in patients or crises situations. The services are definitely insufficient where one clinic facility is supposed to serve 6 774 people (Census 2011). Indigenous healers play a large role in informal health care in the community where women are active as traditional doctors or faith healers.

Because of a strong patriarchal system, the ability of women to engage in decision making about their own health is an inhibitor to them accessing health care (Bobo 2013). The South African Policy on Healthcare 2007 however, requires an active participation in health decision making by patients, enabling self-care especially for chronic and disabled patients and community participation approach. It further acknowledges that in these areas, there needs to be targeted development efforts and new methods of delivering quality healthcare. Good quality care cannot be provided without high-quality doctors, since there is a scarcity of medical staff in Driefontein.

Young women seeking contraception in Driefontein face healthcare workers who are critical and judgmental and do not maintain confidentiality. Female condoms are not easily accessible to females compared to male condoms and this creates barriers in achieving the elimination of teenage pregnancies and HIV infections. This is a serious concern as it results in school drop-outs, maternal deaths and stigmatization of young women. This has also proved that young rural women in particular are more likely to be HIV infected than their male peers because they are predisposed to violence and risky sexual relationships (Bobo 2013).

According to Bobo (2013), culture, tradition and religion play a very significant role in women's lives, guiding and influencing most aspects of their lives. Many people in Driefontein believe in ancestors, traditional healers and witchcraft is believed to be the casual agent in HIV transmission. Witches or sorcerers are sometimes blamed for illness and misfortune, which is a common occurrence in communities in Driefontein.

4.3.2.3 WATER AND SANITATION

Access to safe drinking water and sanitary disposal of wastes are not only recognised as basic needs, but are also intimately tied up with the health and productivity of developing communities (Schwabe, Illing & Wilson 1996).

In rural areas where bulk connection is financially unsustainable VIP toilets, septic tanks and soak-way systems are acceptable levels of service if they are appropriately implemented. Geotechnical conditions must also be suitable, that is, there is no danger of ground water contamination. The

Emnambithi Municipality has a low sanitation backlog with only 5 % of the total municipal population that has no toilet facility. The bucket toilet system has been completely eradicated, while 29, 1 % of the population uses pit latrines (Community Survey, 2007).

Driefontein does not have the advanced bulk water supply infrastructure such as the Water Treatment Works (WTW), Waste Water Treatment Works and there are no water networks. A rural water scheme was commissioned in 2001 by Uthukela District to supply water to approximately 2 930 households within Driefontein. The other households depend on boreholes or rudimentary supply. It is encouraging to note that Uthukela District Municipality has made plans to address the bulk water supply needs for the Driefontein Complex. Such that a multi-year Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) project was conceived in 2005 with the aim of providing Driefontein with the bulk water supply infrastructure and reticulation.

The majority of the houses within Driefontein use pit latrines for sanitation purposes. The area does not have access to waterborne sewerage reticulation, there are no sewerage treatment works or sewer purification plants. This may be considered as a limiting factor in terms of future development (i.e. large scale commercial or industrial) that may take place within this area. This is particularly due to the fact that pit latrines and VIP sanitation is unattractive to business zones, bad odour due to the nature of the facility and environmental degradation due to contamination of the underground water table.

4.3.3 ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

4.3.3.1 WOMEN AND POVERTY

One of the things discrimination against women has done is to further limit women's access to resources such as time and overburden them with paid work or income generation to earn a living, without removing the burdensome reproductive and domestic responsibilities.

Census 2011 showed that 52,6 % of households in the Uthukela District are headed by females. Driefontein, which forms part of the Uthukela District, has also shown an increase in the number of households headed by women. This research indicated that most households headed by women are

significantly poorer than those headed by men, where the risk of being in a poor household is greater for women and children than adult men. According to Cross (1999) women in rural areas engage in subsistence farming and small-scale production primarily for food security, to save money against household budgets and as insurance against cash income failure or unemployment. At present, women in Driefontein are engaged in similar agricultural activities.

Pearce's (1978) term, "the feminisation of poverty", is a chilling reminder that poverty has become a women's issue – and this is still the case in the rural area of Driefontein despite anti-poverty and poverty alleviation programmes. Poverty in the area is further escalated by factors such as: the collapse of cooperatives in the area, lack of skills and knowledge amongst women which hinders them from participating in the building of their own economy, land reform which hinders development in the area and grazing land which is not fenced which often leads to animal theft.

Far-reaching policies and large-scale programmes would be needed to provide the women of Driefontein with skills and resources they need to overcome the scourge of poverty. Furthermore, project identification, planning, monitoring and evaluation would have to take into account the different impacts of programmes on women, as on different socio-economic and cultural groups. Roles to be played by rural people, especially by women, in accessing resources such as land, housing, water and sanitation services, transport, health care, social security and social welfare, energy and electrification for meeting developmental needs would have to be identified.

Employment statistics reveal that only 11 % of the population are employed while an alarming 27 % of the population is not economically active and 20 % of the population is unemployed. (Census 2007). The area has a substantially high number of a school age population and this results in a huge turnout of non-economically active labour force. This also implies that the dependency ratio is quite high within the area. The labour statistics suggests that a lot of work is required to create an enabling environment for economic development within Driefontein in order to maximise job creation within the area. The relatively high unemployment rate may be perpetuated by the low level of skills that characterises this area.

In Driefontein approximately 29, 4 % of the households do not have income. This is indicative of the

high levels of unemployment in the area which is directly linked to poverty in the households. A further 37 % of the households within the area are living on an income that is less than R800 per month. This implies that these households are mainly dependent on social grants and the municipalities' indigent support. It is estimated that 29 % of the household population are the low income earners who receive an income of R800 – R3200 per month. The majority of individuals within this group earn an income, but they are still dependent on government support for housing. The middle to upper income earners only constitute 5 % of the households. This is the group that is less dependent on government support (Census 2007). The area is therefore characterised by a lack of economic productivity, high levels of poverty and underdevelopment.

The following section focuses on the empirical investigation in Driefontein. Interviews were conducted with community members to determine whether government's efforts have empowered rural women in the community.

4.3.4 FINDINGS FROM THE DATA ANALYSIS AND THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This section will analyse the data collected through group and individual interviews. The aim is to answer the research question: How far has the South African government come in meeting the needs of the poor rural women in Driefontein since democratisation in 1994?

Notes were taken during the interviews. Audio recordings were also done so that detailed information could be captured in the subjects' own language, allowing them to express themselves fully. Data was then later organised, described, classified and interpreted by the researcher.

4.3.5 Group interviews

Group interviews were conducted by the researcher with members of a farming co-operative, a poultry co-operative, a cattle co-operative, and a sewing co-operative.

4.3.5.1 Farming co-operative in Driefontein

The researcher interviewed six members of the eight member co-operative. The group stressed the importance of co-operatives being formed as they realise that government cannot focus on individuals when trying to better the lives of the women in the community.

The women stated that they were workshopped in 2010 on two occasions by officials from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture. The officials indicated that there would be follow-up workshops in 2011, but this did not happen. The women were educated on suitable crops to plant and when to plant. The officials suggested that the women concentrate on dry crops since irrigation systems are limited in the area. The women said they were pleased that the officials conducted tests on the quality of the soil in order for them to decide what type of crops to cultivate and the type of fertilizer to use.

4.3.5.2 Challenges encountered by co-operative

According to the women, local government hampered their progress by not giving them adequate support in the cultivation of their lands. They pointed out that in 2011, government ploughed 15 hectares of their land, while in 2015 only three hectares were ploughed. The women said that those were the only two years that they were assisted by government with regards to ploughing their land.

According to the women, the government only supplied the co-operative with one tractor. They said that this did not really improve matters because by the time the tractor reached some of them, after ploughing other land, the planting season had already passed. The women, out of desperation, paid the Municipality in 2012 to plough three hectares of land, but to date the Municipality has failed to do so. Numerous visits to the Ploughing Development at the local municipality to ask them to fulfil their obligation have proved fruitless. The women added they were sent from pillar to post where they were given excuses such as “No tractor is available; no manpower is available; the ploughing will be done next month”, but nothing ever materialised.

The women were also angered by the actions of some of their members. They claim that one of the members had taken possession of the tractor and hired it out to plough others people’s land. This has caused division amongst the members. The women said that without machinery they were unable to

plant crops in time for the rainy season.

The women also indicated that the lack of start-up capital was a major challenge to them as a co-operative. They struggled to buy seeds and fertilizers because there were some years when government failed to supply them with these necessities.

The women did admit that start-up capital was supplied by government to a few rural women co-operatives in the rural community. They said this was because of budget constraints. Those women who did receive funding did however not attend the workshops where they were taught how to price their produce and expand their businesses. They also did not have access to proper markets and therefore could not make an income from the produce.

The women said that local government also failed to assist them with fencing their fields. Thus, crops were stolen or destroyed by cattle grazing in the area.

They also pointed out that when they were able to harvest crops, they were faced with the challenge of milling. They had to grind the mealies themselves and this, according to them, is a tedious and tiring activity.

The women expressed concern that they were getting old and the youth showed no interest in the cultivation of the land in their area. They pointed out that the youth leave the area to study or work in the cities. The women complained that the youth who remained in Driefontein were lazy, abused alcohol, and showed no interest in agricultural activities.

The women's main dissatisfaction was with the lack of assistance with machinery support and input from government. They stated that the lack of the monitoring of their progress by the local authorities was the main reason why their projects did not advance. The women pointed out that the issue of the tractor was the result of failure by government to monitor after rendering assistance.

Lastly, the women spoke about the severe drought in the area in 2014 and 2015 which prevented the cultivation of their land (due to the shortage of water). They pointed out that the future of their co-

operative was uncertain because of the challenges they mentioned. According to the women, they were concerned about the economic implications this would have on their households since many of them relied on the income they earned from selling the surplus crops. This also meant that the women would have to purchase vegetables that they would normally cultivate themselves, thereby adding to their financial woes.

4.3.5.3 Poultry co-operative in Driefontein

The researcher interviewed the four women who are responsible for the poultry co-operative.

The women told the researcher that government provided their co-operative with 400 chickens. They were also given eight chicken incubators and six bags of chicken feed.

4.3.5.4 Challenges encountered by co-operative

According to the women, the poultry project was a complete failure. They said that the chicken incubators were poorly built (for example, the roof caved in). They said that of the 400 chickens, 300 died because they received them in a sickly condition.

Furthermore, the women did not have the financial means to afford treatment for the chicken. The women said that of the 100 chickens that survived, many were stolen as they had no security measures in place. They also felt that the six bags of chicken feed were not sufficient to feed all their chickens.

The women stated that they had to find their own markets. In many instances, these markets were not profitable and they encountered problems in pricing their product. They felt that they should have been sent to workshops on how to rear chickens since one of the hard lessons they learnt was that overfeeding could result in the loss of chicks.

The women were of the opinion that they could make a success of poultry farming in the area if government could assist them in the following ways:

- Provide them with adequate start-up capital.
- Assist them with the building of a mini slaughterhouse, complete with a packaging facility.
- Assist them in gaining access to profitable markets.

The women told the researcher that if these concerns were meaningfully addressed, their business would be successful, which in turn would lead to job creation for unemployed people in the community.

4.3.5.5 Cattle farming co-operative in Driefontein

The three women, who wished to continue with the co-operative despite their negative experiences, informed the researcher that they were among one of the very few co-operatives in the area that government assisted with livestock. Their co-operative was provided with 30 head of cattle.

The women explained that the donation of livestock was given on condition that once their cows had produced offspring, their co-operative must empower another co-operative of women by donating the calves to them. The women went on to say that in the beginning they all felt that this would have a good “snowballing” effect and would empower other women in the community.

4.3.5.6 Challenges encountered by the co-operative

The women told the researcher that a lack of monitoring by government officials meant that the snowballing process of rearing cattle and donating the calves to the next co-operative as a start-up was a failure.

They told the researcher that some members of the co-operative gave cattle to members of their families instead of empowering the formation of another co-operative. The women complained that some members of their co-operative even slaughtered cattle for their ceremonial functions. Some members of the co-operative even secretly sold off some cattle belonging to the co-operative.

All three women agreed that this led to the disintegration of the co-operative and the failure of the snowballing idea. They all agreed that the process could have been successful if only government had monitored the process and held individual members of the co-operative accountable.

4.3.5.7 Sewing co-operative in Driefontein

The researcher conducted an interview with four women from a sewing co-operative.

The women told the researcher that government provided their co-operative with sewing machines. They said that they were fortunate as other sewing co-operatives in the area were not provided with assistance due to the lack of funding from the local municipality.

4.3.5.8 Challenges encountered by the co-operative

The women said that they sewed school uniforms for a school in the Driefontein area. They pointed out to the researcher that although they think the uniforms are of a good quality, the parents have a negative attitude about purchasing the uniforms. The women went on to say that some parents did not want to purchase uniforms sewn by women from the area because of jealousy and pride. According to the women, the parents said that they would rather buy from shops in Ladysmith which specialise in school uniforms. The parents were also critical of the poor quality of the uniforms sewn by the co-operative, which the women of the co-operative disputed.

They told the researcher that although government provided them with the equipment, they have no access to a profitable market and that this has demotivated them.

4.3.6 Individual interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted with the ward councillor, the chairperson of the Luncheon Club, and an unemployed woman with a family of four children of her own.

4.3.6.1 Ward councillor of Driefontein

In his interview with the researcher, Mr Themba Ndlovu (12 September 2015), enthusiastically highlighted the interventions of local government to empower the rural women in his ward. The following are areas in which he felt significant progress was being made:

- Water

Mr Ndlovu made mention of the fact that prior to 1994, no clean, potable water was provided by government to the residents of Driefontein. He pointed out that it was the responsibility of the women to ensure that their households had water. Mr Ndlovu said water was fetched from wells and rivers and women often had to walk long distances to fetch water. He went on to say that communal taps had been provided along roads and that women now had access to clean drinking water without the arduous task of walking long distances. Mr Ndlovu felt that the municipality could make improvements, such as bringing piped water into each household.

He informed the researcher that although the supply of water was a major step, the community still encountered taps running dry. This was as a result of water not being supplied properly from a local reservoir.

Mr Ndlovu added that it was unfortunate that local government had not yet provided the community with flushing sanitation facilities. Most residents made use of pit latrines provided by the local municipality.

- Electricity

Mr Ndlovu informed the researcher that government had made significant progress in the electrification of the Driefontein area. He said that electricity is supplied directly to the area by Eskom and not through the municipality. He expressed his regret and sadness that because of poverty in the area, a number of households could not afford the price levied by Eskom to install electricity cables in their homes.

- Roads

Mr Ndlovu pointed out to the researcher that before democracy in South Africa, there were no roads in the Driefontein area. People had to walk long distances to a road where they could access public transport since most households did not own vehicles. He said that it was women in particular who had to travel these long distances by foot while carrying heavy parcels.

Mr Ndlovu told the researcher that the roads in the area are much better now, although they are not tarred. He admitted that a problem in his ward is the lack of maintenance of the roads by the municipality.

Another challenge Mr Ndlovu mentioned was the building of proper bridges over roads and rivers. In some areas, the roads flooded because cement slabs had been put across the roads instead of a higher bridge. During the rainy season, some roads became inaccessible to vehicles, with the result that people had to walk or swim across rivers to reach their destination. He was of the opinion that this posed a risk to the lives of people, especially children on their way to school. He pointed out that many lives have been lost due to drownings because people attempted to cross the river in the absence of proper bridges.

- Health care

Mr Ndlovu emphasised that with the development of the road infrastructure, people had easier access to the local clinics. He also mentioned that local government had increased the number of clinics in the Driefontein area with the result that mothers no longer had to travel long distances to reach a clinic.

- Education

Mr Ndlovu pointed out to the researcher that all schools in the Driefontein area were non-school fee schools. He went on to say that no parent therefore had to pay for their children's education and that enrolment numbers had increased.

He added that the schools had Feeding Schemes where all learners were provided with meals, since most learners came from poor households.

- Youth development

Mr Ndlovu informed the researcher that a number of Youth Development Programmes had been introduced. A youth centre was established where the youth of Driefontein had access to computers and the Internet. This enabled them to acquire skills in Information Technology Education.

At the youth centre, according to Mr Ndlovu, the youth were also assisted with tertiary education applications and bursaries. He also informed the researcher that awareness campaigns were held at the youth centre whenever the need arose.

- HIV and women

Mr Ndlovu said that government catered adequately for ARVs at clinics. However, he pointed out that many women infected with HIV were still reluctant to come forward because of the fear of stigmatisation and victimisation. Awareness campaigns were conducted by clinics to encourage people to practice safe sex, check their status, and seek treatment.

Mr Ndlovu informed the researcher that Community Care Givers (CCGs) visited Aids patients as well as the terminally ill at their homes. The CCGs ensured that they took their medication as prescribed and helped with the preparation of recommended meals. In the absence of provisions in the homes, the CCGs provided them with proper nutrition.

Mr Ndlovu added that the CCGs also visited the frail and elderly who are too old or too sick to travel or walk to the clinics. Medication and nutrition was also provided to them since it was found that most of the elderly relied solely on social grants as an income, which often went to the unemployed members of the household and grandchildren.

The CCGs also visited newborn babies at their homes to monitor if they were being given the proper nutrition and were receiving their compulsory vaccinations timeously.

- Child-headed households

According to Mr Ndlovu, he was personally involved in finding solutions for child-headed households. He actively helped to secure social grants for these homes.

He added that if deceased parents did not own the land on which the children lived, they were relocated and given a free RDP house. In cases where the parents did own the land, the children were left to live on the property and their needs were taken care of. He stressed that it was important for social workers to monitor child-headed households and render assistance where necessary.

4.3.6.2 Chairperson of the Luncheon Club

The researcher interviewed the chairperson of the Luncheon Club in Driefontein, Mrs Fezeka Majola (13 September 2015).

Mrs Majola informed the researcher that the elderly women of Driefontein had organised themselves and formed a club. She said the aim of the club was to bring the elderly people together on a regular basis so that they could inter-act socially, share ideas and information, and use acquired skills. The co-ordinator lamented that there are no women in political decision-making positions in Driefontein, thus the Luncheon Club serves as a forum where women can inter-act with one another on a social level.

Mrs Majola told the interviewer that the women met five times a week and engaged in various activities. They were taught various exercises and explained the health benefits of regular physical exercise.

According to Mrs Majola, the women sew various items. The material and equipment was provided by

government. The women also engaged in handicrafts, such as beading.

The members of the club also owned a piece of land and government had provided them with the necessary input to enable them to grow their own crops. Mrs Majola said most of their produce was sold.

For recreation, the senior citizens were taken on tours outside of Driefontein as many of them had never visited the coastal regions of KwaZulu-Natal.

Mrs Majola also made mention of the fact that meals were provided for the women since they spent the entire day at the club.

Social workers were available at the club to advise the women on how to cope with or solve the problems they may be experiencing.

4.3.6.3 An unemployed woman

The researcher interviewed an unemployed woman, Miss Phiwase Ngcobo (13 September 2015), from the Driefontein area.

Miss Ngcobo informed the interviewer that she did not complete her primary education. She said that her ability to read and write was limited and therefore she found it extremely difficult to find meaningful employment. She was of the opinion that government had neglected the unemployed. She was contemplating starting Adult Basic Education (ABET) classes in order to increase her chances of finding employment.

Miss Ngcobo told the researcher that she had also joined the 'one home, one garden' initiative. She said that this was a government response to alleviate poverty in the area by assisting households so that they could cultivate vegetable gardens. She felt that the government did not give sufficient support to this initiative. For a period of two years, according to her, they were given one cup of maize seeds, a few carrot, spinach, and pumpkin seeds, and some beans.

Miss Ngcobo went on to say that government did not provide gardening tools and because of poverty in the area, the people, including herself, could not afford to buy the tools. She felt that although the people had embraced government's idea of 'one garden, one home', they had not received adequate assistance from government to make it a success.

Miss Ngcobo stated that 'one garden, one home' could have helped her since she was unemployed. She informed the researcher that she sold sweets and other eats at the gate of one of the schools in Driefontein as a source of income.

Phiwase, however, also pointed out that although the local authorities could do more to assist the people, laziness amongst women in the community also existed. She felt that the women could do more with the little assistance they were given, but some were too lazy to dig a patch of soil for vegetables in their own yards and complained that they were not supplied with garden tools.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the results of the empirical investigation, which was aimed at determining government's efforts to empower rural women in the Driefontein area. The data collected through interviews was analysed and the findings were discussed. The next chapter will present the conclusions from the findings and recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to investigate the extent to which the South African government has improved the lives of the rural women in Driefontein, KwaZulu-Natal. In chapter four, the researcher investigated the effectiveness of initiatives introduced by the government to further the development of rural women. The study used mostly interviews to collect data. Probing person-to-person interviews and focus group interviews were used as a tool for data collection. The respondents included members of co-operatives, as well as individuals. The results of the empirical study were analysed, presented, and discussed. The previous chapter gave a summary of the respondents' information and the obstacles that hindered the development of rural women. This final chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions drawn, and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of findings from SADC countries

The following analysis focuses on the challenges and progress made in the three SADC countries (Swaziland, Namibia, and Zimbabwe) with regards to socio-economic development and the empowerment of rural women. The most important conclusions drawn from the study are summarised below.

All three countries have put in place national and sectoral policies to address gender inequality. These countries are also signatories to various regional and international conventions, declarations and protocols that seek to promote gender equality and women empowerment. However, the implementation of policies should be taken more seriously, especially in Swaziland.

In all three SADC countries, poverty is more prevalent in rural households, especially female-headed households. Poverty levels are on the increase because of high food prices, persistent droughts, and high unemployment rates which result in food aid received from governments and NGOs.

The countries have given priority to education and all three have achieved MDG 2 (achieve universal

primary education) with the result that literacy rates are increasing amongst rural women. The rapidly growing population of children of school age, the high drop-out rate, poverty, and the poor quality of education remained a challenge in all three countries.

Female representation in the parliaments of the counties has shown a substantial increase, with the exception of Swaziland.

The prevalence of HIV/Aids in the three SADC countries is some of the highest globally, but they have seen a steady decline in HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. This is partly due to efforts by the governments to give more rural women access to ARVs.

In the three countries, there is a disparity between urban and rural areas with regards to the supply of piped water and proper sanitation. The governments are allocating huge amounts of money to infrastructure to bridge the disparity by working on water and sanitation projects in rural areas. This will ease the burden on rural women who trek long distances to fetch water.

5.3 Summary of findings from the literature review

This study was undertaken to explore government's efforts in empowering rural women. The literature on the empowerment of rural women was reviewed. The most important conclusions drawn from the literature are summarised in the following paragraph.

It can be concluded from the literature review that literacy is an important basis for education because it can lead to empowerment and the development of rural women. Illiteracy amongst the rural poor has led to higher levels of poverty. The lack of education among rural black women range from their position in the pre-democratic era, gender stereotypes, culture, the education system, the urban/rural divide and their socio-economic conditions. It can be concluded that illiteracy contributes to the low status of rural women, while the implementation of relevant literacy initiatives is one way of reducing the high illiteracy rate.

By raising the level of education in rural communities, the following can be achieved:

- Women can become self-critical.
- Women can begin to read the world and understand their contribution to the economic, political, and social spheres of development.
- Women can improve their standard of living by providing healthy living conditions for their families.
- Women can analyse their life situations so as to improve their livelihoods.

5.4 Summary of findings from the empirical study

The conclusion that can be drawn from the individual and group interviews is that government does have policies on development programmes to empower the lives of rural women, but shortcomings are evident in the implementation of such policies as seen in the three SADC countries that were discussed.

The recruitment of poor rural women into government development programmes is slowed down by the poor implementation of the programmes because of a lack of monitoring and evaluation to see if the programmes are functional and effective enough to raise the status of rural women. There is also a need to empower rural women with adequate knowledge and skills in order for them to effectively participate in government development programmes.

The willingness to participate in co-operative ventures requires the need for women to structure themselves in such a manner that they engage themselves in decision-making to organise development projects for their empowerment and facilitate a common goal towards progress. People should be urged to participate; they should not be forced to undertake a certain task by others.

Rural women have an obligation to show an interest in bettering their own lives; they cannot just sit back and expect others to do it for them. The researcher is of the opinion that there must be some sort of motivation or incentive to encourage rural women to participate in government development initiatives in their area.

The findings of this research support the view that the women living in Driefontein are willing to

participate in developmental programmes in their area. There is certainly a need for government support to provide the skills and knowledge for women to run co-operatives more sustainably and for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of co-operative ventures.

The women of Driefontein have the human capacity and the motivation to participate in upliftment programmes. They are also aware that they have little hope of improving their lives if they are not willing to participate in government development programmes. What is lacking is adequate financial support and guidance to pursue self-employment ventures such as co-operatives. The researcher believes that there is a great possibility that the community of Driefontein could develop through co-operative programmes. The findings of this research acknowledge that the community living in the study area is willing to undertake co-operative business ventures. There is hope that they could uplift their livelihood through co-operatives if they are given the necessary training in skills development through empowerment programmes and financial assistance.

One of the findings of this research is the poor level of communication the Driefontein rural community has with other rural communities. By communication, the researcher means the mutual relationships between rural communities in terms of sharing ideas and the pursuance of development regarding their co-operative business and other empowerment ventures.

Owing perhaps to a lack of proper communication, rural women seem to live in isolation from other rural women in their communities and wider society. The findings of this research indicate that rural communities have a very poor perception of the problems encountered by other rural communities. Their poor insight could be as a result of their own poverty and daily struggles.

Many rural women assume that all rural women have problems and that it is the responsibility of the government to provide. These communities lack the knowledge and skills to embark on any ventures on their own and therefore stagnate in the absence of communication. Given opportunities and assistance, the Driefontein women could share their knowledge and expertise with other rural communities and also learn from them in order to derive mutual financial and structural benefits, such as access to profitable markets and sustainable methods of farming. This learning and sharing process would depend on effective communication.

Many of the women living in Driefontein live under poor social and economic conditions. A large number of rural women in the area cannot find suitable employment due to a lack of education. Driefontein also does not have the infrastructure, commerce and industry to provide the community with suitable employment. Many of the men have to migrate to urban areas to seek employment, leaving the women behind to take responsibility for the household. The women are left to head the household, do household chores, support their children, fetch water, and cultivate the land. They rely mainly on subsistence farming for survival. Other forms of income that support the households are social grants and pensions. In many households, government assistance is the only source of income. While a few of the households enjoy the use of electricity, many of them have to use paraffin and coal for energy.

A noticeable difference is the type and condition of their dwelling places. Living quarters range from mud or brick rondavels to cheaply built block houses and large brick houses.

One of the main challenges that the women of Driefontein experience is their inability to communicate in a language other than their mother tongue, thereby hindering their chances of being employed or making a success of their businesses. To further enhance the development of rural women, mainly in projects, development planning, decision-making, and the provision of better services for all, a thorough understanding of community participation is needed.

The women of Driefontein feel that the government has undertaken good initiatives in their area through development programmes. During the interviews, many respondents voiced the opinion that there are a considerable number of factors that lead to the hindrance of their development.

The respondents felt that the failure of some of the co-operatives was due to:

- Lack of commitment from some of the members of the co-operative programmes. It is common knowledge that developing projects demand time, patience, and hard work from the co-operative members. The study found that some of the members of the co-operatives wanted to see things happening fast, forgetting that there were procedures and processes

that needed to be followed.

- The lack of commitment on the side of government to provide adequate skills training, financial input and monitoring results in poor service delivery to the co-operatives.
- Poor community support with regards to purchasing produce and products from the co-operatives creates unsustainable markets, with the result that co-operatives do not develop, and some even disintegrate, resulting in financial losses for the co-operatives.
- Lack of resources such as machinery, tractors to plough their lands, gardening tools, and agricultural input.
- Poor participation by some members in the co-operatives.
- Lack of trust and jealousy among some members of the co-operatives.
- Lack of access to markets to sell their produce.
- The uneven distribution of financial and structural input. It was found that some co-operatives are supplied with inputs, whilst some receive little or none at all.

5.5 Recommendations

These recommendations emanate from the results and conclusion of the study. They should be adopted in an effort to improve the way rural women access and utilise information for their empowerment and development.

Most women in Driefontein are interested in agriculture and farming. It was established that the extension services by government in this division are inadequate. Agricultural extension workers and officers should be sent to assist women in the area. These extension workers and officers need to be equipped with the necessary equipment, such as vehicles that are capable of travelling around rural

areas so that they can easily disseminate information to community members.

The erratic availability of transport and the lack of proper roads hamper accessibility to the Driefontein area, thus the delivery of necessary information, improvement and development becomes difficult. Proper roads and bridges should be built to facilitate access to the Driefontein community. This will not only help to disseminate information to the women in Driefontein, but also provide job opportunities to those community members who are unemployed.

The roads that serve the community are in a poor condition. This is one of the greatest infrastructural difficulties which the emerging small-scale women farmers in Driefontein experience when trying to access markets to sell their products. In addition, they are constrained by limited access to other factors of production, including credit facilities, information flow, and extension services.

Lack of capacity and knowledge within local government institutions are believed to be additional stumbling blocks when it comes to successful rural agricultural development. This is especially true with regard to the successful implementation and management of development initiatives, such as the co-operatives in the Driefontein area where monitoring and evaluation are lacking.

Moreover, it is concluded that the problem originates from government officials (extension officers) not being properly committed or trained to execute their respective responsibilities, such as the funding, training and mentorship of rural women in co-operatives.

Although there is a tendency to simply increase or intensify existing agricultural services to encompass the female population, it is doubtful that this strategy will succeed in enabling women farmers to realise their full potential in agriculture. Assistance to women farmers must specifically address existing needs and constraints which restrict their participation in agricultural development, such as access to information, cash, credit, labour and government assistance.

Some of the measures to assist women farmers should include the following;

- Workshops and education materials for extension workers should be designed to

acknowledge the substantial contribution women make to the agricultural sector.

- Extension personnel should be equipped with an understanding of the important relationship between assisting women farmers and the achievement of national agricultural goals to reduce poverty.
- Differential incentives to engage in co-operative agriculture should be acknowledged and understood. Women may engage in farming as a viable economic alternative to handicraft or beer production, whereas men have, though to a lesser degree than previously, the more lucrative alternative of wage employment. The incentive for women will therefore be greater if they are able to retain control over agricultural decisions and production, as well as investments and profits.

There should be a conscious effort to increase the number of female extension personnel, possibly through the creation of an Extension Training Programme. Although this may in fact increase the accessibility of extension workers to women farmers, this effort will not in itself guarantee the ability of women farmers to increase agricultural production and participate effectively in development programmes. This is due to the fact that women farmers in Driefontein lack access to other important resources such as cash, credit and labour. Therefore, efforts must be made to ameliorate these constraints in addition to providing current, reliable sources of agricultural information.

Because women tend to receive extension assistance and training more readily when they are organised as a group, such as a co-operative, it is recommended that extension personnel utilise organisations to provide agricultural training and assistance.

In order for women to be able to engage in successful commercial agriculture, appropriate strategies must be put in place to enable women farmers to obtain credit to improve their agricultural technology. This might be achieved through the formation of co-operative structures where women farmers could obtain credit as a group, through group liability.

5.5.1 Recommendations regarding the research design

The question for this study was to find out how effective the initiatives, which had been implemented by the South African government to improve the lives of rural women, had been. In order to ascertain the effectiveness of development programmes, community members had to give their views as their participation in and support of the smooth running of the programmes was essential.

It is recommended that a quantitative research method should also be used. Questionnaires can be used as a data collection strategy to gather data from community members.

5.5.2 Recommendation for further study

The following research efforts are recommended for future assessment:

The study focused on women alone, but the researcher believes it is necessary to look at how men are also being disadvantaged due to a lack of service delivery in rural areas.

The study only looked at one rural area in the Uthukela District, but it would be beneficial if other rural areas in the district were studied as well, for the purpose of comparison. The researcher would be interested to discover if other areas are doing well, and if so, for them to share their experiences, knowledge and accomplishments so that other areas could learn from them. The study should also be extended to other rural areas in the country at large.

The study revealed that rural women in this area do receive assistance from government to start their co-operatives, but are not given assistance to sustain them. The researcher is of the opinion that it is necessary to investigate what further extensions and projects could be used to help them.

5.6 Limitations of the study

This research was conducted in the Driefontein area, which is a rural area where there is a high number of illiterate women. They suffer greatly because of the consequences of poverty and unemployment. In the researcher's opinion, it would be a good idea to extend the research to other

districts in the Uthukela District, which are similarly affected by the high unemployment rate. However, the researcher is of the opinion that the problems and aspirations of the women in Driefontein are similar to those in other parts of the district and country, as well as in the SADC region, and thus, the findings can be shared.

As indicated, the study was conducted in the Driefontein area only. The reason for this is because, amongst other things, there were time and financial constraints. It can become expensive to collect data by means of personal interviews. Long distances had to be travelled in the rural areas as some of the houses were far apart (and some roads were inaccessible by vehicle) and the recording and transcribing of the interviews became a costly undertaking. If more rural areas could have been included in the study, it most certainly would have taken much longer to conclude and would have been much more costly. In the researcher's opinion, this shortcoming does not reflect negatively on the validity or the reliability of the study, as the findings can be used as guidelines.

5.7 Conclusion

The study investigated the effectiveness of the development initiatives taken by government in the development of rural women. The study was conducted in the rural area of Driefontein in KwaZulu-Natal. In-depth interviews were held with the ward councillor, women participating in co-operatives, an unemployed woman, and the chairperson of the senior citizens.

The research findings established that the women were finding it difficult to make a success of their co-operatives due to various factors. The study revealed that a lack of skills training, a lack of support from local government, and uncommitted co-operative members hindered the development of women. It also indicated that monitoring by local municipal officials could help to alleviate the rural women's problems.

This study has highlighted the major obstacles rural women face as they strive for empowerment. Despite the obvious attempts to liberate them, many women are still sidelined from development initiatives. Material, financial and social resources are often lacking. Where they are available, they are inadequate to meet the needs of the community.

In conclusion, for the real empowerment of women to be achieved, the South African government and other pro-development bodies need to improve their strategies with regards to how they engage rural women in developmental projects. Improved engagements are certain to speed up the unleashing of the potential of women, increase their self-confidence, and effectively mobilise the support of essential stakeholders within and outside their communities. Even though considerable progress has been made in developing an enabling environment for women empowerment, inadequate information and the lack of economic empowerment initiatives must be addressed urgently if women, particularly those living in rural areas, are to be more meaningfully empowered. This appears to be the vital but missing element in women empowerment initiatives.

In this chapter, the researcher shared the insight, knowledge and inspiration derived from the research. This section provided the researcher with an opportunity to reflect on the entire research process, provide written recommendations presented with possible future steps, and voice the personal value and experience this research afforded her.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INTERVIEWS

Questions for residents

- In which activities are you involved in your area?
 - Tell me what are the challenges you are facing in your co-operative in Driefontein?
 - What do you think should be done to address the challenges you are facing? Whose responsibility is it?
 - How many members are there in your co-operative?
 - Did local government assist you with your co-operative, and if so, how?
 - Are there opportunities for development in the area?
 - How do you raise your concerns about your needs in Driefontein?
- Tell me about life in Driefontein for elderly women.

Questions for the ward councillor

- What is the position of service delivery of water and sanitation in Driefontein?
- What interventions has local government made to improve the infrastructure of Driefontein?
- What interventions were made in your area by local government in health care and education?
- What role does government play in the development of youth in Driefontein?
- Tell me about your involvement in any development projects and structures in your area.