

AN INVESTIGATION OF COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT HINDER THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN BELHAR.

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An Investigation of Community Perceptions of the Socio-Economic Factors that Hinder the Empowerment of Women in New Belhar.

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Key words

- Belhar
- Culture
- Development
- Empowerment
- Gender
- Poverty
- Power
- Unemployment
- Vulnerability
- Women.



ABSTRACT.

Since the mid-1980s, the term empowerment has become popular in the development field, especially with reference to women. However, there is confusion as to what the term means and how to implement it. Empowerment is a process by which those who have been denied power gain power, in particular the ability to make strategic life choices. For women, these could be the capacity to choose a marriage partner, a livelihood, or whether or not to have children. However, this is far from the reality of most women today.

This pervasive lack of empowerment of women emanating from socio-economic, political, and cultural discrimination calls for debate and research by academics, community development practitioners and policy makers since disempowerment of women affects the plight of families, communities, nations and governments. It is the seemingly lack of attention to the vulnerability of women in villages, rural areas and towns that has attracted the researcher to look into the factors that hinder the empowerment of women.

The aim of this study is to examine the community's perceptions of the factors that hamper the empowerment of women in post apartheid South Africa, particularly, women in Belhar community in the Western Cape. Of special interest is the community's perception of how different policies in post-apartheid South Africa have impacted on the socio-economic participation/discrimination of women's fight against disempowerment. It will also provide recommendations on how best community based systems can be structured to improve women empowerment.

In order to achieve these goals, this research will make use of qualitative research design and techniques and make use of the most relevant and liable information from primary sources such as individual interviews, focus group discussions as well as secondary data like community records.

DECLARATION

I declare that, “An Investigation of Community Perceptions of the Socio-economic Factors that Hinder the Empowerment of Women in Belhar” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Signed
Vivian Nina Fohtung



Date... 2008

DEDICATION

TO MY MUM WITH LOVE.



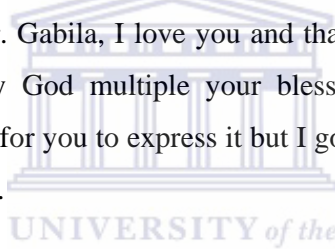
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I thank God for the courage and strength He gave me to finally come up with this piece of work without His Divine Intervention I would not have managed. It has been a long struggle.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Background of the Study	2
1.3. Statement of the Problem	4
1.4. Objectives of the Study	5
1.4.1. Specific Objectives	5
1.5. Significance of the Study	5
1.6. Delimitations of the Study	6
1.7. Concepts Definitions and Clarifications	6
1.7.1. Poverty	7
1.7.2. Vulnerability	8
1.7.3. Power	9
1.7.4. Community Development	10
1.7.5. Empowerment	11
1.8. Development Studies	12
1.8.1. Development Studies and Women Empowerment	13
1.9. Ethic Statement	13
1.10. Chapter Summary	



CHAPTER TWO: A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR CONCEPTUALISING AND UNDERSTANDING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

2.1. Introduction	15
2.2. Historical Background of Women's Struggle for Empowerment	15
2.3. Theories of Empowerment	18
2.3.1. Feminist Notion and the Concept of Empowerment	19
2.3.2. The Modernisation Theory	21

2.3.3.	Dependency Theory	22
2.3.4.	The Cultural Transmission Theory	23
2.4.	Conceptualisation of Women Empowerment	23
2.5.	Approaches to Women Empowerment	24
2.5.1.	Current Approaches to Women's Empowerment	24
2.5.2.	Economic Empowerment through Credit Programmes	25
2.5.3.	Empowerment through Political Participation	26
2.5.4.	Empowerment, Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health	27
2.6.	Policy Frameworks for Women's Empowerment	28
2.6.1.	Selected Acts enabling Women Empowerment	29
2.7.	Women and Poverty	30
2.8.	Women and Education.	31
2.9.	Women and Violence	33
2.10.	Women and Health	33
2.11.	Women and Unemployment	34
2.12.	Women and Land	34
2.13.	Conclusion	35



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.	Introduction	37
3.2.	Qualitative Research	37
3.3.	Case Study Approach	39
3.4.	Overview of Case Study Site: Belhar	43
3.4.1.	Population Distribution	43
3.4.2.	Administration	44
3.4.3.	Languages	45
3.4.4.	Economic Activities	46
3.4.5.	Political Representation	47
3.4.6.	Decision Making	47
3.5.	Data Collection Instrument	48
3.5.1.	Interviews	48
3.5.2.	Observation	50

3.5.3. Focus Group Discussions	52
3.6. Data Analysis	53
3.7. Research Procedures	54
3.8. Limitations of the Study	55
3.9. Conclusion	55

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDING AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction	57
-------------------	----

4.2. OBJECTIVE 1: To Investigate the Community's Perceptions of the main Factors Responsible for Women's lack of Economic and Social Empowerment in new Belhar.

4.2.1. Poverty	59
4.2.2. Education	63
4.2.3. Health	66
4.2.3.1. HIV/AIDS	69
4.2.3.2. Violence	70
4.2.3.3. Battery	72
4.2.4. Unemployment	72
4.2.5. Housing	74
4.2.6. Women's Rights	76



4.2.7. NGOs Perceptions of the Socio-economic Factors that hinders the Empowerment of Women in the Community.	77
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4.3. OBJECTIVE 2: To Investigate the main Socio-economic Consequences of Disempowerment of Women in new Belhar.

4.3.1. Economic Consequences	81
4.3.2. Social Consequences	83
4.3.2.1. Vulnerability	83
4.3.2.2. Alcohol	84

4.4. OBJECTIVE 3: An Exploration of the Implementation of Selected South Africa Policy

Provisions that foster Empowerment among Women in Order to Reduce Gender Inequality.

4.4.1. Policy Provisions	84
4.4.2. Implementation of these policies in Belhar	85
4.5. Conclusion	87

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1. Introduction	89
5.2. Summary	89
5.3. Conclusion	91
5.4. Recommendations	92
5.5. Areas of Further Research	95

Reference:	96
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APPENDICES	115
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- Appendix 1: Map of Belhar
- Appendix 2: Belhar Community Facilities
- Appendix 3: Questionnaires
- Appendix 4: Statistics on Rape and Murder

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Factors Perceived by Respondents to be the Barrier to Women Empowerment in the Belhar Community

Figure 2: Factors Perceived by Selected NGOs to be the Barriers to Women Empowerment in the Community

Figure 3: Poverty Perceptions of NGOs

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Percent of Respondents with regard to Poverty

Table 2: Respondents Level of Educational Attainment

Table 3: Respondents with Access to Health Care

Table 4: Percent of respondents who are Unemployed

Table 5: Percent of Respondents with Access to Housing



ABBREVIATIONS

ANC:	African National Congress
BCEA:	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
DA:	Democratic Alliance
FEDTRAW:	Federation of Transvaal Women
GAD:	Gender-and-Development
HOC:	Hands Off Our Children

ID:	Independent Democracy
NGOs:	Non Governmental Organizations
NNP:	New National Party
OA:	Organisation for the Aged
RDP:	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAHDR:	South Africa Human Development Report
STDs:	Sexually Transmissible Diseases
TB:	Tuberculosis
UIF:	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UPS:	United Party of South Africa
UWC:	University of the Western Cape
WCTU:	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WEAU:	Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union
WHO:	World Health Organisation
WID:	Women-in-Development



Chapter One

1.1. Introduction

In developing countries, women's contributions as workers and as managers of human welfare are central to the ability of households and communities to tackle the resulting crises. . However, women suffer from decreased access to resources and increased demands on their labour and time. If human survival and women problem are crucial to that survival, then the empowerment of women is essential for the emergence of new, creative and cooperative solutions (Sen & Grown, 1985). The aim of this study was to examine the community's perceptions of the factors that hamper the empowerment of women in post apartheid South Africa. The study focused in the community of Belhar in the Western Cape. The community of Belhar was chosen due to the pervasive lack of empowerment of women emanating from socio-economic, political, and cultural discrimination which calls for immediate debate and research by academics, community development practitioners and all policy makers (Bushra & Lopez, 1994). It is no hidden truth that the disempowerment of women affects the plight of families, communities, nations and governments (Leslie 2001, Venis & Horton 2002).

The emergence of new, creative and cooperative solutions to women empowerment is as a result of modernisation. Despite the advantages of modernisation, some men actually want to return to those times as they really were, 'the boss' in everything. Before then, given a choice, women will get jobs, which produce not only income, but self-esteem. Given a choice, couples will have fewer children. Given a choice, men and women will escape wretched marriages. But now, living in an advanced economy gives women choices that would have been impossible just a few years ago. One way some people try to cope with change is by trying to bring back the past, where women stayed home to bear children, men earned a living and everyone knew their place (Keen, 1997). Such changes occur wherever modernization occurs, of which men are lamenting with the passage of time with the changes taking place. Thus the phrase

'The Good Old Days, when women knew their place'.

This phrase is commonly used by men, lamenting the passage of what is often portrayed as an idyllic African past and its replacement by what they see as a confused state of affairs in which women are demanding all sorts of rights (Maurick & Posthumus, 1999)

Women want to be independent in everything they do; therefore, they seek basic rights. Sen, (1997), defines empowerment as being about power, changing power relations in favour of those who previously exercised little power over their own lives. Batliwala (1993) defines power as having two central aspects: control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial, and the self), and control over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). If power means control, then empowerment, therefore, is the process of gaining control (Sen, 1997). The struggle for the empowerment of women has been part of South African's history since apartheid's days (Lamakhosikazi, 2006). Democracy was partly embraced in South Africa to address the disempowerment that plagued black people in general and black women in particular. Some changes have already been observed after 1994; unfortunately, substantial work and progress are still needed in the area of gender equity and women empowerment (Tripp, 2001).

There has been much debate in the gender and development literature on how to achieve women's empowerment, with this debate often centering on income earning opportunities and their empowerment potential (Rakowski, 1995). One common question is: does access to income earning opportunities improve women's status within the household or do social norms and practices intervene to make access to resources alone insufficient to challenges intra-household gender relations in some contexts? (Kantor, 2003). However, the focus of this work is to examine the community's perceptions of the factors that hamper the empowerment of women in post apartheid South Africa.

1.2. Background of the study

Women's struggle for empowerment in South Africa has a long history, where there is not only a record of a violent state, cultural repression and community insurrection, but also women's subordination in important aspects of life (Jewkes, 2002). The struggle for the empowerment of women was intensified during the apartheid's days (Lamakhosikazi, 2006), wherein women were fitted within a system that promoted both racial and

economic marginalization yet was being silent about their oppression (Buhlungu, Daniel, Southall, & Lutchman, 2007).

African (black) women were a severely oppressed group in South Africa. They suffered not only oppression of apartheid laws and practices but also the oppression through sexism in traditional laws and customs (Stack & Morton, 1976). The infamous influx control law made it extremely difficult for any African woman to lawfully live and work in an urban area (Worden, 2002). This legislation fractured African households and put severe additional socio-economic pressures on them as most men became migrant workers and women automatically became single heads of households. Although that policy has been abolished, in practice, the consequences of this legislation are still evident in some of our communities like Belhar (Sparks, 2003). But now that the euphoria of South Africa's transition has passed, we are beginning to pose the sobering question of what difference has democracy made so far to black women's development in general and on how it has enhanced their socio-economic empowerment in particular (Heller, 2001). Recent research suggests black South African women are still struggling socio-economically to enjoy the same rights as men (Sparks, 2003). Various practices of gender discrimination still perpetuate the subordination of women by men, through customs and traditions that reinforce discriminatory practices (Dunker, 1998).

Women's struggle takes different forms and occurs in different localities determined by their diverse interests and needs (Zinn & Dill, 1996). Some women, especially poor black women, are mobilized in their communities and localities on needs that are so basic that they are therefore taken for granted. They thus struggle for empowerment and elementary rights (Mtintso, 2006). Empowerment has become a new 'buzzword' in international development language but is often poorly understood. The need to 'empower' women responds to the growing recognition that women in developing countries lack control over resources and the self-confidence and opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. At the same time, the realization that women have an increasingly important role to play in social and economic development has become widely accepted (Oxaal & Baden, 1997).

As a result of these discriminatory practices black poor women found themselves for decades in a state of powerlessness in which they had to live without the power to choose or make decisions about their welfare (Wilson & Ramphela, 1989). In extreme situations, women were forced to take up activities, which may be socially unacceptable, because they are disempowered and discriminated against (El-Bushra, & Mukarubuga, 1995). Selling of drugs and alcohol, prostitution and other activities may be seen as acceptable practices for women who had no other choices to meet basic needs for themselves and their families.

1.3. Statement of the problem

The historical legacy of patriarchy entrenched in a racist backdrop had assigned women to the position of minors in both public and private life (Johnson-Odim, 2000). Most women especially rural women in South Africa are ignorant on how to use their rights, even the few who are educated. Women who have in the meantime become policy makers are confronted with similar problems of disempowerment since they were considered minor under apartheid laws (Maurick & Posthumus, 1999).

High levels of female empowerment seem to be achieved with power, but power can be derived from many sources such as education, income, and community roles. In many studies, high educational attainment of women was associated with a high level of economic empowerment (Steinmetz, 1987). Education confers social empowerment via social networks, self-confidence, and an ability to use information and resources available in society, and may also translate into wealth (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, & Levin, 2002)

In South Africa under apartheid, higher education was inaccessible to the majority and as a result women were assigned to the position of minors in both public and private life but in the new South Africa there are opportunities to redress this situation (Shirley, 1999). From the history of Belhar, Old Belhar is characterised as a community of highly educated, high income professionals while New Belhar is the reverse, despite the fact that both Belhars are close to higher education institutions (University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Cape Peninsular University of Technology). Old Belhar residents use this

opportunity to their advantage while New Belhar residents neglect this opportunity. The principal research question is:

What are the community's perceptions of the major socio-economic factors that hinder the women in New Belhar from being empowered and how has these affected the well-being of women in the community?

1.4. Objectives of the study

The overall aim of the study was to investigate the community's perceptions of the socio-economic factors that hinder the empowerment of women in New Belhar and to provide possible measures aimed at addressing those in order to facilitate the empowerment of women in Belhar, in particular and South Africa in general.

1.4.1. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are:

- to investigate the community's perceptions of the main factors responsible for women's lack of economic and social empowerment in new Belhar,
- to investigate some of the main socio-economic consequences of disempowerment on working class women in this area
- to provide an exploration of policy provision at both community and national levels that foster empowerment among women in order to reduce gender inequality and
- to provide a foundation for further research into empowerment of all women in general.

1.5. Significance of the study

The research hopes to make recommendations to guide academics, community development practitioners and policy-makers on how to reduce the effects of disempowerment within communities and further provide the platform for the empowerment of women. The study hopes to further provide a comprehensive material for policy debates as well as future academic research on the subject of empowerment of women in general and those in communities like new Belhar community in particular.

Results of the study will make a significant contribution to the study of empowerment, and will provide a foundation for legislators and policies makers of communities in South Africa to deal with the problem of empowerment particular its effects on women. Finally, the study shall attempt to offer a significant addition to the growing body of literature and platform for debate in themes of empowerment challenges and its relation to contemporary developing countries whose economic history, socio-cultural and political conditions/system are similar to that of South Africa.

1.6. Delimitation of the study

Belhar is one of the many “dormitory” suburbs of Cape Town. The form of development is predominantly residential with related community facilities. There is very little commercial or industrial infrastructure and the area lacks a definable centre. In 1987 the administrator of the Cape authorized the Western Cape Regional Council (WCRC) to prepare a local structure plan for Belhar (City of Cape Town Tygerberg Administration, Town Planning Department, 1999). Belhar is located 27 kms from (North, South, West, east???) of Cape Town. Belhar consists of many sections namely, Extensions 1 to 23, the Self-help section and Old Belhar. The extensions are what are referred to as new Belhar. This section is mostly made up of the communities from the Cape Peninsula that was relocated during the implementation of the Group Area Act in the early 1980s. This research is specifically carried out in extensions 13 and 14 in new Belhar.

1.7. Concepts definitions and clarifications

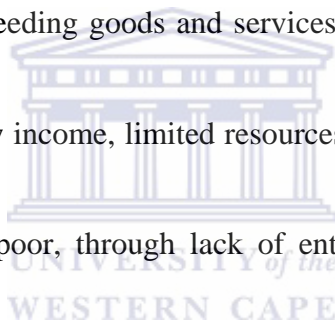
There has been a tendency in the academic literature and in social policy circles in recent years to avoid terms such as women poverty and empowerment (Hall & Midgleg, 2004). Instead, it has become more fashionable to use words and or concepts like ‘social exclusion’ and the ‘capabilities’ of poor people and the marginalized (Sen, 2000). In view of the seemingly divided attention and emergence of new approaches to the explanations of the commonly known ones, it has become imperative to define some basic concepts that will frequently be used and therefore will serve as a foundation of this study and a way-forward for its research.

1.7.1. Poverty

Poverty, power and inequality remain central in both development and social policy issues (Hall & Midgleg, 2004). Although poverty has been the subject of popular speculation and religious interpretation for centuries, it was in the nineteenth century that the first systematic attempts were made to define, measure, and understand poverty as the major cause of inequalities in societies and most specifically among women (Cornia, Jolly, & Stewart, 1995).

There is no generally agreed definition of poverty. This is because Piachaud (1981) argues that the definition of poverty is a moral question that refers to hardship, which is unacceptable. Hence poverty may refer to:

- *material conditions* - needing goods and services, multiple deprivation, or a low standard of living;
- *economic position* - low income, limited resources, inequality or low social class; and,
- *social position* of the poor, through lack of entitlement, dependency or social exclusion.



Conventionally, poverty is represented in two main models.

- *Absolute poverty* is based on subsistence, which is generally a minimum standard needed to live. In 1901, Seebohm Rowntree identified a 'poverty line' on the basis of minimum needs. Furthermore the Copenhagen Declaration of (1995) defines absolute poverty as "a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs that include food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. Poverty therefore does not depend only on income but also on access to social services" (United Nations, 1995).
- *Relative poverty* is based on a comparison basis of poor people with others in a society. In 1979, Peter Townsend defined poverty as "the absence or inadequacy of those diets, amenities, standards, services and activities that are common or customary in society".

Poverty, like all other needs, is defined in terms of the society where it takes place and in terms of what people can eat, where they can live, and the extent of their dependency on others or the society itself (Davidson & Duclos, 2000). That does not necessarily mean that poverty is always based on a comparison among people as there are some countries where most of their people are poor.

For the purpose of this research, poverty will be defined in accordance with what has been prescribed or said in the Poverty and Inequality Report of 1998, which says: “the inability to attain a minimum standard of living measured in terms of basic consumption needs or the income required to satisfy them”. This definition of poverty can lead to an economic policy that has the potential to alleviate poverty in general and that of South Africa in particular, through the address of inequalities. It should however be noted that the current South Africa poverty studies, tend to be predominantly based around subsistence income or expenditure measures, which do not necessarily have any firm definitional or conceptual underpinnings (Meth, 2004).

1.7.2. Vulnerability

Closely related to poverty is the issue of vulnerability. Vulnerability is the susceptibility to physical, institutional, political and emotional exploitation, injury or attack. It also means to have one's guard down, open to censure or criticism (Booyesen, & Summerton, 2002). Vulnerability refers to a person's state of being liable to succumb, to persuasion or temptation. According to Chambers (1989), vulnerability refers to a person's exposure to contingencies and stress such that the person will find it difficult to cope with the exposure.

Bene (2004) describes vulnerability and poverty as intricately interlinked but different. Vulnerability may in itself be a result of poverty. It is associated with economic insecurity. For example, men living in poverty, who are unable to live up to their ideas of “successful” manhood, in the resulting climate of stress, might take their frustration out on the vulnerable, mostly women and may physically and/or emotionally abuse women of their households. Violence against women becomes a social norm in which men are violent towards women they can no longer control or economically support. Violence

against women is thus seen not just as an expression of male powerfulness and dominance over women, but also as being rooted in male vulnerability stemming from social expectations of manhood that are unattainable because of factors such as poverty experienced by men (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002)

1.7.3. Power

The idea of 'power' is at the root of the term empowerment (Boje & Rosile, 2001). According to Williams *et al* (1994), the concept of power can be understood when it is operating in a number of different ways:

- *Power over*: This power involves a relationship of either domination and/or subordination. Ultimately, it is based on socially sanctioned threats of violence and intimidation. It requires constant vigilance to maintain it where it invites either active or passive resistance;
- *Power to*: This power relates to having decision-making authority, such as having power to solve problems. It can be both creative and enabling;
- *Power with*: This power involves people organising each other with a common purpose or common understanding to achieve collective goals;
- *Power within*: This power refers to self confidence, self awareness and assertiveness. It relates to how individuals can be recognised through analysing their experiences on how power operates in their lives for them to be able to gain confidence to either act, influence or change things (Williams *et al.*, 1994).

Whilst the understandings of power and empowerment have come from many different movements and traditions, the feminist movement has emphasised on collective organisation ('power with') and has been influential in developing ideas about 'power within' (McDowell, 1992). Some feminist writers on power have challenged the idea that power must necessarily involve domination by some, and obedience or oppression of others (Yoder & Kahn, 1992). Men would also be able to benefit from the results of

women's empowerment with the chance to live in a more equitable society where they can even explore new roles. The kinds of power described above as power-to, power-with and power-within can be developed as alternatives to power-over (Oxaal & Baden, 1997).

1.7.4. Community Development

Community development has been used variously by community development practitioners, academics and other civil society leaders and professionals as a community building concept (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_development). It has again been known as a process by which efforts or consciousness of people themselves with the support of governments or non-governmental organisations have been ignited to improve the political, social and economic conditions of most communities. In return, such communities would then be able to contribute more fully to their individual's communal and national well- beings (Lund & Van Harte, 1981).

Burdge, (2004) defined community development as a process and method. When described as a process, community development is “an attempt by a community to collectively realize self-identified needs according to pre-established procedures through societal institutions in order to reach certain set goals”. While when it is described as a method, community development is “an attempt by external agents to help a community take some initiatives in defining its own needs and in deciding upon a course of action to develop towards the fulfilment of such needs in accordance with its own values”. Homan (1998) is in support of this view, and perceives it as the acquisition, maturation and connection of community assets to benefit the whole community. Furthermore, community development also operates successfully within a specific environment where the government is open for community involvement in the decision-making processes (Abbot, 1995).

Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups within a community by providing them with the skills they need to effect changes in their own communities. Such skills are often concentrated around building power through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda (Speer & Hughey, 1995). Therefore,

community development is also a learning process. Moore and Brooks are of the opinion that every opportunity should therefore be given to the people for them to take the initiatives, even if they may need to be force into doing it (Moore & Brooks, 2000). The learning process is therefore made viable through participation, initiatives, and evaluations. Without these three ingredients, community development cannot be learnt. Since community development is born out of needs, it is obvious that it must be oriented towards some objectives that will then address such specific needs (Swanepoel, 1997).

1.7.5. Empowerment

Since the mid-1980s, the term empowerment has become popular in the development field, especially with reference to women. However, many attempts have been made by different authors in an effort to describe what it really entails (Batliwala, 1994). Empowerment implies an increase of consciousness and an implication which is more than a forced change of power in which there is a destruction of previous structures and values (www.empowermentillustrated.org). From the above it could be said that it also involves the element of higher consciousness and consideration of both parties' needs and interests gained. Empowerment can also be defined as a person's capacity to make effective choices and to transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005).

The extent to which a person is empowered is influenced by personal agency i.e. the capacity to make a purposive choice and opportunity structure or the institutional context in which choice is made. According to Sen, (1997), empowerment is, first and foremost, about power, changing power relations in favour of those who previously exercised little power over their own lives. To this end, Batliwala (1993) defines power as having two central aspects - control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial, and the self), and control over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). If power means control, then empowerment, therefore, is the process of gaining control (Sen, 1997).

For Oxfam, empowerment is about challenging oppression and inequality:

- Empowerment involves challenging the forms of oppression, which compel millions of people to play a part in their society on terms, which are inequitable, or in ways, which deny their human rights (Oxfam, 1995).

Furthermore, Wallerstein (1992), view empowerment as a social-action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice. While Whitmore (1988) feels the concept of empowerment needs to be more clearly defined, she states that there are some common underlying assumptions:

- Individuals are assumed to understand their own needs better than anyone else and therefore should have the power both to define and act upon them.
- All people possess strengths upon which they can build.
- Empowerment is a lifelong endeavor.
- Personal knowledge and experience are valid and useful in coping effectively.

Empowerment is a concept that goes beyond participation. It implies enabling people to understand the reality of their environment, reflect on the factors shaping that environment, and taking steps to effect changes to improve the situation (Gajanayake, & Gajanayake, 1993). For the purpose of this study, empowerment will be a process whereby individuals achieve increasing control of various aspects of their lives, expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people including women to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and participate in the community with dignity.

1.8. Development Studies

The emergence of development studies as an academic discipline in the second half of the twentieth century is in large part due to increasing concern about economic prospects for the third world after decolonisation. In the immediate post-war period, development economics, a branch of economics, arose out of previous studies in colonial economics. By the 1960s, an increasing number of development economists felt that economics alone could not fully address issues such as political effectiveness and educational provision. Development studies arose as a result of this, initially aiming to integrate ideas of politics and economics. Since then, it has become an increasingly inter- and multi-disciplinary subject, encompassing a variety of social scientific fields (1

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_studies, 22 June, 2008).

Therefore, development studies is a multidisciplinary branch of social science which addresses issues of concern to developing countries. It has historically placed a particular focus on issues related to social and economic development, and its relevance may therefore extend to communities and regions outside of the developing world.

1.8.1. Development Studies and Women Empowerment

Being a multidisciplinary branch with focus on issues of social and economic development, it helps foster the empowerment of women in areas where women could not find equality. For instance, Violence prevents women from exercising their rights to achieving social and economic equality, hampers their ability to organise and, ultimately, is a major obstacle to their empowerment and full participation in shaping the economic, social and political life of their countries.

According to Harris (1999:40), a post-conflict environment may be characterised by a signed peace accord, a process of political transition through elections or a coup, increased levels of security (broadly defined), and a perception that there is a real opportunity for peace and recovery. South Africa has elements of all of these key characteristics.

1.9. Ethics Statement

Privacy, anonymity, integrity, confidentiality and voluntary participation will be observed. The researcher will respect the intellectual property rights of other authors. Participants will also be given the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. This study will be conducted at the University of the Western Cape, Senate and the Institute has approved the research proposal for Social Development. Permission to conduct the research was requested from the target population, Belhar women and other responsible organizations. It is borne in mind that any research of this kind is sensitive and that at all times the welfare of the targeted population would be accorded the highest priority and the due respect. The data would, therefore, be treated in strictest confidence. Feedback of the result will be communicated to the target population and respondent organizations

and will form part of the information library of the University of the Western Cape.

1.10. Chapter summary

This chapter introduces the subject matter for investigation. It gives a summary of the background of the study, stating the objectives as well as the significant of the study. It also looks at women in Belhar in general but with particular focus on women's perceptions of the socio-economic factors hindering women empowerment in extension 13 and 14 of new Belhar from being empowered. In addition, concepts are defined for clarification on the subject matter.

Following this section is a conceptual framework chapter (chapter two) in which a literature review of women empowerment is done. The theories behind women empowerment are also examined in a bid to build a framework upon which the paper will develop. Chapter three presents background research methodology of the Belhar community, in a bid to evaluate the availability and coordination of the factors said to contribute to women's lack of economic and social empowerment. Empirical results are also presented to analyse the contribution made by other researchers. In chapter four, the data used for my analysis is presented. Use is made of tables and charts to assess the factors contributing for women lack of empowerment in the community from my finding. Conclude in chapter five and recommendations.

Chapter Two

A Theoretical Basis for Conceptualising and Understanding Women Empowerment

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review that gives a historical background of women's struggle for empowerment. It attempts to relate the supporting theories of empowerment and various approaches to women empowerment as a whole. Furthermore, some policies framework and acts of parliament on gender equality with specific reference to women empowerment are discussed. Finally, the scale of analysis focuses on the South African situation.

2.2. Historical Background of Women's Struggle for Empowerment

As early as 1894, white women in South Africa began organising politically for the franchise with the Franchise Department of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and more systematically with the formation of the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union (WEAU) in 1911 (Walker, 1979). Its members, all white, never questioned the racial exclusiveness of the franchise, and indeed accepted the differential qualifications which existed between the Northern provinces and the Cape Province (Walker, 1990b). These gave the vote on the basis of education and property, excluding women and all but a tiny minority of Coloured and African men in the Cape. There was little support for the women's franchise, despite the fact that the WEAU's politics provided further support for white domination (Meintjes, 1996).

The 1913 women's protests against passes in Bloemfontein were one of the earliest campaigns led by politically organised urban-based black women. Passes limited and regulated the independence of African and Coloured women. Women complained about the abuse they were subjected to by police and municipal officials (Wells, 1993), yet very little attention was given to them. However, in 1923, afraid that the issue might leave them behind, leading Nationalist women endorsed the inauguration of the Women's

National Party (Walker, 1990b). Their capacity to mobilise has given African women in South Africa an aura of power and mystique. Paradoxically, women are also conceived as the most exploited and oppressed members of society (Meintjes, 1996).

The dramatic release in 1989 and 1990 of political prisoners serving life-sentences for their participation in actions aimed at bringing down the apartheid regime unfolded the process of negotiating South Africa's transition to a democracy (www.transformation.ukzn.ac.za, 14th August, 2007). A Women's National Coalition was formed in April 1992 comprised of four regional coalitions and approximately 60 national organisations. Its objective was to ensure equality for women in the new constitutional dispensation which was in the process of being negotiated by the country's political parties and political liberation movements (Albertyn, 1994). Thus women needed to organise themselves within trade unions, in civic and youth movements to wage a struggle for emancipation.

Leila Patel, a member of the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW), said in her opening address, "The struggle must be waged simultaneously at all three levels. The question of the emancipation of women is therefore integral to our national democratic struggle" (Meintjes, 1996). The perspective outlined in her address suggests a much more self-conscious understanding that in order to emancipate women, a starting point had to be the material conditions within which women lived their lives: 'The point of departure is to start with women's needs and their level of understanding of their reality and to move at their pace' (www.transformation.ukzn.ac.za, 14th August, 2007).

In 1993, the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, with a justifiable Charter of Fundamental Rights, heralded a significant moment in South Africa's transition to democracy. In particular it shifts the parameters within which women are able to claim their rights as equal citizens in an ostensibly 'non-racial and non-sexist' society (Meintjes, 1996). In 1994, South Africans entered the new democratic era in anticipation and expectation of many changes in their lives- for better or worse. Five years on 1999 presented itself as the benchmark year in which to reflect on the achievements of South Africa's new democracy and the challenges, which still lays ahead

(Moller & Dickow, 2001). Thought it has been over ten years into democracy, the situation in most of our communities like new Belhar, still looks as if South Africans are emerging out of an era of institutional racism; one in which a person's worth has been dictated by the colour of their skin (Hamilton *et al*, 2001). This translates into a reality where the lighter the shade of colour, the greater the value; the darker the hue, the less the value of the individual. Alongside institutional racism has and is been the issue of gender discrimination. While women in general have been negatively affected by racism, African women have carried a disproportionate burden of the under-development caused by racism (Hall, 2002).

Gender equality has always been a core value of the struggle for a democratic South Africa. This value was immediately adopted into the country's governance processes with the establishment of the new dispensation in 1994 and has been enshrined in the 1996 Constitution of South Africa. It is the strong political commitment to this value that has moved the South African government to craft gender sensitive national priorities (<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2000/genderold.pdf>, 22nd August, 2007).

The commitment to gender equality has historically been supported by the majority of South Africans committed to equality and to a democratic and non-racist society. Supporters of this principle include members of political parties, the women's movement, religious community, NGOs and the youth movement (True, 2003).

In its attempt to reverse the history of women's discrimination and marginalisation, since 1994, the government has adopted a number of laws developed to promote equality between women and men regardless of race, class, disability and sexual orientation (Sainsbury, 1996). These laws protect the interests of women and men in the family, the criminal justice system, employment, health, property, education and training, governance and institutional support and general equality (Cook, 1994). These laws have the potential to empower women and promote gender equality, thereby making a non-sexist society a reality. Yet, the reality of implementation of these policies in our communities is far fetch in communities like new Belhar.

2.3. Theories of Empowerment

A fundamental problem facing the worldwide process of democratization is the continued lack of gender equality in leadership and decision making especially with regards to women. The past few decades has witnessed the emergence of a number of empowerment paradigms in an effort to explain what they mean (Graaff, 2003). Also as can be seen there is a wide range of definitions of empowerment and the term means different things to different people. Being a plastic word gives space to multiple and different interpretations. It is for this reason that feminist levelled a lot of criticisms against the use of the concept (Aithal, 1996). They criticise that most of the approaches to empowerment aim at improving the marginalised within the existing systems. They also criticise that these approaches do not raise the question of power. Farida Akhter has, for instance, pointed out that the term is being used by those who are in fact working for disempowerment of women. She has criticised the cooptation of the term as well as the cooptation of feminists in the name of empowerment. For Akhtar, women empowerment should be how women need to be empowered by eliminating women poverty, illiteracy, and other objects of reproduction technologies (Akhter, 1995).

Women empowerment does not mean being incorporated and depoliticised through the inflationary use by different actors. Because of the danger and fact of cooptation and incorporation there have been voices to do away with the term (Akhter, 1995). Rather, it is to assert the right to define the empowerment from women and gender perspective and also to provide platform essential for the women movement to insist upon their leadership roles, decision-making and power content (Aithal, 1996).

Since the 80s an increased activism by women witnessed in the “Third World” Countries has brought to light the concept of empowerment bringing women into focus. In many aspects the word that came to be a concept is quite different from other concepts like “participation” or “gender” (Aithal, 1996). Rather, the conceptualisations of “empowerment” are offered also in development studies as well as in women and gender studies, political theory, sociology, psychology, adult education, special education, social work, theology and other related fields (Aithal, 1996). The concept has now gained a new dimension in international feminism. While the feminist debates are largely guided by hegemonic feminism of the North, women in the South inspired women all over the

world to use a concept that can help to change the life of women (Molyneux, 1985).

The concept of women's empowerment has again shown clearly the need to challenge patriarchal power relations that result in women having less control over material assets and intellectual resources (Batliwala, 1994). Therefore, this study will take a look at some theories of empowerment such as the feminist theory, modernisation theory, dependency theory, and cultural transmission theory.

2.3.1. Feminist Notion and the Concept of Empowerment

Even though feminist ideas have been around for a long time, the term feminism was first used in 1895. Feminism, pronounced "FEHM uh nihz uhm" (The World Bank Encyclopaedia, 2003). In simple terms it means that human rights should cut across barriers and be equal for both males and females and girls and boys. Jary and Jary define feminism as a holistic theory concerned with the nature of women's global oppression and subordination to men (Jary & Jary, 2000). Feminism is the belief that men and women should have equal human rights economically, politically and socially (Stearman, 1988). According to the Oxford dictionary, a feminist is a person, woman or man who supports the beliefs that women should be given equal rights and the same status as men. Brabeck (1997) is of the opinion that it should involve approaches to women's roles and lives in a broad variety of disciplines like politics, sociology, economics and anthropology.

Over the centuries there have been certain individuals who refused to accept the stereotypical casts of women and their place in societies. From this stemmed women's organisations in their struggle for equality. However, feminism grew in power during the 1800's-1900s and many people regarded the resultant changes in the status of women as a result of demonstrations and women's movements as a turning point in the history of society (The World Bank Encyclopaedia, 2003).

In the 70s and 80s insights from the Western women's movement were fed into the thinking and practice of development resulting first in the Women-in-Development (WID) programmes, and later in their transformation to Gender-and-Development (GAD)

approaches (Howe, 1996). The concept of women's empowerment is the outcome of important critiques generated by the women's movement, particularly by 'third world' feminists. It has been stated that women's empowerment requires the challenging of patriarchal power relations that result in women having less control over material assets and intellectual resources (Batliwala, 1994).

The feminist notions of empowerment see women as acting agents and not as beneficiaries, clients, participants, etc. and they deal with the question of power. In analysing the literature on empowerment Rowlands has made following classifications of power (1998):

- **power over:** controlling power over someone and something. Response to it can be compliance, resistance or manipulation
- **power to:** generative or productive power that creates new possibilities and actions without domination
- **power with:** power generating a feeling that the whole is greater than the sum of individuals and action as a group is more effective
- **power from within:** a sense that there is strength that is in each and every individual.

The recognition of one's self-acceptance and self-respect enables the acceptance of others as equals. Most of the definitions on empowerment imply the dimension of "power over", i.e. access to decision-making. In contrast, "power with" relates to a notion of collective power. Medel-Anonuevo has suggested that many women's NGOs in the South relate to this kind of understanding where changes are brought about by a sense of "together with others" (Medel-Anonuevo, 1996).

Naila Kabeer (1994) subscribes not so much to "power over" but to "power within" yourself that needs to be strengthened. She undertakes a deconstruction of the notions of power and unfolds the theoretical and practical potential of empowerment. "Power within" needs recognition by experience and analysis of the subordination of women.

According to Kabeer, such power cannot be given. It has to be self-generated and taken. It is in view of this that Stromquist asserts that empowerment is a process where women are able to change from a state of powerlessness (“I cannot”) to a state of collective self-confidence (“we can”) (1993). Besides the notion of power any attempt to theorise empowerment would involve in framing the concept in cognitive, psychological, economical and political aspects (Stromquist, 1993).

The feminists also argue that since women participate in their own oppression, they must first become aware of the ideology that legitimises male domination. Batliwala, further asserts that the empowerment process starts from within but access to new ideas and information will come from external agents (Batliwala, 1994). With new consciousness and the strength of solidarity, women can assert their right to control resources and to participate equally in decision making (Batliwala, 1994).

Western feminists are again of the opinion that women’s reproductive responsibilities limit their horizons and are often used to justify entrenched patterns of their political and economic marginalisation (Oxaal & Baden, 1997). This view is strongly held by women in South Africa due to past policies which made them inferior, particularly the black, to their male counterparts (Oxaal & Baden, 1997) because they were not given the opportunity to be educated and to develop their skills to work in order to again the necessary power to enable them to be independent.

2.3.2. The Modernisation Theory

The concept of modernisation refers to the total transformation that takes place when a traditional or pre-modern society changes to such an extent that new forms of technological, organisational, or social characteristics appear (Coetzee, Graaff, Hendricks, & Wood, 2001). The debate in the modernisation theory began in the 1960s. The theory was chiefly propounded by Rostow amongst prevailing theories. The theory portrays development as a progressive change from a traditional to a more sophisticated (modern) society (Coetzee et al, 2001). Earlier, there was the optimism that modernisation would free women from the constraints of traditional families. It was again believed that the modern laws would protect women from male domination, give way to

a more pessimistic view that family relationship, far from being independent or 'private' (Chen, 2003).

On the contrary, the processes that were supposed to bring empowerment to women have in fact meant their disempowerment. In historical terms, modernisation processes were also legitimised by arguments of empowerment of women (Boserup, 1970). Modernisation has, however, resulted in more disempowerment of women in some parts of the Third World (Mies & Shiva, 1993). The introduction of the cash economy for instance can disempower women (Afshar, 1989). Also, the loosening of traditional family bonds did not bring increased freedom of choice to women. Instead, the state "modernised patriarchy", reinforced gender differentials in the family and the economy while continuing to discriminate against women (Deveaux, 1994).

Feminist economists who employed the WID approach recognised that modernisation has strong negative consequences for women that can be traced to changing family dynamics (Lichter, LeClere & McLaughlin, 1991). This undermines the material foundation for reciprocal gender relations and undercuts the shared authority mandated by traditional norms (Young, Samarasinghe & Kusterer, 1993). However, the situation in the South African context is all too visible wherein majority of the women are held by traditional constraints despite the fact that they are living in a modern society.

2.3.3. Dependency Theory

In many ways, the problems of women since independence are a continuation of policies and forces set in motion during the colonial period (Gordon & Gordon, 2001). The failure by the modernization theorists to explain and address the dependency of the third world and specially women led to the rise of the dependency theory around the 1970s to the 1980s. Although African gender relations were transformed during the colonial period to further European economic and political exploitation of Africa, such distorted and patently unfair practices often continue to be justified by appeals to "African tradition" (Nweke, 1985).

Obadina (1985) is of the opinion that despite women's contributions to the struggle for

independence and the call of equality for all, the new African states and social institutions are largely Africanised replicas of their colonial predecessors. Advantages men had gain in access to education, jobs, and property enabled them to gain control of the wealth, jobs, and leadership positions unlike their female counterpart (Nzomo, 1989).

Male dominance has been enhanced as many of Africa's new Westernized elites, both male and female, have modelled their own gender roles on those of their western tutors. These roles are in turn, disseminated to the masses via education, the media and many governments and women's organisation (Bujra, 1986). Rather than promoting equal political and economic rights and opportunities for women in their societies, women are encouraged instead to pursue domestic and economic subordination to a male who is "head of the family" (Schuster, 1982).

2.3.4. The Cultural Transmission Theory

Cati (2005) defines culture as, "encompassing the everyday, habitual practices of people, including practices of schooling and Western ways". In other words it refers to the organisation of experience shared by members of a community including their standards for perceiving, predicting, judging and acting (Ndabandaba, 1987). According to Clinard *et al.* (1973) the absence of the traditional family and its hierarchy of discipline and care in urban areas have made promiscuity, delinquency, teenage pregnancies common characteristics in the social structure in South Africa.

Cultural studies of a people are important in the understanding of their behaviours and situations. Most women in South Africa were brought up under discriminatory role and policies (Dugger, 1988). Therefore, it is difficult for change of mentality and culture to effectively have an impact on women as a whole and those in communities like Belhar for example, in particular.

2.4. Conceptualisation of Women Empowerment

Although the terms "oppression", "marginality", and "dependency" best characterise the female condition, so freely used are these particular words in contemporary discourse that they sometimes border on being slogans and clichés, thus weakening their impact on

social consciousness (Reed, 2000). Nevertheless, since no other terms describe the status of women as succinctly as these do, it is necessary to do more than merely describe the parameters of women's lives and identifies the features of their oppression, marginalisation and dependence (Kapoor, 2004). It is necessary to go beyond the descriptive level and understand who and what causes women's collective lowly status, what are the functional reasons for their oppression, marginality and dependency, and how these inequalities are perpetuated. In other words, the status and condition of women has to be critiqued holistically (Schuler & Kadirgamar-Rajasingham, 1992), in order for women to overcome poverty as the major cause to their being less empowered. However, as a result of past policies that marginalised and discriminated against women, the new democratic government had to create new policy framework to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and to empower them.

2.5. Approaches to Women Empowerment

2.5.1. Current Approaches to Women's Empowerment

A number of areas of activities in development have become closely associated with the promotion of women's empowerment, such as in micro-credit, political participation and reproductive health, and in turn, much innovative work has so far been done in these areas (UNDP, 2000). However, there are clearly limits on the extent to which such activities in themselves can be said to be genuinely empowering. There is a general tendency to assume that increasing access to resources, or decision-making powers in one area, will necessarily carry itself through into other areas (Kabeer, 1999).

Much of the access to resources, or decision-making powers in South Africa is a direct result of apartheid policies that denied equal access to education, employment, services, and resources to the black population of the country. It is important to note that, the context in which credit is delivered, is vital in ensuring that women's control over resources and bargaining power is also increased. Nonetheless, credit, for example, is the key element to development strategies and it is imperative that women have access to credit. Conversely, empowerment in one area cannot be sustained without attention to

other facets (Pillariseti & McGillivray, 1998). Reproductive and sexual rights, for example, cannot be fully exercised when women's lack of independence on economic resources undermines their freedom to make choices and bargaining powers (Oxaal, & Baden, 1997).

It is therefore important to note that implementation of an empowerment approach in the context of hierarchically-organised developmental organisations may prove difficult, if organisational cultures are biased against the participation and autonomy in decision-making of beneficiaries, especially where it concerns women (Oxfam, 1995). In an interview with some of the women in new Belhar, when asked if they have ever approach any bank for loan or credit to start a business for example, the reply was no. why? The answers were always we don't have any guarantee or collateral security or the means to pay back because we are depending on our partners (Interview with some women on the 18th April, 2007). This then suggests that not just activities and policy frameworks but also organisational structures and processes need to be examined in promoting 'women's empowerment' (Oxfam, 1995).

2.5.2. Economic Empowerment through Credit Programmes

Micro-credit programmes, many targeting women and claiming to empower them, have become extremely popular among donors and NGOs in recent years (Amin *et al.*, 1998). Goetz and Gupta (1996) argue that donor's interests in seeing the development of financially self-sustaining credit programmes has led to quantitative goals for credit delivery and recovery that supplants a more qualitative and elusive social change of objectives (Goetz & Gupta, 1996).

The change in developmental policies from the focus on women's active roles in production as a means of efficient development, to the approach of women's empowerment through self-reliance, has resulted in policies that strongly enhance women's economic roles (Schreiner, 2003). The focus has changed the original approach and is now targeted at providing grants for financial assistance to women through the establishment of special credit schemes. Credit schemes are seen as having the potential to link women with the formal banking sector and thereby integrating them into the

mainstream development system (Von Bülow *et al*, 1995). Many of such credit schemes aimed at women, attempt to follow the model of well-known micro-credit providers such as the Grameen Bank. The problems of high administrative costs and lack of collateral among small-scale women borrowers are often overcome by the establishment of some special borrower solidarity groups based on joint liabilities (Oxaal & Baden, 1997).

Women constitute the poorest group in South Africa and are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed. The challenge is to ensure that South Africa's macro economic strategy promotes economic growth and sufficiently addresses the differential impact of macro-economic policy on various groups of people and more specifically women depending on class, race, age, gender, location and disability (South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 1998).

The ability of credit schemes to promote women's empowerment has come under close scrutiny. Research on credit programmes has shown that apparently, successful credit programmes targeting credit to women cannot be taken at face value without a more careful examination of the social context in which women live (Schreiner, 2003). Women's participatory experiences in rural development programmes, for instance, can even be negative, because demands on women's labour may be intensified without finding substitutes for women's reproductive work at home (Goetz & Gupta, 1996).

Many micro-credit initiatives can be viewed as promoting a narrowly individualistic definition of women's empowerment, and as ignoring the collective dimension of empowerment. By offering credits to women, the women's lack of access to capital is in turn treated as a technical problem which outsiders can identify and tackle without actually committing to deeper structural transformations (Von Bülow *et al.*, 1995).

2.5.3. Empowerment through Political Participation

One important approach to supporting women's empowerment is the promotion of their participation in formal politics alongside their support in broad-based programmes of democratisation and good governance with a strong focus on developing civil societies (Conway, 2001). This includes promoting women in government, and national and local party politics as well as supporting their involvement in NGOs and other women's

movements. In 1994, only 5.7% of the world's cabinet ministers were women (UN, 1995b).

However, in South Africa, women's access to political power and decision-making has improved after the 1994 elections. There is a strong representation of women in the national, provincial and local legislative branches of government and in some governments departments. The challenge to political institutions is to change their culture in order to be more responsive to the needs of women politicians and of civil servants (South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 1998).

Yet in government, women in decision-making positions tend to be concentrated in social, law and justice ministries. Fewer women are found in chief executive and economic areas. This poor representation is very common in spite of the fact that women are found in large numbers at lower-level positions in public administration, political parties, trade unions and business, who could potentially serve as representatives at higher levels (Karl, 1995). Though, there has been a considerable amount of improvement in the various posts and position held by women in recent years, the number of women in higher position is still less as compared to their male counterparts.

2.5.4. Empowerment, Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health

The health sector provides an interesting case of how empowerment can operate on both an individual and collective levels. Traditionally health programmes had been focusing on a top-down approach of their service delivery systems (Stevens, 2004). An empowerment approach to women's health emphasises on women's individual sense of self-worthiness connected to the value they attach to their own health, as well as women's individual decision-making over access to their health care. The approach also emphasises on women's collective empowerment whereby they themselves organise for more accountable health services, increase their own choices, decision-making and control over their bodies (Asthana, 1996).

Links between empowerment and health in general and specifically with women, are receiving growing recognition (McFarlane & Fehir, 1994). Research has highlighted the

relationship between powerlessness and susceptibility to ill-health, and the health-enhancing capability of empowerment, defined as ‘control over destiny,’ at both individual and community levels (Wallerstein, 1993). These links are also gaining recognition in international development agencies. For example, a 1991 World Health Organisation (WHO) position paper on health education, links community participation to empowerment as a means of promoting healthier individuals and environments. The 1995 WHO position paper on women’s health produced for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing states:

The empowerment of women is a fundamental prerequisite for their health. This means promoting increased access for women to resources, education and employment and the protection and promotion of their human rights and fundamental freedoms so that they are enabled to make choices free from coercion or discrimination.

The international women’s health movement stresses women’s health and empowerment as goals in their own rights and not as a means to reduce fertility. For example, the Women’s Declaration on Population Policies (1994), and DAWN’s Population Policies and Reproductive Rights Project (1994), emphasise on the empowerment of women, as well as on gender equality, including men’s responsibility for their own sexual behaviour and fertility (Garcia *et al.*, 1994). In many places, as a result of this amongst others, women have moved from being a critical voice on the margin to being influential participants in programme and policy debates at both national and international levels (Blanc, 2001). This is also enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

2.6. Policy Frameworks for Women’s Empowerment

The term empowerment is currently in widespread use across a range of different organisations, from women’s organisations, NGOs, governments, bilateral to multilateral agencies. Organisational cultures, processes and structures of accountability vary and this has implications on the strategies adopted to promote women’s empowerment (Oxaal & Baden, 1997). For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy framework of 2000 offers the potential to address individual and collective empowerment of women at different levels, although in practice, its main focus is on individual

participation in decision-making, individual skills and economic self-reliance. As a result of this, the South African government did adopt a number of policy framework to empower the marginalised and especially women. It should be noted that these policies framework came about as a result of past policies that discriminated against black and most especially women (South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 1998).

This Gender Policy Framework attempts to ensure that the process of achieving Gender equality is at the very center of the transformation process in South Africa within all the structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices and programmes of government, its agencies and parastatals, civil society and the private sector. These are guided by a vision of human rights which incorporates acceptance of equal and inalienable rights of all women and men. This ideal is a fundamental tenet under the Bill of Rights of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) (South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 1998).

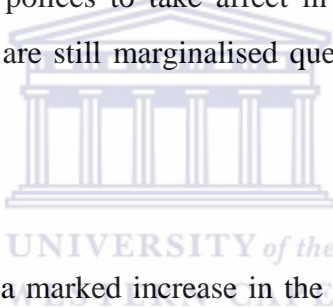
The Public Service Act of 1994 removes discriminatory practices such as different pension and housing benefits for married and unmarried women and men. The 1996 White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service says that all national and provincial departments must have Transformation Units to ensure that there are sufficient women and black people at all levels. This has been a stepping stone as women were not considered as public figures who could serve the interest of the public. As a result of this act, we find more than ever in the public service.

The Labour Relations Act of 1995 protects workers against unfair discrimination on the basis of sex, race or other grounds. Since 1995 the Act also covers domestic and farm workers. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) has covered farm workers since 1993 and domestic workers since 1994. In 1997 the BCEA was amended to prevent dismissal of women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and to provide for better maternity and family leave.

The Employment Equity Bill says that companies employing 50 or more people, or with turnover more than a specified amount, must have an employment equity plan and report

regularly to government on race, gender and disability (www.Country Gender Profile South Africa.htm. 13th September, 2007)

Act 1998 (No 116 of 1998), provide for the issuing of protection orders with regard to domestic violence; and for matters connected therewith and having regard to the Constitution of South Africa, and in particular, the right to equality and to freedom and security of the person; and the international commitments and obligations of the State towards ending violence against women and children, including obligations under the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Rights of the Child' (www.info.gov.za/gazette/acts/1998/a116-98, 22 August 2007). It must be mention here that, despite the fact that these policies framework are states the rules and regulations abiding to all and specifically women, its going to take a gradual process for all sure polices to take affect in some of our communities like Belhar. Yet most women who are still marginalised questioned the effectiveness of the constitution.



2.7. Women and Poverty

The last decade has witnessed a marked increase in the numbers of those who are poor across the world. South Africa is no exception. South Africa is an upper –middle-income country with a per capita income similar to that of Botswana, Brazil, and Malaysia (Carter & May, 2001). Despite this relative wealth, the experience of the majority of South African households is either one of outright poverty or of continued vulnerability to becoming poor (Klasen, 1997). Poverty is usually seen in alienation from the community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of basic forms of energy, lack of adequately paid, secure jobs, fragmentation of the family (characterised by absent fathers or children living apart from parents) (May *et al*, 1998).

Close to three-quarters (71%) of all rural households are poor. Over three in five (61%) of African households are poor compared to 38% of coloured households, 5% of Indian and 1% of white (World Bank, 1999). According to the 2002 poverty statistics, women constitute (50.9%) of the total population that is poor (South Africa Human Development

Report, 2003) (SAHDR). Given such a high proportion of women in poverty, it is virtually difficult for women to be empowered because they lack the material and human support. Poverty has not only placed great stress on family units, but also on women, children and young people (Belle, 2003). In addition South Africa has experienced the deepening of a phenomenon called the *feminisation of poverty* (Laurie, 1988). Estimates indicate that women are now the sole economic providers in up to one-third of the households and that these households are disproportionately poor (Buvinic & Yudelman, 1989).

A number of factors contribute towards the poverty of women in South Africa in general and women in new Belhar in particular. The gendered division of labour in the household, the low value accorded to women's work with the concomitant clustering of women in low-paid jobs contributes to female poverty (May, 2000). Past discriminatory civil and traditional laws that have denied women access to land, loans and property have also hindered women's ability to be self-sufficient, thereby, rendering them to be less empowered (Cock & Bernstein, 1998).

Like many other societies, the South African economy is biased in such a way as to place most of the highly paid jobs in the hands of men. For this reason as elsewhere, the degree of poverty is far higher amongst female-headed households than in those homes where a man is at the head (Wilson & Ramphela, 1989). In addition, most of these men migrate to urban areas in search of these jobs, and as a result of the high rural-urban migration among women suffer because of lack of care from their husband. Todaro (2000) argues that rural-urban migration is a natural process in which surplus labour is withdrawn from the rural sector to provide the labour needed for urban industrial growth and that this affects a disproportionate number of women and children, with women and children more likely to be poor and malnourished. They are also less likely to receive medical services, clean water and other benefits (Momsen, 1991).

2.8. Women and Education

Education policies were designed to perpetuate the inferior economic and social status of black persons, and to reproduce the racially segregated division of labour in South Africa,

during the apartheid days (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Under apartheid, education was administered through 19 different education departments leading to fragmentation and inter-regional inequalities. Not only were educational institutions at all levels racially segregated, but also there were vast racial disparities in the funding of education (Fedderke, *et al*, 2000). The policy of 'Bantu education' left a legacy of illiteracy, innumeracy, and a lack of high-level skills in the majority of the population. These legacies pose a formidable challenge to the realisation of the constitutional right to education. Apartheid education policy has left a legacy of illiteracy and lack of skills (Libenberg & Pillay, 1998).

Despite enormous efforts at transforming the education system, the following factors continue to contribute to high dropout rates and lower secondary school pass rates for girls:

- Unplanned pregnancies affect girls more negatively than unplanned paternity affects boys. In a survey quoted in the *Women's Budget*, 28% of female drop-outs were a result of pregnancy compared to the 3% of male drop-outs.
- Domestic responsibilities lead to school absenteeism for girls, especially in rural areas.
- Girls, more often than boys, are likely to be the victims of sexual harassment, rape and other forms of violence. The resulting trauma frequently leads to a drop in school attendance (Moja & Hayward, 2000).

Despite innovative advances in the South African education, gender stereotypes and women's subordination continue to pose a challenge for curriculum development. Given high levels of illiteracy among women, especially, in rural areas, non-formal education can make a major contribution to women's lives (<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2000/genderold.pdf>, 20th April, 2007).

It has to be emphasised that education and training alone do not provide the opportunities (such as jobs), which allow individuals and especially women and children to utilise their skills and knowledge to escape from poverty. Education and training also produce unequal returns for women and men, black and white (May et al. 1998). Fuller et al

(1995) suggest that despite increasing enrolments by Africa children, uneven quality of teaching has resulted in ongoing marked racial differences in basic literacy and numeracy, even where there is similar attainment in terms of standard passed.

2.9. Women and Violence

South Africa faces the challenge of combating domestic violence, abuse and rape where the main targets are women, children and girls (Teboho Maitse, 1998). There are few support structures for victims of rape. At police stations, rape victims are faced with a lack of facilities coupled with the unsympathetic treatment women frequently receive from both the police and the justice system. The South African Police Service reports that in the year 2000, it had initiated a Victim Empowerment Programme as violence against women and children was one of its focus areas for the period 2000 – 2003.

Yet the situation of women has not change (<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2000/genderold.pdf>, 20th May, 2007). Most women who are raped do not report it to the police, because they are blamed for raped. Often women don't tell anyone, because they are made to feel ashamed for having been raped if they do things like walk alone at night or dress in ways that provoke men (Hansson & Hofmeyr, 1992).

2.10. Women and Health

The low social standing of women in society, the high levels of illiteracy among women, as well as the prevalence of violence against women are major obstacles to their enjoyment of health rights (Monteiro, *et al*, 2004). More specially, the effects of rape, domestic violence and economic dependency as significant factors contributing to the HIV-infection amongst women. Many women who work as sex worker in order to earn a living have an increased susceptibility to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

The combined impact of the legacy of apartheid and gender discrimination has had negative consequences for the status of women's health. Many people stressed the effects of discriminatory laws such as the Group Areas Act No. 36 of 1966 on people health

status. For example, the Group Areas Act has ensured that health care services remain located largely in formerly white areas, making access difficult for the majority. The costs of this are borne by the current health system (Libenberg & Pillay, 1998). While statistical data on women's health is scant, the following trends are nonetheless discernible. The major causes of female deaths in South Africa are: high blood pressure; pregnancy related complications; prolonged labour and obstetric haemorrhage; septic abortions; HIV/AIDS related diseases; cancer of the cervix; tuberculosis; malaria; and other opportunistic diseases (<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2000/genderold.pdf>, 14th May, 2007).

2.11. Women and Unemployment

According to the broad definition of unemployment, the number of people who are not working and are actively looking for work divided by those people who are working and those who are searching or have given up looking. The characteristics of unemployment in South Africa are such that Africans have a much higher rate of unemployment. Also, broad unemployment rates are higher for rural areas and for females (May et al. 1998).

The very high unemployment rate is the main cause of poverty in South Africa. The general standards of living tend to be very low for the majority of people (Valodia, 2001). These low standards of living are manifested in the form of low incomes, poor health, limited or no education and, in many cases, a general sense of malaise and hopelessness (Todaro, 2000).

2.12. Women and Land

Fundamental as land may be to all humans, and despite being the majority among land users, women in South Africa do not enjoy the same rights to land as men. Women produce most of the nation's food, yet they are the majority among the poor (Machina, 2002). The Department of Land Affairs has explicitly stated its commitment to gender equity in the allocation of land and has demonstrated this by establishing a sub-directorate on land reform, gender policy and implementation (Cherryll, 2003). However, historical factors and unequal gender relations continue to hinder women's access to land

and control over resources in a number of ways:

- Women's land rights are still limited and insecure. Lack of information about land rights further hinders women's ability to access land;
- What rights women hold are threatened by the negative attitudes of some service providers; by chiefs and the rules and practices of customary law; and by patriarchal households and community relations;
- The ability of women to claim land entitlements is variable and depends, to a large extent, on social status and the goodwill of male partners and relatives;
- The laws of inheritance, in which sons have tended to inherit land from their deceased fathers, sometimes leaves widows [and daughters] without rights of tenure;
- Inheritance rights are still limited by customary practices. Even when women can inherit land, they may have to forfeit control of it, usually to male relatives (¹<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2000/genderold.pdf>, 14th May, 2007).

2.13. Conclusion

The successful and peaceful political transition in South Africa is regarded as a great accomplishment for its people. Unfortunately, democracy was not accompanied by economic growth and policies that could lead to a meaningful quality of life and an acceptable standard of living for all the country's citizens and especially women. There is a need for South Africa to reconcile the expectations resulting from the achievement of democracy with the realities of both the problems and the potential of the economy

Against this background, and with regards to South African situation, adopting women's 'empowerment' as a policy goal in development implies a commitment to encouraging a process of more equitable distribution of power in society on personal, economic and political levels. It implies increasing women's control over their lives both individually and collectively, and also their participation and influence in institutional decision-making processes.

However, unless empowerment is clearly defined and the strategies or processes through

which it is to be translated from policy to practice are also specified, it totally becomes a vague goal or meaningless buzzword. Without clear definition of this term in line with the contexts in which they are operating, developmental organisations run the danger of simply renaming the old top-down approaches as part of their empowerment policies. This also poses a danger on such organizations whereby they would operate with no alteration of the contents and characters of their programmes, or simply operating with no complete examination of the needs for changes in their cultures and processes.



Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology, study tools and sources of research data, and the targeted groups and organisations where data was collected. An overview of the case study area, (new Belhar) is also presented and the process of data documentation and data analysis, the limitations of the study and conclusion are presented.

Qualitative techniques were adopted as the main research approach for this study. The rationale for selecting this approach is based on the fact that the research analysis is primarily qualitative thus requiring the use of primary and secondary sources of information. Babbie and Mouton (2001) noted that qualitative types of study emphasize on rapport, trust and participation as measures of avoiding error and establishing validity in research. Stern, Coe, Allan, and Dale, (2004) also suggest that qualitative methods encourage more discussion and involvement by the respondents (individuals, and or focus groups). Qualitative techniques including interviews, direct observation, and focus group discussions were used in this study.

3.2. Qualitative Research

Qualitative research refers to the inductive method of gathering data. Qualitative research is concerned primarily with the process rather than the outcome, i.e. how people make sense of their lives, their experiences and the structure of their world (Creswell, 1994). The researcher used this method to assess opinions, attitudes and perceptions of people in Belhar. Research has shown that social norms suggest that taking responsibility is a good thing, sometime referred to as good citizenship. By asking the people of Belhar what they thought about taking responsibility and being empowered, the researcher was able to use qualitative technique to study respondent's perceptions.

As Stern et al (2004), puts it, qualitative methods encourages more discussion and involvement by respondents. It should be noted that before choosing this research

method, the researcher carried out a preliminary study to see if there was data on Belhar in relation to the research question. The findings showed that very little or no data was available. As a result, the qualitative technique was adopted for data collection. It is worth mentioning that quantitative data was also used to gain further insight from the qualitative research inquiry conducted.

Qualitative research makes preliminary reflection on the concepts before hand, but most of them are developed during data collection. Conversely, in quantitative research, all concepts are thoroughly developed and considered before the actual research. Secondly, in quantitative research, variables are pre-determined and 'converted into specific action during a planning stage' before and separate from data collection and analysis, while measurement for qualitative research is done during data collection process. Moreover, qualitative data is sometimes in the form of spoken words, i.e. expressed opinions which cannot entirely be converted in to a single median like numbers. Alternatively, data is presented using flexible expressions and forms.

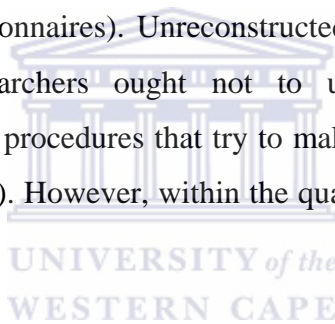
The research also uses qualitative techniques to collect empirical data since open-ended questions were asked where responses could not be fully predicted; they were post-coded through context analysis techniques. In order to test the theoretically derived hypothesis primary and secondary data sources were needed.

Qualitative methods are also an effective tool when the target group are vulnerable, as is inevitably so, when focusing on people with disabilities. Other common vulnerable groups are women, illiterate groups and people with HIV. The capacity of qualitative research to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of the people in the community contributes towards improving the validity (and therefore the value and ethics) of the research. However, there is also a need to recognise the limitations of the qualitative approach.

It is difficult to define qualitative research since it doesn't involve the same terminology as ordinary science. The simplest definition is to say it involves methods of data collection and analysis that are non-quantitative (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Another way

of defining it is to say it focuses on "quality", a term referring to the essence or ambience of something (Berg, 1989). Others would say it involves a subjective methodology and self as the research instrument (Adler & Adler, 1987). Historical comparative researchers would say it always involves the historical context, and sometimes a critique of the "front" being put on to get at the "deep structure" of social relations.

Data are not inherently quantitative, and can be bits and pieces of almost anything. Qualitative techniques do not necessarily have to be expressed in numbers. Frequency distributions and probability tables are not the norm. Data can come in the form of words, images, impressions, gestures, or tones which represent real events or reality as it is seen symbolically. Qualitative research uses unreconstructed logic to get at what is really real, the quality, meaning, context, or image of reality in what people actually do, not what they say they do (as on questionnaires). Unreconstructed logic means that there are no step-by-step rules, that researchers ought not to use prefabricated methods or reconstructed rules, terms, and procedures that try to make their research look clean and neat (as in journal publications). However, within the qualitative research, the case study approach will be utilized.



3.3. Case Study Approach

Case study is a detailed analysis of a person or group, especially as a model of social phenomena. In addition it is a detailed intensive study of a unit, such as a corporation or a corporate division that stresses factors contributing to its success or failure. It is again variously defined as a method, methodology, or research design (Bassegy, 1999). It is used as a catch-all category for a variety of research methods, methodologies, and designs and as a result, loses its meaning.

Gerring (2004) stated, Case study is a research design best defined as an intensive study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomenon. This notwithstanding, case study have a number of advantages:

- case study calls for an intensive and in-depth focus on the specific unit of analysis and generally requires a much smaller sample size than survey research (Yin,

2004).

- Efforts to perform broad analyses with large numbers of participants can reduce the effectiveness of case study as it might come at the expense of detailed description.

This study targeted Belhar because of its small simple size and because this approach was deemed effective for the study.

It must be noted that, there was limited information on Belhar. Therefore, a contextual study was needed. The study aim to give the reader a sense of “being there” by providing a highly detailed, contextualized analysis of an “an instance in action” in Belhar. The researcher carefully delineates the “instance,” defining it in general terms and teasing out its particularities.

In addition, there was the need for natural settings. The case study was chosen to systematically study the situations in Belhar where there was little control over behaviour, organization, or events (Yin, 2003). As Anderson, Crabtree, Steele, and McDaniel puts it, case study is uniquely suitable for research in complex settings (Anderson, *et al*, 2005) because it advances the concept that complex settings cannot be reduced to single cause and effect relationships.

Some limitations of case studies include:

- Case study must adjust to such changes in the unit of analysis that may occur in the course of the research, as the researcher arrives at a situation where he or she cannot force through his or her initial domain assumptions. The case study is a “coming to terms” with the unit of analysis, which is itself dependent on other paradigmatic considerations.
- Furthermore, case study is a tradisciplinary study. It implies that case study has no particular disciplinary orientation; that is, it can be used in social science, science, applied science, business, fine arts, and humanities research, for example. Therefore, it is regard heuristic at its most general level as an approach that focuses one’s attention during learning, construction, discovery, or problem solving.

New Belhar, the poorer side of the suburb, conditions is different. It is home to a poorly housed, impoverished working class community, plagued by socio-economic problems. The socio-historical context of new Belhar resembles that of most of the 'coloured' communities in the Cape Peninsula area. A number of the most important issues in new Belhar are rooted in the poor socio-economic conditions together with extreme overcrowding in some areas. These conditions manifest themselves in many ways including anti-social behavior, gangsterism and "shebeens", low incomes and high unemployment are common in many households (City of Cape Town Tygerberg Administration, Town Planning Department, 1999). Acute shortage of housing and lack of adequate health facilities coupled with increased levels of crime. Violence seems to be the major preoccupation of the youth in the area. Cloete (2005) has commented that since its establishment, new Belhar has become one of the worst crime areas in the Cape Peninsula. In such a community with gang related violence, it is difficult for women to have a say in any matter because they are afraid for their lives.

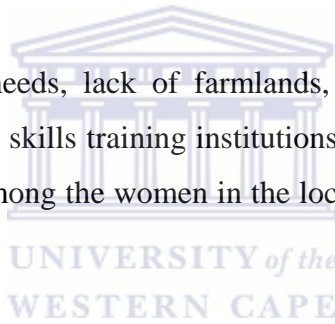
Under apartheid legislation, development of a new section of Belhar was initiated as one of the suburbs for the relocation of the "displaced" "coloured" communities living in the Cape Peninsula. The community has both formal and informal settlement (Amoateng, 1997). New Belhar community is one with poor infrastructure, unemployment and has acute housing problems, among other things (Allanise, 2005). New Belhar consists of many sections namely, Extensions 1 to 23 and the Self-help section. This research is specifically carried out in extensions 13 and 14.

The extensions are also the section where the communities from the Cape Peninsula were relocated to during the implementation of the Group Area Act in the early 1980s. According to statistics during 2001-2002, the incidence of crime (murder) doubled in the extensions as compared to the Old Belhar (Allanise, 2005). The myriad social problems that plague new Belhar, especially crime, seem to be associated with the socio-economic status of the residents within the community. For instance, the most serious crime in old Belhar, the more affluent section, appears to be house-breaking and theft, while in extensions sections and the self help section, the common crimes are assaults, domestic violence, gang fights, shebeens and rape, housebreaking, alcoholism and drug abuse.

As a result of insecurity, women have less say in public matters for fear of their lives. Lack of social and communal democracy has reduced civil lives to individualism and apathy. Distrust and differences in social stratification among women and of their socio-economic circumstances (poverty and unemployment) are some of the characteristics found among the women of new Belhar (Cohn *et al*, 2003).

In 2001, the area recorded a population of 49 404 (Strategic Development Information and GIS, 2001) at a rate of 2 per cent, as compared to 57 000 persons in 1999 (City of Cape Town Tygerberg Administration, Town Planning Department, 1999). The more than 10% drop in the population is as a result of the insecurity in the community and out migration of the population especially those who are economically sound to other parts of South Africa.

The complete lack of basic needs, lack of farmlands, job openings, credit facilities, shopping malls, vocational and skills training institutions have compounded the problem of unemployment especially among the women in the locality (www.css.cornell.edu, 19th May, 2007).



Almost all case studies involve unstructured interview and ethnographic methodology (meaning the subject was allowed to express themselves in their own words) and new Belhar was no exception. It's difficult to describe the variety of techniques used to arrive at useful generalisations in a case study. One way to generalise from a sample of one is to argue that group data overlooks or blurs the significance of individual success or failure.

Another way to generalize from a sample of one is to use the "universe in a dewdrop" argument. With case studies, this is called "methodological holism" and is quite common in Historical-Comparative research. The idea is to find a subject so average, so typical, so much like everyone else that he/she seems to reflect the whole universe of other subjects around him/her (<http://faculty.ncwc.edu/toconnor/308/308lect09.htm>, 16th October, 2007).

One of the limitations of the case study area was the limited availability of information as

Campbell and Stanley (1966), rejected the ‘one-shot case study’ as having “almost no scientific value”. Their judgment was based on what they regarded as the near impossibility of ascribing causation in a single case, (as already explain above) where no pre-test is available and very few variables are measured at post-test (Bobbie & Mouton, 2001).

3.4. Overview of Case Study Site: Belhar

Belhar is one of the many “dormitory” suburbs of Cape Town. The form of development is predominantly residential with related community facilities. There is very little commercial or industrial infrastructure and the area lacks a definable centre. In 1987 the Administrator of the Cape authorized the Western Cape Regional Council to prepare a local structure plan for Belhar (City of Cape Town Tygerberg Administration, Town Planning Department, 1999). Belhar is located 27 kms from Cape Town. According to a structural plan “Belhar is bounded by the Bellville/Langa railway line to the north, Stellenbosh Arterial Road to the south, Modderdam Road to the west and Kuilsriver Freeway to the east” (Pentz, 1991). Belhar is shouldered by the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Cape Peninsular University of Technology. Belhar, as with many other Cape Town suburbs, may have one name, but it is a home to two very different communities (Cape Argus, 9, August 2004, p. 8). Old Belhar, just behind UWC, was established more than 30 years ago and is an affluent, quiet and peaceful community of educated, high income, professionals. Belhar is home to about 85,000 mainly coloured people (Cape Argus, 9, August 2004, p. 8).

3.4.1. Population Distribution

Belhar has a population of approximately 49,404 inhabitants (Strategic Development Information and GIS, 2001), predominantly adult within the age group of 18-34. This age group makes up 30.05% of the total population, of which 15.56% are females and 14.49% are males. The second largest group includes individuals within the ages of 35-54. This age group makes up 25.44% of the population of which 13.66% are females and 11.78% are males. The youth, ages 10-18 make up 10.94% of the population with the total number of males amounting to 5.39% and females 5.55%. Finally, the children ages

0-10 years make up 25% of the population. 12.48% of the children in Belhar are females while 12.51% are males. It is evident from the above that females make up the bulk of the population of this community.

Figure 1: Population Distribution

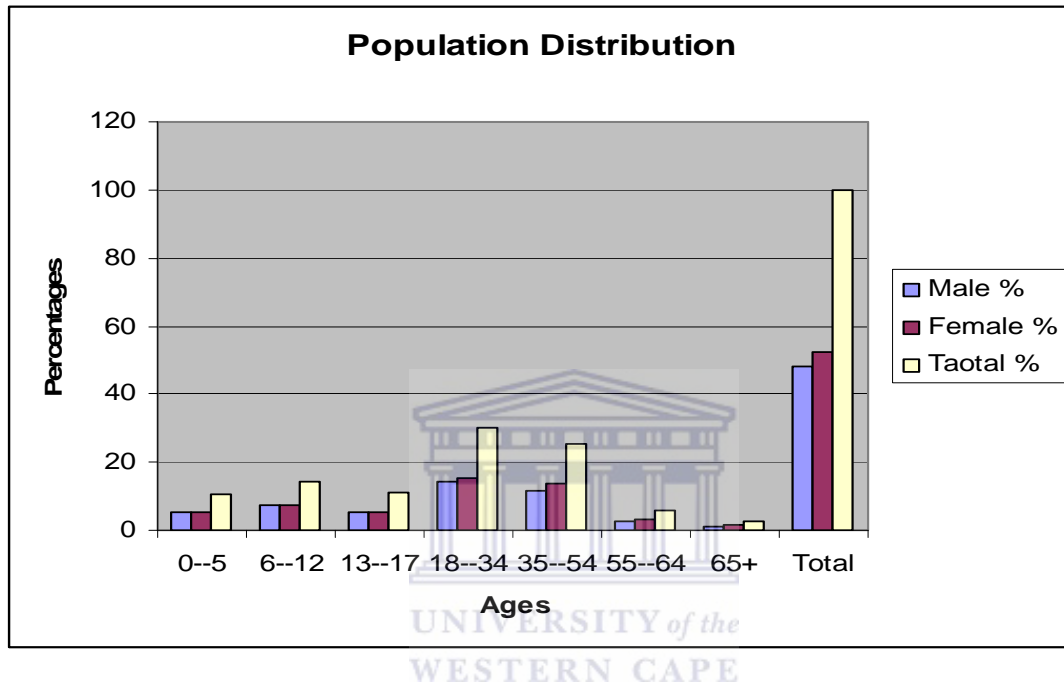


Figure 3.1. Population distribution of inhabitants of New Belhar (Source: Strategic Development Information and GIS, 2001).

3.4.2. Administration

New Belhar is administered by a Municipal Council headed by a councilor. The councilor Mr. Jaftha Desmond has been in office for close to two year. He was elected in to office. New Belhar was a formal strong hold of the New National Party (NNP), but it collapsed because the leader left for the African National Congress (ANC). Majority of the residents are supporters of the Democratic Alliance (DA) presently. Thus, the councilor is a candidate of the DA in the community. The Councilor has five assistances and a couple of others who offer their services voluntarily. The staffs are made of three women and two men. Amongst the three women, one manages the affairs of the aged in the

community. She sees that they are well cared for and provided their most essential needs like food, medication and warmth clothing. The second lady is the community officer. Her duties are to receive complaints, arrange meeting(s) to resolve the complaints and submit them to the councilor. The third is a social development officer. She is concerned with providing food for the community as well as development matters in the community. The councilor ensures that the basic needs of the people (services) are delivered. This includes necessities such as water, electricity, safety, sanitation and health (Interview with Mr Jaftha, 7th, May 2007).

3.4.3. Languages

From the interviews and group discussions held, it was revealed that the community of new Belhar is predominantly Afrikaans speaking (Interview with some of the ladies, 11th April, 2007). More than 70% of the population speaks Afrikaans. English language is the second popular language spoken and understood. 26.83% of the population speak and understands English. Many children are very fluent in the Afrikaans language but are unable to construct a sentence in English. Respondents also revealed that, there is a small population of Xhosa speakers estimated at 1.15% while those who speak other South African languages and foreign language speakers make up 0.93% of the inhabitants.

Figure 2: Languages.

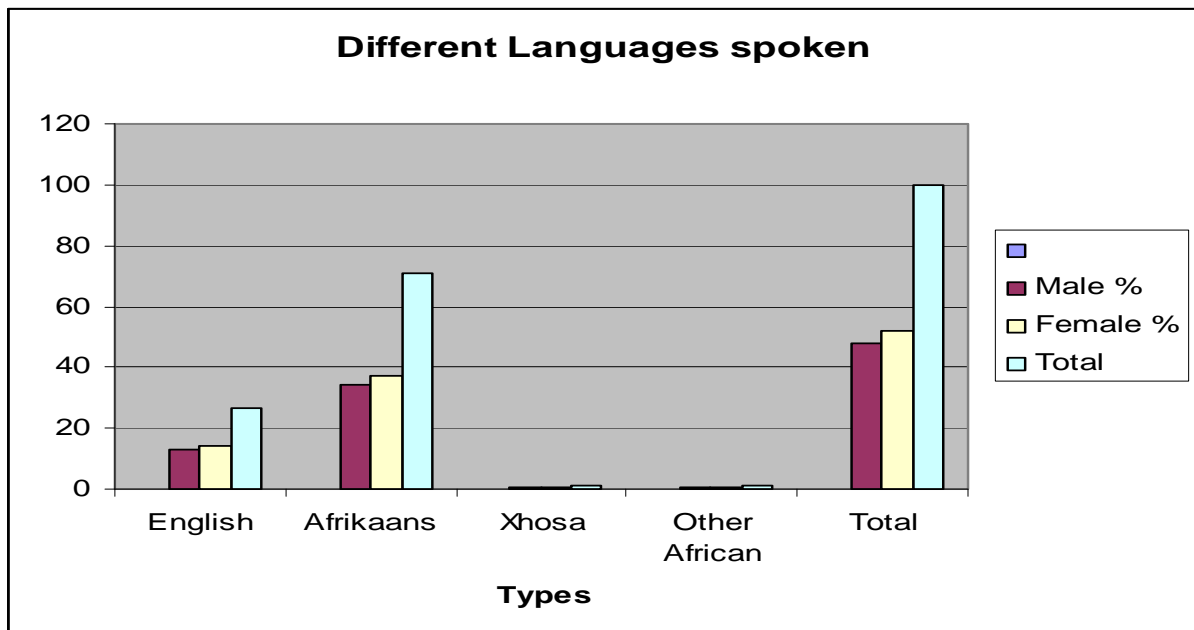


Figure 3.2. *Distribution of the different languages spoken in the community* Source: *Strategic Development Information and GIS, 2001*

3.4.4. Economic Activities

The main economic activity in the community is trading. There is one shopping mall (pick- mor supermarket), that provide basic items but it is not fully equipped with all the necessary things needed by the residents. Certain items, therefore, have to be purchased in Bellville or other shopping malls. There are few shops that provide employment opportunity to the member of the community. Lack of employment is a significant contributor to poverty especially among women. Several studies documented the negative impact of male unemployment on the survival tactic of women in the absence of alternative productive roles for or the reallocation of responsibilities for reproductive activities (World Bank, 1995). A lot of people have small stances in front of their home and mostly perishable goods are sole.

Most of the women in the community are self employ. They have small tables in front of their home with little boxes of sweets, biscuits, and fruits that they sell to the residents due to inadequate capital to open a shop. Women's contribution to family welfare and involvement in community management is difficult and effect personal and family circumstances, since these women have to depend on their male partners for financial assistances (Cohn *et al*, 2003).

There are also petty businesses such as barber shops, hair dressing saloons, shoe repairs, cell phone repairs and accessories, fridge repairs, motor garage for repairs of minor damages to car and fruit and vegetable stands (Njomo, 2006). Another very prominent economic activity in the community is the operation of shebeens. There are a lot of illegal shebeens in the community. Only one of them is licensed. These shebeens affects the community Youth, because most of them spend time drinking and committing crimes as they are either jobless or not going to school (Interview with Councillor, 16, May, 2007). The PIR (1998) states that unemployment rates are the highest among Africans in rural areas, among women and the youth, and among those with no previous work experience. Inadequate employment opportunities, especially for low-skilled and unskilled persons, impact strongly on poverty in South Africa. Although unemployment and

underemployment are the main causes of poverty, many other factors can contribute. It is argued that many of the poor lack the will to work (Streeten, 1989).

Presently, one shopping mall and 60 shops are under construction, which are expected to be completed by November 2007. It is expected that, these shops will provide employment opportunity to the residents thereby reducing the rate of unemployment in the community (Interview with Councillor, 11th, April, 2007).

3.4.5. Political Representation

According to the councillor's Reports, four political parties are well represented in the community- the African Nation Congress (ANC), the United Party of South Africa (UPS), the Independent Democracy (ID), and the Democratic Alliance (DA). Of all four, the DA has the majority followers. The New National Party was the people's party but it felt apart when the leader switched to the ANC party and majority of its followers went instead to the DA. When asked why the members didn't move alone to the ANC with their leader? The councillor said the members felt they were betrayed and that nobody cares for them.

However, residents are active participants in all elections. Most of them support the structure of parties that offers something (Money, Gifts etc) to them and the women are more supportive than the men in every election.

3.4.6. Decision Making

The councillor declared that decision making in the community is strictly participatory by means of public meeting and debate. However, the final decision rest with the councillor. In other words the voice of the public plays a very important role in arriving at decisions that affect the community. Before any decision is taken and implemented, his assistances hold meeting(s) with all the Area Committees to discuss the issues, then, they inform the councillor, give him feedback on the meeting with an agenda for the next meeting. After the preliminary meeting(s) a public meeting is held in the minor hall of the community to enlighten the people on the matter(s), if need be. In this public forum, community members have the freedom to voice out their opinions on the issue in question. Thereafter

the final decision will be made by the councilor (Interview with Mr. Jaftha, 7th May, 2007).

3.5. Data Collection Instrument

Data Collection Instrument of this study form the content in which the abstraction was based, on methodologies used in other systematic reviews interviews, observation, focus group discussions, and meta-analytic literature; expert opinion and review. The form is used to classify and describe key characteristics of the intervention.

Data was collected using a pen and a notebook during interviews and focus group discussions. At the end of every meeting, the researcher made sure information gathered was immediately entered into a spreadsheet or word processor and stored in a named and secure file folder.

3.5.1. Interviews

Using qualitative interviews in Belhar, this study was designed to understand participants' lived experience "from their own point of view", as they struggled to reduce personal powerlessness and dependency. The qualitative approach of Guba and Lincoln, (1989); Lord, Schnarr, and Hutchison, (1987); Patton, (1990) that provides an in-depth examination of the process of people's transition toward increased control in their lives was adopted. The researcher interviewed forty key informants selected using the non-probability sampling method (See Appendix 1). The respondents included; Five community leaders (because they represent the main decision makers within the community); Five leaders from community organisations in Belhar, (because they are concern with helping the government in the development issues in the community), and thirty females this group was the focus of the study) though this does not constitute the majority's perceptions, more opinions were derive from the FGDs and personal observation and three male because they represent the main opposition forces to women empowerment in the community.

Two different sets of semi-structured interviews texts were prepared; both including a brief on the research purposes and the theoretical perspective. Through open-ended

questions (See Appendix for research questions 1), one questionnaire aims to capture all possible details regarding women empowerment as a whole and aimed at getting inside information from respondents on their opinions, expression and views regarding women empowerment; while the other intends to capture the understanding which individual have on women empowerment issues in the community. This was done in order to get alternative perspectives and gain insights from convergences and divergences of responses given by the two groups.

In addition, the Belhar councilor was interviewed in depth since majority and final decision concerning the community rest to a greater extend with him. Actually, his consent and encouragement was an added advantage to the researcher as he did introduced the researcher to other leaders and organizational leaders as well in the community. This facilitated the interview process.

Furthermore, expert opinion was sought from academic researchers, religious organization representatives and NGOs representatives, though there are more than 65 community organizations that claim to be involved in various social and economic projects to improve the lot of the residents. But most of them are in-active because of financial constrain and only 15 Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are active. These 15 NGOs were recently launched and the community is still awaiting for a development agenda for the community. This made things difficult for the researcher because of lack of information and statistic readily available. There are also 12 religious organizations in the community. These religious organizations represent all the churches in the community and are actively involved in all major social issues that are of concern to the community as a whole. Their main aim in the community is to help change the mentality of the residents and especially the Youth to keep away from violence and gang related activities.

The random sampling techniques used in the study was aimed at ensuing balanced representation of different opinions, conviction and experiences in a community characterized by regional division along political preference and orientations, traditional cultures, and different socio-economic factors. Actual identification of interviewee in the

community was done by the different ethnic groups found in the community such as Coloured, Black African, Indian/Asian and White.

The results of the interviews contributed directly to the formulation of answers to the research question. Moreover, the answers did also supply new insights regarding the truth surrounding women empowerment issues.

3.5.2. Observation

Observation is the process of immersing yourself in the study of people you're not too different from. It is almost always done covertly, with the researcher never revealing their true purpose or identity. If it's a group the researcher already know a lot about, s/he need to step back and take the perspective of a "martian", as if s/he were from a different planet and seeing things in a fresh light. If it's a group that the researcher knows nothing about, s/he need to become a "convert" and really get committed and involved. The more secretive and amorphous the group, the more the researcher need participation. The more localized and turf-conscious the group, the more the researcher need observation.

The key point behind observation was that the researcher must operate on two levels: becoming an insider while remaining an outsider. S/he must avoid becoming over socialised, or "going native", as well as being personally revolted or repulsed by the group conduct. Going native was seen by the researcher as giving up research and joining the group for life.

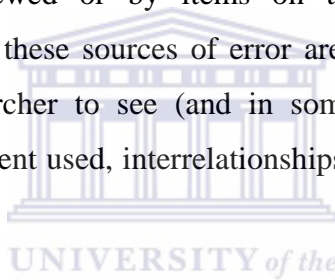
Observation was used as a methodology for data collection by systematically and keenly noting as well as recording the flow of events, the interactions, information and communication channels in the natural settings of the Belhar community. Such observations did enable the researcher to better understand the internal dynamics of the community socially, economically and politically. The advantages of observation to this research were as follows;

An observation of the Belhar community includes specific evidence of what occurred. The researcher did use this evidence to support claims she made when she talked with respondents after the observation. Secondly, carefully recorded notes did help the researcher to remember what s/he observed when later; approach the task of interpreting

and making judgments. A narrative is chronological. The researcher simply write what was seen as it happened.

Furthermore, open-ended observation in the community gave the researcher the opportunity to record what happened in its natural context. Behaviour only has meaning when you see it and interpret it in light of the setting: where it fit in the lesson, what the participants were doing, what happened right before, how the participants responded, etc.

In addition, with direct Observation, the researcher did obtained first-hand knowledge and information about the study being analysed. Other methods (such as the interview or questionnaire) only allow the researcher to indirectly obtain this information. Thus, with other methods, sources of error (ommissions or exaggerations) are introduced either by the incumbent being interviewed or by items on the questionnaire. With direct observation of the incumbent, these sources of error are eliminated. In addition, direct Observation allows the researcher to see (and in some cases experience) the work environment, tools and equipment used, interrelationships with other participants, and its complexity.



Furthermore, direct Observation of incumbents was necessary in the community to support participant's testimony. A researcher is necessary to support personnel actions that were taken. However, the researcher should have been of limited value if s/he had not seen the incumbent perform. In other words, relying solely on the incumbent's description may not withstand scrutiny and not subject to hearsay rule. However, it was important to recognize the limitations of direct observation. They include the following;

The research finding would have lack reliability. i.e. could not be repeated with the same results and could therefore be seen as unreliable. Observations would have been deviate if the researcher did not join in fully with the group. Furthermore, only small numbers of people can be surveyed at a time. In addition, it is time consuming and hard work. Saphier (1993) points out the following flaws in observations; they never have enough categories to include every event you observe. According to Saphier, "the more categories there are, the more likely this is to happen, since the categories become more

specific.” In addition, there is usually no place to record supporting evidence for the researcher’s claims. Saphier says even a form that allows space for comments is less than ideal because the amount of white space provided limits what you can write. Furthermore, a rating might be given on a certain behaviour or quality. But according to Saphier, “Knowing the presence or absence of a behaviour is useless unless we know how it was used, in what context, in other words if the behaviour was used appropriately.” He also says that checklists and other instruments with categories for organising observations “efface the reader’s sense of the flow of the way events unfolded.” Instead, a chronological narrative shows how events related to each other (Saphier, 1993).

Again with direct Observation the presence of the researcher may affect the incumbent causing the incumbent to alter their normal behaviour. It is important for the researcher to be unobtrusive in their observations. Participants may alter their behaviour if they know they are being observed. Moreover, the researcher's own perception of what ‘IS’ will give bias to the end recorded result. There may be too few trials/studies/or objects observed to make an end conclusion to the study.

3.5.3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

One of the prerequisite of FGDs is that factor influencing the success of the focus group is the researcher’s ability to conduct a smooth and natural conversation. Firstly, the researcher did visit the participants in their home to invite them to the session. This was an indication that the researcher considers the participant important enough to make a personal visit and could encourage them to attend. While at their home, the researcher did collect some basic demographic data: their age, occupation and marital status, for example. This was done because registration at the time of the focus group takes up valuable time, and people may not want to register and give away personal details in front of other participants.

Furthermore, great help came from the Councillor and other community leaders, who gave the researcher permission to enter the community. They helped the researcher locate most of the participants and in arranging a site for the session. Each participant was then

asked the time that s/he will be available. The researcher did arrive before the appointed time to make sure the place where the focus group discussions is to be held is ready.

Further, the researcher welcomes the participants and thanks them for coming. Introduce the moderator who did welcome the group through a direct translation. This gave the strong impression of their involvement in the session. The researcher further provided a simple explanation of the project without giving away the exact nature of the research questions and why the participants were chosen. Include the importance of their contribution to the study and the community and made them understand that the session will be confidential.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) did play an important role in the qualitative research approach. One of the most prominent advantages of the focus group discussions was that it did reveal how the group participated and view the issues with which they are confronted. Ten focus groups discussions were conducted. Five groups were represented by the Belhar women; the second group was made up of two groups, represented by some members of the Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in Belhar. The third group was made up of two groups, selected from representatives of relevant religious organizations found in Belhar. The last group was made up of one group of Belhar men. Each focus group discussion comprised of ten members. Before selecting the focus groups, the researcher did consult with the Councilor, who helped to contact leaders of the NGOs and religious leaders in order to facilitate the appropriate focus groups. The researcher also hired an assistant in facilitating the focus group discussions and data collection due to language barrier.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data was analysed in the tradition of qualitative research. A five step qualitative analysis process was designed to ensure that patterns and themes which might emerge from the data could be carefully verified. These included: transcribing the notes from the interviews; coding the data with key words as a way of identifying commonalities and variations; identifying common and variable patterns within each group as well as across groups; and identifying themes which link or explain the data (Miles & Huberman, 1984) using Microsoft Word and Micro Excel for Windows Explorer.

The core of qualitative analysis lies on three related processes: describing phenomena,

classifying it and seeing how the concepts interconnect. It is seen as a circular process to show that they interconnect each other. The first step in the qualitative data analysis was to develop thorough and comprehensive description of the phenomenon in the case study. Geertz (1973) and Denzin (1978) call this a 'thick' description. If 'thin' description merely states 'facts', a 'thick' description includes information about the context of an act, the intentions and meanings that organise action, and its subsequent evolution (Denzin, 1978). Thus description encompasses the *contexts* of action, the *intentions* of actor, and the *process* in which action is embedded.

Classification is the second process that was used in analysis the data. Without classifying the data, the researcher would not have known ways of knowing what it is that was analyse. The researcher would not have made meaningful comparisons between different bits of data. So, classifying the data was an integral part of the analysis. Moreover, the conceptual foundations upon which interpretation and explanation are based lay on it.

Alvin Toffler (in Coveney & Highfield, 1991), said that, researchers are so good at dissecting data that they often forget how to put the pieces back together again. This problem will not arise if description and classification are not ends in themselves but must serve an overriding purpose that is to produce an account for analysis. For that purpose the researcher did make connections among building block of concepts of analysis as well as graphic representation. This was a useful tool in analysing concepts and their connections.

3.7. Research procedure

The research procedure for this study was conducted after getting clearance from the relevant authorities. Literature study, including both primary and secondary data was gathered from different sources. This was followed by field data collection exercise. Identification and sensitisation of participants in Belhar such as the councillor, community leaders, community women and men, representatives of NGOs and religious organisations, etc. this was followed by consultation with prominent players: various leaders in the community, female and male both workers and non-workers,

who were interviewed. Interviews were conducted with twenty key people using the non-probability sampling technique. In addition to this, the researcher carried out a total of ten focus group discussions (5 FGDs with Belhar women, 2 FGDs with representatives from NGOs, 2 FGDs with representatives from religious organisations in the community, 1 FGD with men in the community). Each FGD comprised of 10 members, as much as possible gender balanced for the NGOs and religious organisations. This was been done with the help of an assistant to help in facilitation during FGD and data collection due to language barrier. Before the interviews and FGD, the researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they should feel free to leave, at any time, if they did not feel comfortable. Data processing was done mostly by using Microsoft Word for Windows and Micro Excel for presentation of data. Data analysis, synthesis and presentation were done using different tools such as tables, charts, bar graphs, maps, and statistical analysis.

3.8. Limitations of the Study

The researcher experienced a lot of limitations during the data collection process in the field. The most important ones include:

- Financial constraints: The exercise of data collection became very expensive since it was being financed by the researcher. This involved paying a facilitator for his time, during the interviews and FGD.
- Some respondents were not willing to talk, despite the fact that they had been inform of the advantages of carrying out a research in the community and more specifically on women. Some even argued that the study will be a waste of their time and nothing will change their situation.
- Inability to meet some of the key organisational and government officials for the interviews despite making prior arrangements and a number of visits to their offices.

3.9. Conclusion

The above chapter elaborated on the scope of the study, the reason for selecting the case study area as well as the research methods used and their importance in relation to this

research and the justification for using largely qualitative research methods. From the statistics above it is indicative of the fact women represent the majority of the population in the community yet they are the least empowered.



Chapter Four

Presentation of Research Finding and Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

The greatest struggle since the early post-apartheid days has been the attempt to undo the socio-economic vestiges of the system of racial exclusivity which plague mostly women. Despite this struggle, some of our communities like new Belhar are still witnessing rising unemployment, rising income poverty, and inequality. President Nelson Mandela's Inaugural Speech of April 1994, expressed great concern specifically about the empowerment of women. He stated in his speech;

“It is vitally important that all structures of government, including the President himself, should understand this fully: that freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. All of us must take this on board, that the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) will not have been realised unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of the women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all spheres of life as equals with any other member of society”. (President Nelson Mandela, Inaugural Speech April 1994).

From the above quotation, it's all clear that freedom for all South Africans can not be attained unless the visible and practical conditions of women has changed. Therefore the empowerment of women is a prerequisite for any sustainable development in South Africa. This chapter presents an analysis of the field research findings. The finding was obtained in response to questions that were administered to respondents either in form of semi-structured questions or group discussions. The research was conducted in new Belhar. The overall aim of undertaking the study was to investigate a community's perception of the factors that hinder women's empowerment in Belhar. The general presentation and analysis of the findings are based on the objectives of the study.

4.2. Objective 1: To Investigate the Community's Perceptions of the main Factors Responsible for Women's lack of Economic and Social Empowerment in new Belhar,

The main factors perceived as responsible for women's lack of socio-economic empowerment in the community were associated with poverty, lack of education, lack of housing, unemployment, amongst others. Findings indicate that poverty amongst others was the paramount barrier to women's lack of economic and social empowerment in the community. Figure 1 indicates general perceptions of the factors that hinder women from being empowered.

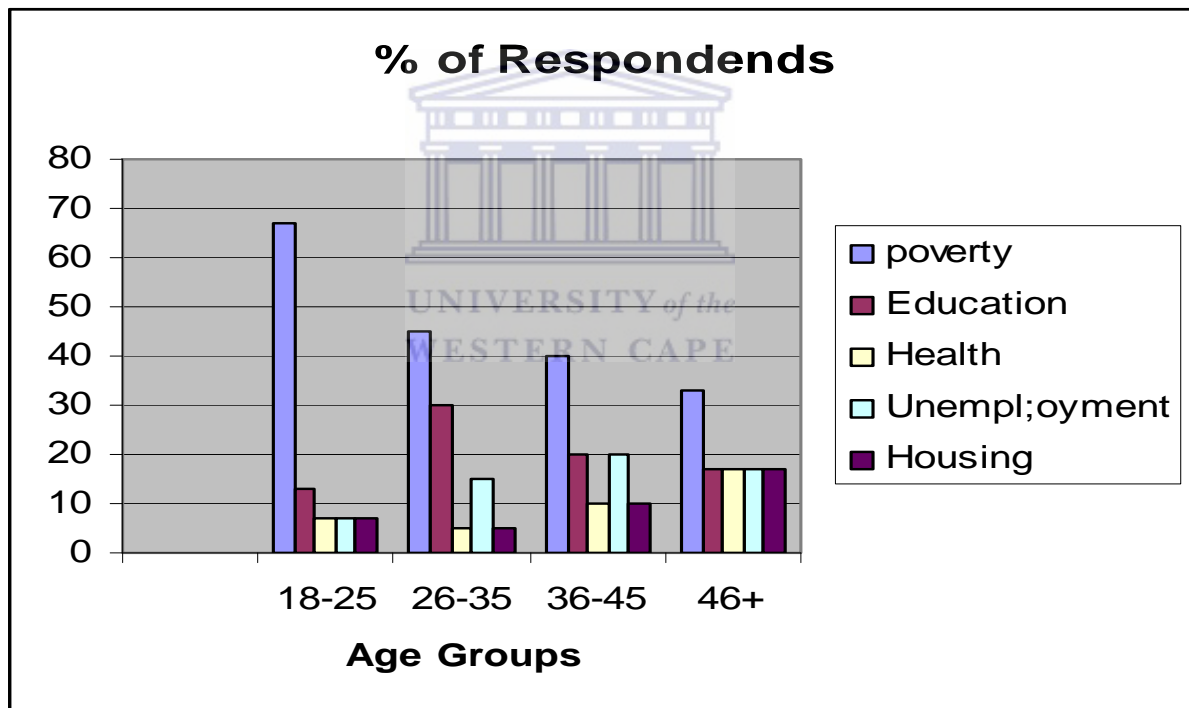


Figure 1. Factors perceived by respondent to be the barrier to Women Empowerment in the community. Source: Interviews and Focus Group Discussions, 2007

The diagram above indicates that poverty, in all age groups amongst other factors that hinder women from being empowered. While 67% is the highest percentage, within the age group of 18-25 years, who are perceived to be poor, as compared to 45%, 40% and 33% within the age groups of 26-35, 36-45 and 46+ respectively, other factors were

minimal in comparison to poverty. According to them poverty is the main cause of their feeling of being powerless. Few respondents did acknowledge that lack of education was a contributing factor to their being poor as compared to health, employment and housing. Whereas education and unemployment are major contributing factors that hinders women within the age groups of 26-35 (30% and 15%) and 36-45 (20% and 20%), from being empower.

4.2.1. Poverty

Poverty documentations suggested that poverty is one of the many factors responsible for women’s disempowerment. Poverty was explained by individual circumstances and/or characteristics of the women. Some examples were: level of education, skill, experience, intelligence, health, handicaps, work orientation, time horizon, culture of poverty, discrimination, together with race, sex, etc. the table below reflect responses from participants. A total of 50 respondents were involved. Out of this number, 15 women were within the age groups 18-25, 12 were within the age groups 26-35, 12 were within the age groups of 36-45 and 11 were 46 years and above.

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Table 1: Percent of respondents with regard to Poverty

Poverty Level	Age groups			
	18-25 (N=15)	26-35 (N=12)	36-45 (N=12)	46+ (N=11)
Basic Needs	47%	50%	42%	36%
Permanent Workers	27%	25%	17%	9%
Grant	27%	25%	42%	55%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: interviews and FGDs, 2007.

Table 1, above indicates that the majority of respondents who are perceived to be poor are within the ages of 26-35. While 50% within this age group are perceived to be poor, as compared to other age groups, they believed that their poverty is a result of not having the basic necessities such as food, education, and housing, clothes etc. which they can provide by themselves without depending on their partner or parents. In addition, most of

the respondents within this age group are casual workers and most of the times are unemployed. Though some of them receive social welfare grants at times, majority of them explained that these grants are inadequate to support themselves and their children. The majority of beneficiaries of these welfare grants were found to be within the age groups of 46 and above, which receive 55% of the welfare grants. Majority of the respondents in relation to these grants stated that they were content since most of them do not have anyone dependent on them. Therefore, they are capable of providing their every need.

Accordingly, Cornia et al (1995) explained that, poverty has various important manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to secure a sustainable livelihood; hunger, malnutrition, and ill health; and lack of access to education, housing, and other basic services. For instance, social inequality that stems from cultural ideas about the relative worth of different genders, races, ethnic groups, and social classes, works by placing individuals in different social categories at birth often based on religious, ethnic, or 'racial' characteristics. In South African history, apartheid laws defined a binary system that assigned different rights (or lack thereof) and social spaces to Whites and Blacks, using skin colour to automatically determine the opportunities available to individuals in each group (Davidson & Duclos, 2000). As a result blacks especially women were greatly disempowered according to the system that was put in place.

In Post-apartheid South Africa, there have been different attempts and approaches to reduce the high level of poverty mostly amongst women. Over such were the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP explains poverty as a direct result of the apartheid system and the accompanying industrial development that benefited certain groups (ANC, 1994). Yet, Apartheid and economic exploitation have created some significant and unnecessary inequalities among South Africans in general, and women more specifically, which therefore hinder women from being empowered.

Participants described poverty as having a lot of 'worries', 'tension' or 'pressures' in life. One looks physically unhealthy, not 'open' minded and 'free', and not 'bold' and

‘confident’. Almost every participant mentioned that a woman who is not poor has a harmonious home life, which is largely determined by the quality of her relationships either with her husband or friends. Most of the women expressed this as an absence of negative relationships and thoughts. Only a few mentioned the presence of positive relationships. Some women commented that financial independence from their husbands was also important for a women’s health, i.e. women having their own source of income (Interview and FGDs, May 2007). The following quotes typify the responses:

Such a woman does not have any worries, feels free. Has an open mind, is always happy since all needs are met, quite contented financially and mentally. Is being treated with love and concern by relations, is financially independent. Has the power without anybody’s restriction to make decisions regarding different occasions (Interview, April 2007).

The above statements indicate that poverty is perceived to be a major barrier to women’s empowerment in the community. They use phrases such as good health, happiness, fighting, depression, worries to define the term empowerment. Inequalities lead to unemployment and result with the problem of poverty which is more visible among women. The cause of poverty that is used to describe the lack of empowerment among women points to the major challenges faced by the government to address issues of inequality in the community and society as a whole.

Bremner, Crawford, Mairs, and Minsky, explains that; “The literature on poverty and empowerment both point to the extensive and devastating effects that poverty can have on people's lives” (Bremner, *et al*, 1988). Poverty in the community is a dis-empowering experience for all of the low-income women and most especially those not working. As a result of poverty, many of the women explained that they have to live on welfare for extended periods, and are forced to live in housing projects with other people who are poor.

In addition to this, women talked about many of their concerns that hinder them from being empowered. Amongst them were, a loss of control and a perpetuation of

dependency on their partners; invasion of privacy; being robbed of their self-esteem; being seen as not trustworthy; being blamed for their own misfortune; and feeling oppressed. All such perceived attributes help them to be more hopeless and disempowered.

Elderly women in the community are also powerless. Those without families to support them are also often poor. Their vulnerability is seen not only in their inadequate pensions/grants and their hunger, but also in their loneliness. Tower (1987) indicates that, “Elderly people’s vulnerability is better than not having food”. Garcia explains that women are more likely than men to be poor and impoverished; and to remain poor for longer periods of time than men do (Garcia, 2000). The perception of elderly women being poor in the community is evident in their loneliness. Majority of them spend their day at the community hall, where they could spend time with other people and return to their homes at nightfall. 55% indicated that, they prefer to be at the community hall than at their home. Welfare grants to the elders are a source of finance but not comfort. 8 out of the 11 women mention that they were poor despite the fact that they receive this grant from government. Many respondents explained that they have applied for these grants time in and time out but their applications are not processed. This renders them powerless as they often use the money to get personal needs. Others made mention of the lateness of their documents being processed and how they can do little or nothing about it.

Samson (2002) explained that women, as the primary care providers for children, orphans, the elderly, and those who live with physical and mental disabilities are particularly dependent on social security grants. At times, procedural obstacles in accessing certain grants have resulted in lower take-up rates by women for both pensions and disability grants.

The take-up rates amongst African women for state maintenance grants has been particularly low, effectively reflecting racial bias in the distribution of such grants in practice and as Oldfield terms it ‘if not in strict legal terms’ (Oldfield, 2000). As a result of such bias, women feel hopeless and powerless at times to pursuit their cause to the end. Single parents in Belhar who depend on these grants find it virtually difficult to take

care of their children and themselves. Many of the women who were interviewed wanted to empower themselves in one way or another but there was one major problem, finance. The grants they receive from government are inadequate to take care of their household needs.

The legislation on the provision of welfare grants has been amended but the targeted population; women and children couple with persons with disabilities is mostly at times the last to get such grants. Women's powerlessness comes in to play when they can not attack the constitution. However, as Meth and Dias (2004) points out, the major problem is at the implementation stage which is slow and ineffective.

Soper (1981) explained that a human's needs are a powerful source of explanation to human behavior and social interaction. All individuals have needs that they strive to satisfy, either by using the system, acting on the fringes or acting as a reformist or revolutionary.

As a result of the causes and consequences of disempowerment caused mostly by poverty, the empowerment of women in most of our communities, like Belhar will have to take a gradual but effective process to achieve its aims. Documentations suggested that the ability of poor women to overcome poverty and other factors that hinder them from being empowered is hampered by social and institutional factors that include lack of access to land, credit, and education, just to name a few (Young et al 1993). In addition, the women are often excluded from membership in community organizations that make decisions with respect to production and conservation. Kabeer explained that, adopting empowerment as a policy for goals implies a need for tools and processes that can translate such goals for women's empowerment into practice across a wide range of developmental activities (Kabeer, 2003).

4.2.2. Education

Women described education as the ability to express yourself freely in the public, have a good job and confidence where ever you are. Other participants mention behaviour and ways of interaction with people either mate, junior or senior, as determined by the

educational level. Table 2 below shows the educational attainment of the respondents.

Table 2: Respondents Level of Educational Attainment

Education Level	Age groups			
	18-25 (N=15)	26-35 (N=12)	36-45 (N=12)	46+ (N=11)
No Education.	7%	17%	33%	27%
Primary Education	67%	42%	42%	45%
Sec Education	20%	25%	17%	18%
University	7%	17%	8%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Interviews and FGDs, 2007

With regard to education attainment levels, Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents in all the age groups had some primary education. However, the percentage of respondents with some primary education is higher in the 18-25 age group compared to the other age groups. While 67% of the respondents in the 18-25 age groups had primary education (Grade 5-8) the percentages of respondents with some primary education were 42%, 42% and 45% in the 26-35, 36-45 and 46+ age groups respectively.

Respondents believe that they are poor because of lack of education. Majority of respondents did not complete their primary education. As a result of this, it is difficult for them to acquire basic skills for employment. Many of them believe that given the opportunity and available finance, they would like to go back to school in order to secure a job for the future. Thereby they want to empower themselves.

Overall, the proportions of respondents with some university education were low in all the age groups. According to the respondents, they are perceived to be poor because of their educational level. Majority of them lack the basic skills and experience, since they did not finish their primary education.

Participants discussed the barriers they are facing as a result of not being educated. Amongst them, were employment difficulties, depending on someone/relationship which was not healthy; poor etc. When participants were asked why they can not go back to

school. Majority of them lack the will power. Some complained about their age, responsibilities of child care, finance and so on. Some of the women mention that they have never been to school and it was difficult for them to return at this age and time. One young woman stated:

I never went to school, "because the school wasn't accessible."

Ayesha Salarie one of the Home Executive had this to say:

"I really want to educate myself but I don't have the time". She is a single parent. Thus, *"it is difficult to take care of the children's education and myself"* (Interview, 11th April, 2007).

Lack of education was caused by either helping to support the family, unwanted pregnancy and therefore had to drop out, or one of the family members was sick and help was needed. As a result, most women are perceived to be powerless, jobless and hopeless since they don't have the basic qualifications, skills and experience to get employment. Accordingly, Foucault (1984) explained that, this is one of the cruelest myths experienced by people, especially by women and the consequences of this is that they turn to other activities such as crime, alcohol etc.

The respondents viewed lack of education as a form of poverty, which was determined by co-habitation either with relative or male partners, lack of independence and lack of self confidence. One other thing that was noted was that as soon as you are with these women, talking to them, asking why they are not empowered. They will explain that:

'I am not educated. I don't know anything'.

Libenberg and Pillay (1998) explained that even poor women who have had some educational success are unable to make full use of their potential because of their daily struggle to survive.

Education is a key to women's economic empowerment. While many more women are now graduating from university compared to men, women did not always have access to higher education for some reasons that have been advanced above. And today tuition levels are increasing creating new barriers. Although women and men participate at an

almost equal rate in training programs, women actually receive substantially fewer hours than men, and they are still underrepresented at all levels of education and training. As a result, most of the women feel that no matter how hard they try, they will never equate men. This is discouraging as one looks at their situations at times as hopeless.

However, indications are that the lack of empowerment due to lack of access to education is as a result of the discriminatory educational system of the past. The legislative amendments in the Education Act, which state that free education for all irrespective of gender, race, colour or ethnic, has made provision for women empowerment through education. The amendments have increased women accessibility to education. Yet most women still find themselves vulnerable to men. Fallon and Lucas explained that women are vulnerable to their male counterpart who looks at them as unreliable (1998). Haile, *et al*, explained that educational disadvantages weigh more heavily on women than on men, and place upon women additional burdens (2006).

Fiske and Ladd explains that the exploitation of women as a result of their educational status in the labour market is all-pervasive, even amongst the relatively well-educated, in the form of differential salary scales, and discriminatory promotional policies (2004). Moreover, the most exploited categories of workers are domestics and agricultural labourers who work the hardest, for the longest working days and are paid the lowest wages (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989).

In all, amendment in the legislations poses great challenges especially to those concerns (women), to change their mentality and adapt to the process of change. This also involves the policy makers as well as those involve in the implantations process.

4.2.3. Health

The third emerging factor that is hindering women from being empowered in the community is health. Health related illnesses were one of the factors advanced by the respondents as hindering them from being empowered. Common health concerns in the community at present are HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB), Sexually Transmissible Diseases (STDs), and immunisation for children.

The participants described a healthy woman as having no ‘worries, no problem, don’t think. A healthy woman was also characterised as having the freedom to move around and make her own decisions. Some of the participants had these to say about healthy women in the community;

One who is very open-minded and quite bold with men and women as well, Confident, seems to be free of any pressures or tensions, partakes in the any activities, willing to mediate when there is some quarrel, always very sympathetic. Capable of thinking, prepared own enhancement because of good health. Helps her husband in the house, listens to him and makes him listen to her. Capable of making decisions about buying things for the children, opening bank accounts is respected in the household and also by the community members. Has no ill will towards anybody and willing to help anybody. Has enough food and clothing (Interview and FGDs, August, 2007).

Ill-health was commonly associated with mental tension or pressure and the determinants of illness for women were predominantly relational and economic, and generally the inverse of those associated with mental health. Table 3 below indicates the percentages of access to health of the respondents.

Table 3: Percentage of Respondents with Access to Health Care

Access to Health care	Age groups			
	18-25 (N=15)	26-35 (N=12)	36-45 (N=12)	46+ (N=11)
Yes	13%	33%	33%	55%
No	87%	67%	67%	45%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Interview and FGDs, 2007

Table 3 shows that the 18-25 age groups had the highest proportion (87%) of respondents with no access to health care and those aged 46 and above had the lowest proportion (45%) of respondents with no access to health care. The proportions of respondents with no access to health care were 67% in both the 26-35 and 36-45 age groups.

Apart from the illnesses listed above, one respondent stated that one of the major challenges facing women in the community with regards to health was;

The availability of a hospital and staff Shortages in the clinic

Another respondent stated that;

Distance and no ambulance to get to the clinic in an emergency case.

A report in the community indicates;

Shortage of staffs in the clinic remains a major challenge as well as the delivery of services. The staffs at the Community Clinic consists of a medical doctor, 24 staffs, 1 enrolled nurses, 1 assistant nurse, 1 clerk, 2 supervisors, 1 administrative officer and a manager. The clinic operates only eight hours daily. That is from 8:00 to 16:00. Patients in need of medical attention after five o'clock in the evening have to go to the hospital in Delft. The size, facilities, and staff are far too inadequate to serve the 62 to 70 patients who visit the clinic daily. Implying there is no hospital in Belhar (Interview with Mr. Greeff, 16 May, 2007). Patience at the clinic explained that;

One had to get up at 4 A.M, to get a chance to see the doctor. It is extremely difficult, in situations where a child might fall sick at mid-day. Running to the clinic with the child, you are not even sure of seeing the doctor. That accounts for the increase death rate among children in the community. Respondents strongly want the clinic to function 24 hours daily, including the councillor (Interview with some pregnant women, 16 May, 2007).

Accordingly, distance to the clinic was an added problem. Transporting an emergency case to the hospital in Delft does not only entail cost but often, also lead to the death of a patient who needs urgent medical attention. Libenberg and Pillay reiterate that health care structures are not close to where the people are, where they can get help in terms of health (1998). The absence of an efficient ambulance service and the lack of health workers in far-flung areas are additional obstacles to the enjoyment of the right.

As a result of some of these obstacles, most of the women are powerless, physically and economically because they can't work couple with financial difficulties and socially

because they can't socialise, thus, they find themselves isolated and in violence relationship. One respondent stated;

If He (her partner) doesn't provide me with food, shelter and money, I will have nothing. At time he even beat me but I can't live him. He is my all.

Hearing such remark from women one wanders how under such circumstances one can be health physically and mentally, talk less of being empowered. Amongst other things violence, battery, sexual transmissible disease and fear were some of the factors listed by the women that hinders them from being empowered.

4.2.3.1. HIV/AIDS

HIV is another barrier to women empowerment. The notion that HIV is a deathly disease makes people to keep way from people who are infected. Present estimates of HIV/AIDS carriers suggest that women constituent 40 percent of the total of HIV infections in the community. Although infected blood is an important source of transmission for women, sexual transmission of HIV accounts for an estimated 86 percent of infection. Because most infected women are young and in the prime of their productive and reproductive lives, the socio-economic costs of HIV and AIDS among women are likely to be significant.

Young *et al*, (1993) states that, it's because of the need to meet immediate economic needs. Accordingly, women will seek occasional sexual partners known as spare tires (Schoepf *et al*, 1990). Moreover, girls from low-income families are particularly vulnerable to the enticements of older men or 'sugar daddies' who offer money or gifts in exchange for sex (Panos Institute, 1989). This contributes to women powerlessness. Since men know that offering money will easily get them what they want.

As a result of lack of empowerment, caused by poverty in the community, there is an increase risk of HIV infection. Conversely, the illness increases the risks of a household or individual becoming impoverished and powerless. May et al (1998) explains that beyond the individual and household, HIV/AIDS lowers the general level of health in the community in which it is prevalent because of its close relationship with other

communicable and poverty-related diseases such as TB.

Alli (1995) states that, good nutrition contributes to the greater welfare and happiness of an individual. The unemployed experience rising rates of ill health and mortality, primarily as a result of poverty, which is accompanied by lack of sufficient funds to purchase nutritious foods and consequently by deficiencies in diet. There is a very important relationship between nutrition and susceptibility to infection. He ascertains that poor nutrition lowers the resistance of the whole body, and hence a malnourished individual is prone to various infections and diseases which may lead to lethargy, lack of drive and possibly death.

HIV/AIDS is a very serious problem in South Africa. It affects women disproportionately to men. The power imbalances between women and men in interpersonal relations contribute to this growing pandemic.

4.2.3.2. Violence

Another major factor hindering women from being empowered socio-economically is violence. Participant's opinion of violence in the community was described as so much part of the everyday life. Among others, domestic violence, rape, battery was some of the common ways in which they experience violence. A few respondents stated that,

If you don't bother anyone you cannot be affected by the violence in the community.

Domestic violence was characterised as an issue of warfare in the community. Women are being battered day-in and out by their male partners and nothing is done about it. It is even difficult for women to report their situation to the police because more often than not, the police say, it's an internal issue. One of the ladies explains that;

I had a lot of operations on my eyes, but the doctor say they can't do anything anymore. My husband use to beat me on my eyes. I use to have long hair; my husband pulled me by the hair so that big strings came out. (The narrative about her abuse forms part of her learning process about life as a young woman growing up in a specific culture where women have to depend on their husband no matter

what they faced. In another word, there is this element of powerlessness) (Interview, August, 2007).

Mrs Mouton a nurse, who provides basic care to mostly stroke sufferers and a resident in the community also referred to the high incidence of crime and violence in Belhar. She noted, at time she could not go on her rounds because of gang related violence in particular sections of Belhar. She says:

When I go on my rounds I cover myself with the blood of Jesus. I've been doing this for years; I cannot leave my 'oumensies' (old people). I have too much love for them still (Interview, August, 2007).

For this health care worker, going out into the community she has to metaphorically anoint herself with the blood of Jesus for protection. This suggests that she feels and know that her sense of safety is threatened when she goes out on her rounds in the community (Allanise Cloete. 2005).

Das and Kleinmann (2001) noted that, violence of women render them powerless. As a result of this, victims are either deformed or isolated (Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996). In the context of violence, this has the profound effect of illuminating the complexities and intricacies behind the social phenomenon of violence.

As a result of the high rate of dependency, women find themselves in violence relation because they are unable to take care of themselves and maybe their children. Some are depress of their situation but can hardly tell the men who abuse them. Thus, some look at their situation as something that is very natural because they are powerless.

Violence against women remains a serious problem in South African society. The high incidences of rape cases, as well as other forms of physical and psychological abuse of women and girls, are evidence of this. The Criminal Justice and Safety and Security systems are dealing with this crisis in a gender sensitive manner according to the legislation.

4.2.3.3. Battery

One common form of violence which men use against women is battery. It is not unusual for husbands, male lovers and boyfriends to beat their female partners. Some people even accept that husbands have the right to beat their wives if they are disobedient (Moser, 1999). Women who are abused have few sources of help. Friends and family often feel that if a man beats his partner, she must have done something to deserve it (Thomas & Beasley, 1993). Few women lay assault charges against male abusers, because they are too afraid. Sometimes women are forced to withdraw charges before their case comes to court because their abusers threaten them, or their children, with death.

Krane (1996) explains that, reason why abused women don't lay charges, or withdraw them, is that they depend on the men who batter them for shelter and money. Given the housing shortage and the difficulty women face in finding paid employment to support their children, few women are able to leave men who abuse them (Hansson & Hofmeyr, 1992).

4.2.4. Unemployment

The dictionary definition of Unemployment is the state of an individual looking for a paying job but not having one. Unemployment does not include full-time students, the retired, children, or those not actively looking for a paying job.

Findings indicate that the issue of unemployment is a major hindrance to women empowerment. Participants perceived that they are poor because they are unemployed. They feared that they will never be employed and its consequences add greatly to their burden. The uncertainty and humiliation experienced by some women while waiting for Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), disability grants, compensation allowances, and old-age pensions are all evidence. Table 4 below shows the percentage of respondents who are unemployed.

Table 4: Respondents who are Unemployed

Unemployment	Age groups			
	18-25 (N=15)	26-35 (N=12)	36-45 (N=12)	46+ (N=11)
Off-On	13%	17%	33%	18%
Unemployed	74%	84%	67%	64%
Retired	0%	0%	0%	18%
Unable	13%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Interviews and FGDs, 2007

It is indicated above that unemployment is a pandemic in the community. The highest rates of unemployed women are found within the ages of 26-35, with 84%. This is followed by 74% within the age group of 18-25. Most of the respondents within these ages group lack the necessary skills and experience. This is partly caused by their educational status.

Documentations indicates that the causes of unemployment includes the worldwide recession, which has resulted in less demand for raw materials, cash crops and, to some extent, manufactured goods. This has led to decreased production and the eventual and unavoidable lay-offs. But unemployment in the community was partly attributed to past laws and policies that hindered women from being employed, couple with their educational level. One of the respondents said the major cause of unemployment is;

Lack skills and qualification.

Alli (1995) mention that unemployment is also as a result of the role played by the increasing population. The result has been that more job seekers have been thrown onto the labour market. In addition, urban migration is yet another cause of unemployment, with people moving from rural areas to urban centre in search of greater opportunities.

Job segregation was also one of the major problems given by the respondents as a barrier to empowerment. Although women are still paid less for the same work (unequal pay for equal work), the major reason for women's pay inequality is job

segregation which render them powerless.

The kinds of paid work in which women are more likely to be involved (childcare, secretarial, and clothing production), which pay less than the kinds of work in which men are more likely to be involved (construction and trades, truck drivers, sales people). Women consistently find themselves in low-status, low-paying jobs with few opportunities for advancement and are overrepresented among part-time workers and in the informal sector.

As a result of the high unemployment rate in the community, many youth are involved in crime. One of the respondents explained that the social effect of unemployment in the community is causing unrest, fear and helplessness especially among single mothers as stated;

‘We hear the shootings, but we don’t worry about what’s happening outside’.

Others explained that;

‘We don’t feel safe here even in our own house, we have to be alert. Don’t know when they are going to break in. I pray and ask God to protect us; we don’t know when one is going to get killed’

In an attempt to escape from the hopelessness of unemployment, most women have indulged in excessive consumption of alcohol, usually the cheap local brew with its potential health repercussions. Alli (1995) states that, the stake may eventually be raised to include drug abuse, and in order to sustain the habit, the unemployed may engage in petty crime such as pickpocketing, stealing or, in the case of females, prostitution.

4.2.5. Housing

Evidence indicates that housing is one of the factors hindering women from being empowered. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that housing improves the lives of women whilst moving them out of the web of poverty especially for low-income earners; the house can be put up as collateral to access credit. Table 5 below indicates the

percentages of respondents who have access to housing compared to those without.

Table 5: Respondents with Access to Housing

Access to Housing	Age groups			
	18-25 (N=15)	26-35 (N=12)	36-45 (N=12)	46+ (N=11)
Yes	13%	33%	50%	45%
No	87%	67%	50%	55%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Interview and FGDs, 2007

Housing is one of the major barriers to women empowerment. From the table above, 87% of respondents don't have access to housing. They are either co-habiting or staying with relations and friends. This percentage of respondents falls within the age group of 18-25. In addition to this, the women within this age group are in their most reproductive life and depending on other for shelf makes life unbearable.

The quality of housing in Belhar is densely overcrowded in some areas. This is one of the major aspects of the housing crisis that daily confronts those who are poor. In some situation respondents explained that;

‘Even when houses are left by respondent late Father or Mother, there is the possibility of them sleeping out so as to give the houses for rent to generate income (Interview, 11th April, 2007).

Wilson and Ramphele explained that this is another phase of poverty. But this particular face of poverty has other features as well. Not only are houses overcrowded. All too often they are inadequate in other respects. Some have not being renovated for a number of years, some the roof leaks when it rains (1989).

Despite attempts to remove gender discrimination in housing, some practices continue to work against the interests of women. These include:

- The application age for a housing subsidy is based on the legal contractual age of 21 even though many women have children before the age of 21. This means that

women under the age of 21 are often left homeless as they are not able to access the housing subsidy; Township housing transfer schemes favour existing title deed holders who tend to be male;

- There are no legal provisions for rights to housing for women who receive custody of their children after separation or divorce;
- In rural areas, women find it hard to obtain the necessary security of tenure that is a precondition for accessing housing subsidies (Chimere-Dan, 1993).

Kern (2005), states that housing offers women a sense of security, safety, comfort and space to bring up families, to set up small and micro businesses, to rest and to feel a sense of communal belonging. Young et al (1993) states that housing challenges male control of resources and lays the base for greater gender equality.

4.2.6. Women's Rights

Majority of the respondents agreed that they know their right as stated in the constitution. One of the major roles of the law is to establish women's status, and particularly in upholding and legitimising women's social and economic subordination. Essentially, societies regulate the acquisition and control of land, jobs, credit, and other goods and services through their legal systems (Schuler & Kadirgamar-Rajasingham, 1992).

Nevertheless, discriminatory attitudes amongst render them powerless and are deeply rooted cultural practices which continue to maintain women in an inferior role and limit basic freedoms and access to decision making in the family, community and at the national level. The majority of South Africans, whilst no longer subject to racist laws, continue to encounter racist attitudes which persist to this day. Furthermore, Comaroff and Comaroff, (2003) states that challenging cultural attitudes is a highly sensitive political matter.

Cherryl (2003) explains that women subordination, based on unequal gender relations is manifested in the law in several key areas, particularly labour law which governs legal capacity right, guardianship, inheritance, income, land rights and participation in public affairs. In some instances women's inferior status results from formal legislation

(Cherryl, 2003). In the family, women's legal rights to make decisions, control resources, inherit, contract marriage and divorce, among others, are deficient (Hamilton *et al*, 2001). In the workplace- whether in the formal or informal sectors- women's roles are still not sufficiently recognised and the exploitation of female worker's labour is often sanctioned by the law (Schuler & Kadirgamar-Rajasingham, 1992).

As a result of such discriminatory practice and attitudes, women find themselves in a state of powerlessness. This would allow for a more fair interpretation of how effective or ineffective the legislation is. However, the above statements did highlight the state at which most women in the community find themselves.

4.2.7. NGOs Perceptions of the Socio-economic Factors that Hinders the Empowerment of Women in the Belhar Community.

Sociological approaches to NGOs mainly define them by referring to what NGOs are not. Lador-Lederer (1963) notes that "the NGOs are *non*-governmental, *non*-profit-making, *not*-uninational." Similarly, Willetts (1996) declares that NGOs are "any non-profit-making, non-violent, organised group of people who are not seeking governmental office." However, the responsibilities of NGOs are to bring social and structural change in communities. Participants describe the barriers to women empowerment as having so many dimensions. Amongst others, poverty was the primary cause and affect of other factors. As mention in the ethnic, names of NGOs will not be indicated.

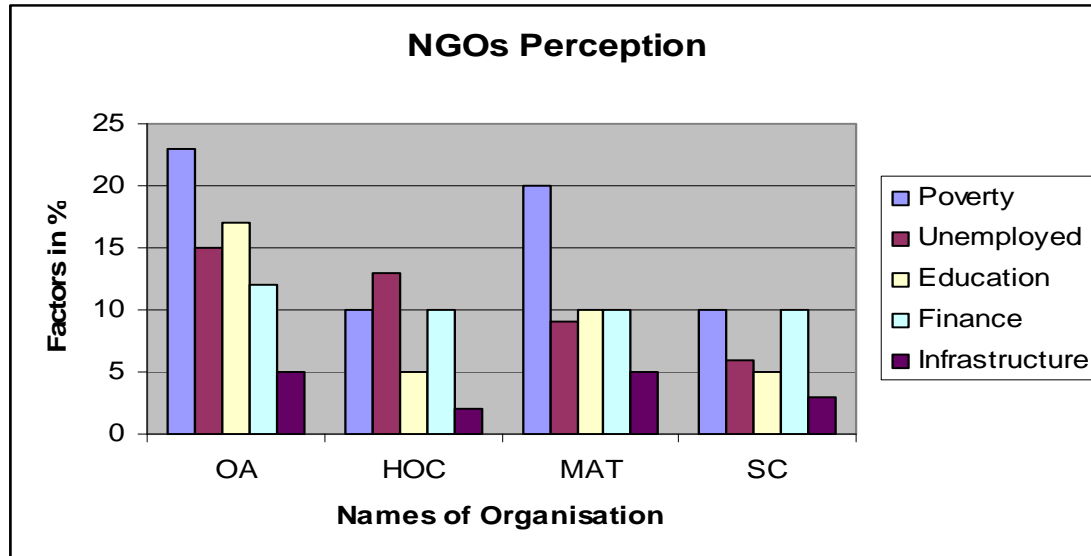


Figure 2: Factors Perceived by Selected NGOs to be the Barriers to Women Empowerment in the Belhar Community. Source: Interviews and FGDs, 2007

Figure 2 above represents the gross percentages of selected NGOs that were interviewed. The names of the NGOs were Organisation for the Aged (OA), Hands Off Our Children (HOC), MaAfrika Tikkun (MAT) and Soul City (SC). The factors perceived to be major barrier to women empowerment in the community ranged from Poverty, Unemployment, Education, Finance and Infrastructure. Findings indicate that poverty is a major barrier to women empowerment. 23% of respondents from the OA believed that poverty is a major barrier to women empowerment as opposed to 10% for HOC, 20% for MAT and 10% for SC. OA has the highest percentage as a result of their daily encounter with the women in the community. They were of the opinion that government needs to do a lot to eradicate the rate of poverty amongst the women in the community. The respondents explained that most of the women not working were force to have at least a meal from the community hall. Most at time there is shortage of food for the aged, implying these women would have to back to their homes without any food for the day.

Poverty, with its multi-faceted causes and effects, according to the finding, seemed to be the overriding element through which virtually all representatives of NGOs attempted to address perceived powerlessness among women. Finding indicates that causes of poverty

was synonymously used to explain the existing powerlessness amongst women and especially women within the low-income group.

Majority of respondents are perceived that unemployment on the other hand is a major cause of poverty in the community. It is perceived that if more women were employed, the rate of poverty will be reduced. Financial instability on one hand and being exacerbated by unavailability of basic service facilities was perceived to be a contributing factor to the disempowerment of women. Apart from these Factors, Respondents also identified absence of or inactive community organisations as a contributing factor to women disempowerment. Hence, for the NGOs, the main cause of powerlessness was poverty, unemployment, lack of education and the inaccessibility to finance. Furthermore, findings asserted that women are confronted with poor basic service facilities like housing, schooling, health access, etc.; limiting any efforts on their part to build capacities to overcome the above stated causes of poverty.

In this regard, Taylor states that, in a largely industrialized country like South Africa, there is no doubt that labour market failure is directly linked to the increase in poverty. Job losses, at the most fundamental level, translate into loss of income and therefore the loss of the affected person's ability to provide the family with the most basic needs and services. (Taylor, 1999). Pearce explains that, globalisation, driven by the values of neo-liberalism, has seriously harmed the anti-poverty and anti-exploitation struggle today. The benefits to the few have not compensated for the increased poverty, inequality, and uncertainty, (most especially among women,) which many have experienced (2000).

Findings further indicate that, organisational problems appeared as a contributory factor. This is based on the evidence of a lack of meaningful initiative in the target community to collectively address major constraints hampering women's realisation of their aspirations. Documentation states that NGOs do face many challenges. From the perspective of the NGOs, the heart of the problem is the shortfall in organisational capacity, the seriousness of which has been compounded by many NGOs having to face the problem of high staff turnover. According to Sangoco, "the NGOs sector as a whole lost more than 60% of its senior staff to government and the private sector since 1990" (Mail & Guardian, August

22-28, 1997).

Furthermore, poor infrastructure, a fatalistic attitude to life by poor women and lack of access to finance were considered a contributory factor to poverty and hence powerlessness (Tefera, 1998). Poor infrastructure refers mainly to the deteriorating physical surroundings of the poor which has negative psychological impacts which so often are overlooked. Such impact is expressed in the pessimist view of the majority of the women regarding the prospects of life which are reflections of their surrounding. Lack of access to finance was argued to have significant impact in perpetuating poverty by deterring efforts of the women for self-employment or expansion of the existing one.

On the other hand, an attempted to present powerlessness within low-income groups was boiling down to unemployment. However, findings indicates that, empowerment of women was regarded from the broader perspective where on the one hand the individual person needing empowerment was perceived to have physical, social and spiritual needs which have to be addressed holistically; and on the other, NGOs perceived to have capacity building needs also required empowerment. From the individual empowerment perspective, social needs refer to a low level of awareness, low self-esteem, low education, lack of skill; physical needs relate to livelihood and poor availability of facilities like housing, water and sanitation, etc. while spiritual need refers to moral apathy and a crisis in faith dimensions which emanates from the Christian orientation of the organisation (Ibid).

Findings indicated that income generation activity of the NGOs increases economic empowerment and overall empowerment of women more than government organisation. So it follows from the result that an income generation program only might not be helpful to enhance the level of overall empowerment of women. Some participants were of the view that;

Women should be organised under a group or accountable body to achieve the goal of increasing the overall empowerment level of women.

The findings further shows that NGOs generally take participatory and community

development approach, to empower the women, which differs from traditional approaches usually taken up by government institutions. But since there are few NGOs which are active in the community, the empowerment of women is also slow.

Legislation in relation to the role and responsibilities of NGOs has being revised twice in regards to women empowerment. The bill was revised in 1994, and a new Non-Profit Organization Bill was submitted to the cabinet in August 1997 and enacted in December 1997. Amongst the most noted, is in relation to women empowerment at the grassroots level.

4.3. Objective 2: To Investigate the main Socio-economic Consequences of Disempowerment of Women in new Belhar.

4.3.1. Economic Consequences

Women (working and non-workers), strongly lament the consequences of their being disempowered. For those who are working, their concern was that they are concentrated in low-status, low paid jobs and earn less than men. Most of the women said;

It was either they are not educated; they lack the necessary skill and experience etc.

These women felt that given the chance, they would have done better than their male counterpart. As for non-workers, most of them were of the opinion that they have little control over how household income is spent. Participants interviewed said;

They have been shut out of such responsibility because their male partners told them that they don't contribute to the running of the house. Implying they don't bring in any financial support. Most of them said they have considered on many occasions to leave but on second thought, where will they go?

Depression and suicide were some of the consequences that were mention as factors that contribute to the disempowerment of women in the community. Each of these is discussed below;

Depression: Depression is a mental health disorder that can affect the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. A depressive disorder is more than a passing mood. , depression is not just a state of mind. It is related to physical changes in the brain, and connected to an imbalance (¹ <http://mentalhealth.about.com/od/depression/a/depression1.htm>, 9th November, 07).

Accordingly, the participants perceived that anyone who is sad and has lost interest in life is in a state of depression. Their perception has connection to the definition above. According to them, depression is caused by poverty and as a possibility either of abandonment, isolation or maltreatment from relations and most especially when forced to do something against one's will.

But Yapko (2003) argues that, depression is a two-way street: These include problem-solving capabilities, coping style (whether you deal with problems directly and proactively or either ruminate or go into avoidance), decision-making style (many people who are either depressed or are prone to depression make bad decisions that lead to depression and even make their depression worse), perceptions of control (whether you see yourself as a victim of life experience or as having the power to take charge of your life), the quality of relationships and relationship skills, and many other such personal factors. Feeling hopeless and helpless are part of the disorder, and so depressed people are prone to believe there is nothing they can do to help themselves. He is of the opinion that, when people educate themselves and take proactive and deliberate steps to get help, including self-help, the probability of overcoming depression is high (Yapko, 2003).

Suicide: Suicide like depression caused by stress of not being able to satisfy one's needs. This comes as a result of not being able to face the challenges of live caused mostly by poverty. Every participant knew of at least one person who had either attempted or completed suicide because of poverty related problems. The methods of suicide involved self-immolation, hanging, poisoning and jumping in the well.

The participants were asked what, in their opinion, were the reasons for the identified cases of suicide, and the reasons for suicide more generally. The commonest reason given

for actual suicides was poverty, stress, depression, family conflict between husbands and wives or between parents and children. Others included financial problems, alcoholism, AIDS, jealousy. Other reasons for suicide included anger/impulsivity, money problems, dowry demands, and pregnancy out of wedlock. The consequences of disempowerment amongst women in the community relates to being forced to cohabit. Respondents explained that they are forced to live in abusive relationship against their will because they have no option. They are perceived to be powerless and believe that their situation can't change; therefore, they are forced to depend on those who abused them for a living.

4.3.2. Social Consequences

Socially, it was noticed that there is no active women organisation in the community that foster women empowerment. These women are divided amongst themselves. In addition, low status amongst the women was paramount due to lack of education. As a result of this, there is controlled movement and restricted access to development activities in the community. This was further compounded by weak communication. A number of others factors were vulnerability and the consumption of alcohol as an alternative to help them forget the challenges of everyday life.

4.3.2.1. Vulnerability

Vulnerability according to the participants refers to the negative outcomes of processes of change. These processes may be economic, social, environmental or political and may take the form of long-term trend. Women who are dependent on men were particularly vulnerable. In addition, most parents raise their daughter to be feminine, in other words, to be dependent on males, passive, obedient and helpful to others. Generally, girls are not encouraged to be independent and assertive, and to be leaders and achievers. These characteristics are believed to be male ways of behaviour.

Divorces and deserted wives were another group that find themselves destitute. According to most of them, 'society' has been structured in such a way that most women are compelled to be unusually dependent financially on their husbands/male counterpart. The vulnerability of women living alone or possibly with her children in the community was also an issue of concern. Most of the respondents said their live are threatened. As a

result of such changes in their live, they turn to be vulnerable to their male counterpart. Thus women find pleasure in alcohol as a mean of relaxation and to do away with the fear of everyday life.

4.3.2.2. Alcohol

Majority of the respondents made it plain that alcoholism was a major problem because it was the only available form of relaxation since they are jobless. This gives an account for the countless shebeens in the community. Plain poverty and adverse social circumstances have a lot to do with this high incidence of alcoholism, for alcohol has a numbing and care-diminishing effect which makes life more tolerable for those who have to struggle daily for the bare necessities of living.

However, behind alcohol and violence lies the despair that eats away at the soul and overwhelming individual with a sense of utter hopelessness. Many of the respondents were of the opinion that;

They can't forgo the consumption of alcohol because it helps them forget their problems despite the negative effects that it has on them.

Thus, many of the participants are aware of the negative impact of excessive alcohol but they can do little about it as a result of lack of empowerment.

4.4. Objective 3: An Exploration of the Implementation of Selected South Africa Policy Provisions that foster Empowerment among Women in Order to Reduce Gender Inequality.

4.4.1. Policy Provisions

Gender equality has always been a core value of the struggle for a democratic South Africa. This value was immediately adopted into the country's governance processes with the establishment of the new dispensation in 1994 and has been enshrined in the 1996 Constitution of South Africa. The Constitution through the Equality section in the *Bill of Rights of 1996* reinforces social justice, human rights and full citizenship status for

women. Some of the policies provision for the empowerment of women includes;

1) *Employment Equity Act of 1998*. States that there should be Equality between women and men in every workforce. Refers to a situation where women and men have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and potential and are able equally to contribute to national political, economic, social and cultural development and to benefit from the results. This includes;

- Equality of opportunity and equality of treatment in all facets of life
- Share of resources in all aspects of their social, economic, political and cultural experiences on equal basis with men.

2) *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000*. That is *the Recognition of differences and inequalities among women*. Women differ according to factors such as race, disability, class, culture, religion, sexual orientation and geographic location. In this regards, increase representation of women in all sphere of life in terms of their race, disability, socio-economic class, culture, religion, sexual orientation and geographic location in terms of their proportion in the population.

3) *The National Education Act (No 27 of 1996) and the Further Education and Training Act (No 98 of 1998)*. States that education and training should be regarded as any human rights for women most especially. The Act also states that every person must be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an education department or education institution on any ground whatsoever; of every person to basic education and equal access to education institutions; of a parent or guardian in respect of the education of his or her child or ward; of every child in respect of his or her education.

4.4.2. Implementation of these policies in Belhar

The implementation of these policies in some of our communities like new Belhar is far fetch and not effective. Finding indicates that there is the need for equality between men and women in the community with regards to the employment equity act. Data indicates that more women than men are casual workers and are unemployed mostly with the age

groups of 18-25 (74%) and 26-35 (84%). Women within these age group are in their most reproductive ages, being unemployed is virtually difficult for them to be employed. Therefore, there is need for the creation of new jobs in the community without which women empowerment cannot be achieved. Gender relations in the community are still a challenge for those who implement these policies. As a result of unequal gender relations, women continue to find themselves in situations that hinder them from being empowered. Differential access to employment opportunities exists. Whilst theoretically women currently have access to a broader scope of employment, these new opportunities are accessible to a narrow pool of women who have had access to skills development, education and training. In large measure, women's employment remains either within the traditional female occupations or within the domestic and farming sectors all too often as casual workers.

Furthermore, as indicated in the findings, access to basic needs such as education, housing, welfare, land and water was also been influenced by unequal gender, race and class relations. The inequality of power between women and men has inevitably led to this unequal sharing of resources. Data for education states that majority of respondents in the community did not complete primary education. Most of the women voiced out their concern as regards their level of education. Many are willing to go back to school if they are provided with the necessary funding.

In addition, finding indicates that, access to Housing is also a barrier to women empowerment caused as a result of inequality in gender relation. *The Housing Act of 1997*, which was further amended in 1999, provides that women should have access to housing but this policy implementation is not effectively implemented in most of our communities like Belhar. Data indicates that, more women in the community don't have access to housing. As a result of this, they are forced to live in abusive relationships which contribute to their powerlessness. Differential access to Housing opportunities exists. Whilst theoretically women currently have access to a broader scope of housing, these new opportunities are accessible to a narrow pool of women who have had access to skills development, education and training.

To give full substance to the essence and quality of these rights, mechanisms need to be put in place that will enable women to develop a relationship with the state including the executive, the legislature and the judiciary at all levels of implementation. The emancipation of women and the attainment of equality in the political, economic, social, cultural and civic spheres is a long-term process of social transformation that fundamentally challenges the way in which society is organised. At the level of the state it requires a new approach to the formulation and implementation of policy. At the level of civil society, women and men need to educate themselves and each other about the causes and manifestations of, and the solutions to, gender inequality and patriarchy. The shift thus from inequality to equality requires the transformation of government and civil society.

4.5. Conclusion

In summary, powerlessness for the research was both a "global" experience and a "situational" experience. As a global concept, some people experienced a sense of total powerlessness, and became, for a period, unable to see themselves as being capable of having control or being able to influence others. For these participants, this was a period in their lives of "surviving, not living." The consequences of prolonged dependency for these individuals included low self-esteem, few options, and limited experience with decision-making, not dissimilar to other research and literature (Checkoway & Norsman, 1986; Sanford & Donovan, 1984).

The combination of social isolation and low self-esteem limited people's capacity to dream. It also affected their ability to believe in themselves and to take control of their lives. The conditions of powerlessness experienced by these participants are similar to Goldenberg's (1978) conditions of oppression, which include containment, expendability, and compartmentalization. As a situational concept, a minority of participants experienced powerlessness only in some areas of life.

This research argues that boosting new Belhar women's relative control of income and other economic resources has so many consequences that positively enhance both gender

equality and development that female economic empowerment may be close to being a “magic”. Specifically, women economic power – defined as control of income and other key economic resources (e.g., land, animals), enable women to gain more equality and control over their own lives, while also contributing directly to their children’s human capital (nutrition, health and education) and thereby indirectly to their nation’s income growth. In addition, they will also contribute directly to the wealth and well-being of their community and indirectly to their country’s national income growth through their own and their educated children, thereby, lower fertility.

Also, more female economic power might help reduce corruption, conflict and violence in their community, while promoting greater environmental sustainability and, perhaps, reduced rates of HIV/AIDS.



Chapter five

Summary, Conclusion, Recommendation and Further Research

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings from the previous chapters within the context of the Literature and theoretical frameworks that were reviewed. Concluding comment are provided on what constitute women's empowerment in Belhar and the recommendations made to improve the situation of women in the Belhar community. It must be mentions here that while majority of the women in new Belhar are not empowered, there are a few who refuses to dependent on other and as a result of their will power, are empowered. According to one of the respondents, people's opinion don't count, it is what you want to make out of yourself that matter.

5.2. Summary

This study originated from the concerns about perceived levels of lack of empowerment, unity and concern on the part of women in the new Belhar community in the Western Cape. The study aimed to investigate the community's perceptions of the socio-economic factors that hinder the empowerment of women in the community. The concept of empowerment has diverse meanings. While this study focused on community's perceptions, there are also some important insights from this work that can contribute to clarifying the concept and meaning of empowerment.

Although government has instituted policies for the empowerment of women, these polices' success rates will continue to affect the rate of empowerment if other fundamental changes in the ways of implementing these policies do not occur. To address the problem of this study, the critical questions were developed around what constitute empowerment for women. These questions are found in the appendix.

The literature review highlighted the principal factors that hinder the empowerment of women and how these affect the women in new Belhar community. To identify and explore these factors, this report used; data collected from primary and secondary

sources. Information collected from primary source did enable the researcher to find answers to the research questions. There are some areas in particular that illustrate these contributions. Firstly, there is the interpretation of *personal control*. Most of the literature associates empowerment with personal control (Rappaport, 1987). The people interviewed in this study echoed this concern for control as they described their struggles. Other literature describes control in terms of coping (Epp, 1986; World Health Organization, 1986). This research strongly suggests that personal control is more than just coping. In fact, people who achieved the greatest degree of control in their lives were those who refused to accept their situation and instead kept questioning and searching for options. In terms of empowerment, then, personal control can be seen as an active process of engagement in the social world.

Another significant of the study was that, physically, though the Belhar residents enjoy relatively better socio-economic conditions in terms of such measures as education, income and occupation than other communities around Belhar, the socio-economic conditions of women leave much to be desired. Even though the overall literacy rate is above 52 percent for women is generally commendable, only 2.6 percent of the total population have post-metric education. The vast majority of the population have between Grades 5-8 metric-level educations. The generally poor educational attainment of women has, in turn, affected both the occupational structure and the level of income, as well as the empowerment of women in the community.

In addition, the study showed that blacks are increasingly living in smaller households. This is evidenced by the fact that the typical household in new Belhar consists of 4-5 persons with predominantly African. The typical household in new Belhar has approximately 7-6 persons. A vast majority of the households are headed by men. This has a correlation with the level of education. That is, households in which the educational levels of members are generally high, tend to have fewer members living in them. On the other hand, households almost always are co-terminus with the “family” to the extent that all the members of a household are related either by blood, marriage, or adoption, with unrelated.

Furthermore, when the participants were questioned about their desire to become empowered, a number of barriers to their being empowered were identified. The barriers could be classified into three main themes, namely, economic, social and financial. The

feeling of powerlessness and the view that they can do little or nothing about their situation were common among the women. Financial constraints were a common barrier to all the women both married and unmarried. In addition, issues concerning living in fear, vandalism, rape, violence were also raised. Residing in a community which is characterised by endemic violence, it inevitably affects every community member, though none of the women reported being directly harmed. On the contrary many were being indirectly affected.

The police in new Belhar are not able to control the crime rate in the community. This is because; there is only one police station in the whole of Belhar, found in Extension 20. That explain why Belhar is one of the worst crime areas in the Cape Peninsula (Cloete, 2005), with many youth turning to crime, violence and gangsterism. According to Police respondent, Peace and order, safety and security greatly depend on how far and how much the Police can offer before help can be called in from other police stations. As the population of new Belhar reduces daily, the level of crimes and insecurity increases. As a result of insecurity, many people are living the community for other areas. Murder, rape, assault, theft and burglary, house-breaking, domestic violence, gang fights, alcohol and drug abuse are very frequent activities in the community. Consequently, it is clear that the Police Station in Belhar is unable to combat all crimes in the community. Thus, there is an urgent need for the creation of another Police Station in Belhar.

5.3. Conclusion

The finding concludes the followings:

There is a high proportion of women in public office. However, in the context of Reconstruction and Development, it has been difficult to sustain the organisation of women, and this has weakened women's ability to ensure the goal of gender equality, despite their gains. This affect women in some of our communities like new Belhar who are dependent on the government to change their situation.

The government has taken time to set up institutions, and an overarching constraint is that they lack resources. Implementation of existing policies is inadequate and not effective in most of our communities like new Belhar. In addition, the women in new Belhar are aware of these structures but they don't want to understand that transformation is going to take a gradual process. They want change so fast which is making their situation more

difficult. To advance women empowerment in the community, there is a need for struggle both at the level of ideas and practice. To take up such struggles, there is a need for strong women's organisations in the community, which have as their focus the transformation of gender power relations.

Gender inequality slows economic growth and increases the difficulty of overcoming poverty. Women's empowerment is especially important for determining a country's demographic trends—trends that affect its socio-economic success and environmental sustainability.

5.4. Recommendations

From observation and the research finding, it is all evidence that there is a need to develop a culture that is anti-sexist and that rejects gender oppression. People of both genders should be given opportunities to develop their full potential as human beings. Adults must become role models for children especially girls. And women skills must be developed.

Furthermore, females must be educated and trained in all fields. There will need to be affirmative action to achieve this. Minimum quotas of females may have to be set in jobs that are dominated by males. Once hire, the skills females will have to be developed on an ongoing basis. This will help reduce the dependency rate in the long run. Literacy and numeracy training for black women, especially, is vital. If more money can be made available for the education of women and especially black women, it will enable women to be empowered.

In addition, improving women's access to credit as a means of increasing production may be to recognise them as good credit customers and to design a service that meets their needs. For it is believed that a lack of credit availability at the right time, at the right place, and in the right amount impedes opportunities for there women to generate income through self-employment and limits other interventions.

More so, increased income controlled by women gives them:

- Self-confidence, which helps them to obtain control over their live.
- “Voice and vote” in household decisions, such as:

- i. Domestic well-being decisions (women tend to use income clout for more equitable decisions about sons and daughters' diet, education and health);
- ii. Economic decisions (acquiring, allocating, and selling/alienating assets);
- iii. Fertility decisions (most women use their income clout to lower it);

Secondly, control of their “life options”. These are aspects of one’s destiny that exist in all human societies (e.g., marriage, divorce, sexuality, fertility patterns, freedom of movement). Women’s freedom and control vis-à-vis these options (relative to males), however, depends not only on their relative economic power but also on the macro-level legal system and overarching gender norms for their group. As Blumberg puts it, these may respond more slowly to growing female economic empowerment (Blumberg 1984).

Empower adolescent girls and women in the community by increasing their knowledge about their bodies, sexuality, and HIV and STDs and by improving their skills in using condoms and negotiating safe sexual behavior with their partners. This will provide girls and women with opportunities for group interactions to model new behaviors, share personal experiences, and develop a critical consciousness about gendered sexual roles. Such efforts can facilitate individual behavior change and may lead to collective action to change socio-cultural norms in the community.

More so, there are multiple and consistent examples of Project’s positive impact on other communities especially in relation to addressing women empowerment, poverty, stigma and discrimination, and fostering economic participation. Such projects could be initiated in the community to help the women. This includes,

- **Social inclusion:** Social relationships, involvement in groups, and civic engagement should be encouraged in the community. This will encourage the women by fostering community responsibility for and ownership of programs. The importance of reaching out to help poorer members of the community should also recognise.

- **Freedom from discrimination and violence:** The promotion of social tolerance is frequently described in other community, and its success in reducing discrimination based on sex, caste, disability and illness are often highlighted. This could also ensure safety from the threat of physical violence, but not nearly as commonly as the promotion of social tolerance and self-determination for women.
- **Access to economic resources:** Economic opportunities should be open to women so as to promote their capacity to earn income independent from their husbands/partners. This could be done by promoting literacy and numeracy, the formation of self-help (microcredit) groups, training women in marketable skills, and providing seed funding/loans for businesses.
- **Housing:** Women's access to housing challenges male control of resources and lays the base for greater gender equality. Housing offers women a sense of security, safety, comfort and space to bring up families, to set up small and micro businesses, to rest and to feel a sense of communal belonging. Most of the women in the community do not have a place to call home. Therefore, building more houses in the community will be an added advantage most especially to women.

In addition, some of the NGOs in Belhar community suggested that;

Economic development program should help women (through development activities) to acquire more knowledge and information and opportunity for interaction with the outside world. It helps them to enhance their levels of self-confidence and empowerment.

Others were of the opinion that mobility outside the boundary of the home and interaction with outside people will improve self-confidence among women.

Socio-economic situation of women in the case study area is constrained by the division of labour between men and women. Women are mostly confined to home-based work. Therefore, women should be encouraged to work outside their home.

5.5. Areas of Further Research

Despite the fact that policies provision have been granted, the implementation of these policies have not reached some of our communities like new Belhar. Therefore, it is imperative that policy implementation should follow a bottom-top approach. However, considering the finding, this research report may provide a base from which other research areas can be drawn. This will include conducting studies with a much wider scope. They include;

It is important and imperative to carry out a further research in the areas of women and knowledge couple with governance. This is because one of the factors that hinders the empowerment of women in general and in the case study was the lack information (Education). The one resource that liberates people from poverty and empowers them is knowledge. Possessing knowledge is empowering, while the lack of knowledge is debilitating.

Historically, the isolation of women from the mainstream economy and their lack of access to information because of societal, cultural and market constraints have led them to become distant from the global pool of information and knowledge. This distance is reflected in the levels of empowerment and equality of women in comparison to men, and has enormously contributed to the slow pace of development. In the context of knowledge sphere, the issues of gender equality, equity and empowerment of women should be most exploited.

In the context of governance, key elements to better governance are to "democratise" people's knowledge and understanding of complex, social, economic and welfare mechanisms and processes and to "demystify" the political choices available to their elected representatives.

The marginalization of women in political processes and governance in general has been both the cause and effect of slow progress made in the advancement of women development.

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Appendices

Appendix -1: Questionnaire for the Councillor

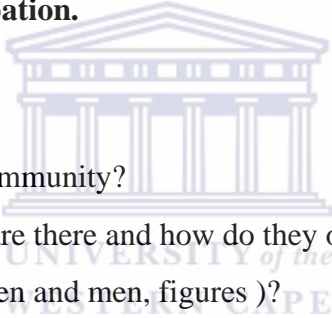
Date of the interview:-----

Name of the Respondent:-----

The question aims at examine the community's perceptions of the factors that hamper the empowerment of women in post-apartheid South Africa with particular reference to women of Belhar. The information attained will only be used for the purpose of this research study and therefore will be confidential.

Thanks for your kind participation.

Questions.

- 
- Who head the Belhar community?
 - How many councillors are there and how do they operate?
 - How many staffs (Women and men, figures)?
 - Who makes decision for the community?
 - Does the community members participate in any decision making process?
 - How does the community participate politically?
 - How many NGOs, Religious organisation, are found in the community?
 - How do these organisations recruit women into their organisation?
 - How do you encourage women to participate in development activities in the community?
 - How often is career development facilitators invited to come and sensitise the women of career opportunities available to them?
 - What do you understand by the women empowerment?

Appendix -1.1: Questionnaire for (NGOs and other Statutory Bodies)

Date of the interview:-----

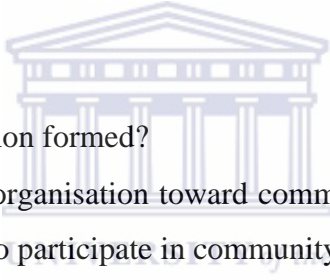
Name of the Respondent:-----

Organisation:-----

The question aims at examine the community’s perceptions of the factors that hamper the empowerment of women in post-apartheid South Africa with particular reference to women of Belhar. The information attained will only be used for the purpose of this research study and therefore will be confidential.

Thanks for your kind participation.

Questions:

- 
- When was the organisation formed?
 - What is the aim of the organisation toward community development and how do you encourage women to participate in community building?
 - What do you understand by the term women empowerment?
 - What are your perceptions of women empowered in the community?
 - What are the factors that hinders the empowerment of women in the community?
 - What are the benefits that the organisation might acquire as a result of women empowerment in the community?
 - What are the challenges faced by the organisation as a result of this lack of empowerment on the part of the women?

Appendix -1.2: Questionnaire for Community members

Date of the interview:-----

Name of the Respondent:-----

Name of respondent (option):-----

The question aims at examine the community's perceptions of the factors that hamper the empowerment of women in post-apartheid South Africa with particular reference to women of Belhar. The information attained will only be used for the purpose of this research study and therefore will be confidential.

Thanks for your kind participation.

Questions:

- What is your age?
- Are you single/married/divorced?
- Are you employed? If yes, please specify.
- What is your level of education? If employed, do you think you would have been better placed as a result of your qualification(s)?
-if not employed, do you think you should have had something to do if you had attained the minimum educational standard/certificate (Grade 12 certificate)?
- Do you have children? If yes, how many and at what age?
- What do you understand by the term (women) empowerment?
- Do you think children are a burden to your being empowered?
- What are some of the factors that hinder you from being empowered?
- Do you receive support (self/child) from anywhere?
- Have you ever received a loan of any form, from any institution(s)/organisation(s)? if yes, please specify.

Appendix -2

Statistics: Rape (& Attempts) and Murder

Belhar: Extension 13 &14

Period: 2003 to 2006 compared 2002 to2003.

Rape & Attempted Rape

Extension	2002/04/01-2003/03/31	2003/03/31-2006/03/31
Geographical blocks	2	4
Old Belhar	6	8
Total	8	12
Extension 13 & 14	2002/04/01-2003/03/31	2003/03/31-2006/03/31
Geographical blocks	1	2
Extension 13 &14	6	12
Total	7	14

Source: police report, 2007 

Murder

Extension	2002/04/01-2003/03/31	2003/03/31-2006/03/31
Geographical blocks	1	2
Old Belhar	1	2
Total	2	4
Extension 13 & 14	2002/04/01-2003/03/31	2003/03/31-2006/03/31
Geographical blocks	3	2
Extension 13 &14	6	8
Total	9	10

Source: police report, 2007