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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

A GENDERED ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND POWER RELATION IN THE FAMILY: THE POSITION OF WORKING WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ABUSED

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANESBURG, IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN SOCIAL WORK

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Johannesburg, 2012

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Social Work in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Signature

9th day of May, 2012

ABSTRACT

The lack of transformation in gender-based social relations at household level seems to further entrench women's state of disempowerment despite having access to employment opportunities. This study aimed to explore economic and power relations in the family from the perspective of women. A qualitative exploratory research design was used for the purposes of this study, since the study intended to present specific details of situation, social setting and relations dynamics. The sample consisted of thirty women from one organisation that primarily focuses on service delivery in relation to gender-based violence. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect data. The findings in this study agrees with previous research that income and economic participation can serve as a tool for women to negotiate issues affecting their lives with relatively equal gender powers with their partners. However, the research also demonstrates that, indeed, income or paid employment was not sufficient as a weapon for equal gender power relations at the household levels.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTON

1.1 Research Background

The debate surrounding issues relating to family, power and the notion of gender stereotypes is not recent. Over the last few decades, there has been a drastic increase in research around issues pertaining to development, empowerment and gender equity,as well as poverty alleviation (Kabeer, 2000; Jackson, 1996; Duffy and Pupo, 1992; Philips, 1992). A significant number of national and international policy documents emerged from these research recommendations (e.g. gender and employment equity, women charter in the South African context, etc). However, despite this progress, women still feel subordinated across most sectors of society. Evidently some barriers to the emancipation of women remain a mystery in some settings and have sometimes been described as "glass ceiling" gender-based stereotypes due to their invisibility in policy documents (Strandberg, 2001; Whitehead and Lockwood, 1999). The question as to why women constitute the majority of the poor given the fact that, historically, both men and women equally experienced deprivation in South Africa deserves further inquiry.

Although one would agree that poverty affects the realisation of female emancipation in a significant way, it remains unclear how poverty alone can explain why, given the fact that in South Africa experiences of deprivation and/or poverty are the same across genders. This explanation has been described as simplistic and contends that freeing women from

poverty would not necessarily therefore result in their emancipation (Jackson, 1996; Duffy and Pupo, 1992; Philips, 1992; Kabeer, 2000). Evidently, the dynamics that underlie the emancipation of women are much more complex than most studies so far have managed to explain. The present research is an enquiry into the impact of the interplay between power, economy and gender-based stereotypes on female emancipation. It looks at the relation that exists between economic participation and power negotiations within the family setting. It hopes to examine crucial elements that are embedded in gender equity, employment equity and analyse how these elements have, or have not, transformed the notion of power-based gender stereotypes in the family.

1.2 Rationale

Internationally, gender sensitivity and mainstreaming is the centre of policy formulation in national and international development projects., Therefore an assessment of whether the desired degree of female emancipation has been achieved is especially relevant in the new and progressive South Africa. Most research on gender equality both in South Africa and elsewhere has focused either on the role of poverty on female emancipation (Strandberg, 2001; Whitehead and Lockwood, 1999), while others theorise on how economic participation of women, has, or could potentially, contribute in addressing the gender insensitivity that is still observed across the globe (see Kabeer, 2005). Other studies have investigated the causal relationship between culture or normative social conformity and the disempowerment of women (Pape, 2001; Kabeer, 2000).

The underlying cause of gender imbalance and domination, despite preached move to gender equality across the globe, still remains poorly unexplained and understood. There is still a need for research that questions and explains the causality of the deeply seated "heteronormative" and other biased assumptions about men and woman, that still lead to the subordination of women in a contemporary liberal world. These studies are even more relevant with regard to domestically abused women as they are often deprived of their confidence and freedom to express their femininity. Since this study looks into the context-specific impact of complex gender dynamics on women in abusive relationships, it is anticipated that it has policy relevance in the sense that it will deliver new knowledge and insights that are substantially important for current gender equality debates. The fact that the data used in the study is based on information from women ranging from domestic workers to those in professions such as Human Resource Management, and who have been victims of gender-based violence, means that it will uncover new gender dynamics that help to understand the causality of complex gender imbalances.

1.3. Research Questions

Primary Question

To what extent is female empowerment evident at a family or household level, despite apparent achievement at macro-level?

Specific questions:

1. What, if any, impact does the participation of women in paid employment have on gender power relations in a household or family?
2. To what extent can female economic empowerment help address gender bias experienced by women in South Africa?

1.4. Objectives

- Main objective

The primary objective of this project is to explore women's experience of gender power relations at the household level. More precisely, the aim is to explore the role of paid employment and how it influences power relations in family life, specifically from the perspective of a group of working women, recruited from one organization, rendering services in the area of gender-based violence. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

- Specific objectives:

    i. To identify the gender-based challenges that women who have been abused experience in their homes.

    ii. To determine working women's perspectives concerning gender equality issues.

    iii. To identify supportive elements that contribute to better power negotiations within the family.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

The following are working definitions of the terms that are used throughout this research report.

Economic Participation: Global economy and paid employment are of crucial importance in defining the economic status of women. Kabeer (1997:19) argues that paid employment can increase women's decision-making power within the household and improves their independence. This thinking assumes that labour markets are devoid of gender discrimination. Economic participation refers to the ability to participate in economic decision making in all social aspects.

Employment Equity: For the purposes of this research report this term will be defined as an ideology that seeks to redress the impact of race, disability and gender-based discrimination in ensuring that women actively participate in economic activities, and by so doing challenging the notion of gender stereotypes. (Employment Equity Act No.55 of 1998).

Empowerment: This term has acquired popularity over the years and has been used to describe certain processes of development and transformation within the South African context. For the purposes of this research the definitions used by Mosedale (2005:243) and Oxaal and Bandel (1997:2) will be adapted which define empowerment as a developmental goal. Both theorists assert that empowerment is a process which involves

active participation by the disempowered in challenging structures of oppression which give people unequal access to power.

Family: The use of this term in this study resonates with the description by Potgieter (1998:134) that "Any unit of people which is described by its members as "my family" should actually be seen as the basic family group for that person." This definition embraces all forms of modern family units as viewed and experienced by society cross-culturally.

Gender Bias: This term refers to the belief or attitude that one sex is of a higher power than the other sex.

Gender Equity: Due to its conceptual wooliness, "gender equity" is better defined in context. It is concerned with issues of discrimination based on gender stereotypes, be at the work place, within a family setting, or in political participation etc. Gender equity therefore attempts to address all these issues, as well as how economic and power processes relate to gender.

Power: Power is defined by Mosedale (2005:250) as "the ability to prevent certain people or issues from getting to the decision making arena in the first place". This definition portrays power as a negative force based on power over, rather than power to, which provides the notion of access and ability to participate in, and exercise, informed choices. Oxaal and Bandels', (1997:5) definition of power resonates with the

understanding in this research report that power involves three key elements of control, influence and authority, which enable powerful individuals to deny or give others access to decision making structures.

Working Women: This term refers to the notion of access to resources through participation in economic activities outside the domestic realm through paid employment.

1.6 Overview of the report structure

Chapter One: Introduction

The introduction chapter gives a clear rationale for undertaking this study. It also stipulates the research questions and outlines specific objectives for this study. In addition it provides working definitions for all key concepts to be used throughout the document.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter gives an overall theoretical background to this research topic. It presents other arguments that have been researched and looks at other gaps related to the topic. It also helps to contextualise the related topics and creates a theoretical framework for the current research.

Chapter Three: Women and family

This section examines the role of women in the family and how empowerment has, and has not, manifested at family level. It examines the dynamics of gender at family level by looking at historical background and current research.

Chapter Four: Research design and methodology

This chapter gives account of the process that was followed in undertaking this project. It gives details of key elements of research like sampling, data collection method, etc. It also outlines the limitations of the study, as well as anticipated benefits.

Chapter Five: Presentation and analysis of findings

This chapter presents the collated data in a thematic form and analyses the significance of the data in relation to the research questions. This section also attempts to answer the main research question presented in the first chapter.

Chapter Six: Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

The final chapter draws together the main findings and conclusions, if any, reached by the study. It also makes certain theoretical and practical recommendations. Proposed new research is also mentioned in this chapter as it realises gaps or pertinent questions that it could not address.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Gender power relations have recently dominated the discourse on human rights, democratisation and other developmental debates of most countries across the globe. It is an issue that is well documented both in academic and policy related publications. (Morre, Frohwirth and Miller, 2010; Taneja, Pryor and Humphreys, 2009; Velde, 2005). The primary objective of the gender debate is to redress the imbalance between men and women and is a topic of delicacy. Indeed, so far, there are no universal standard practices or principles governing the gender roles distribution, especially at the household level since the "family" is often construed as an independent and private entity whose modus operandi remains privately the discretion of members and varies from culture to culture. As a result, it is often very difficult to isolate factors that affect gender equity and equality at household level. There have been theories that attempted to explain the complex gender power dynamics between a man and a woman in family settings but the gender-based e incidences of violence observed at the household level in the context of South Africa seem to defy most of these existing theoretical explanations. (Sullivan and Bybee, 1999).

Oxaal and Bandel (1997) assert that disempowered groups should initiate their empowerment processes rather than the processes being planned by those who purport to empower the disempowered. Consequently, they argue that external forces cannot empower others but can only create conditions that are enabling for empowerment to occur (Oxaal and Bandel, 1997). Their argument is, in fact, an extension of the theory of critical consciousness developed by Paulo Freire (1983), which contends the subordinated social group need to be critical and conscious of the world to understand conditions that led to their disadvantaged situation. According to Freire (1983), this process opens substantial opportunities for real and durable changes.

Hence, like other research that has been done on gender power relations, this project provides new insights in a context-specific manner that are relevant to the constructive gender equality debate in the new world order; it doesn't provide a "fit all" explanation or solution to gender imbalances in South Africa but reveals some important implications of gender-based violence on the emancipation of women in South Africa.

2.2 Women, work and family

Family nurtures, shelters and educates its members irrespective of size and structure. The family critically influences the choices individuals make as they seek to improve their lives. The concept and nature of family affects a woman's capacity to benefit

from development interventions due to both the nature of work most women are engaged in, as well as family expectations. Work and family strain present a challenge for all women who juggle work and family commitments. The family has always played a mediating role between individuals and society.

2.3 Defining work

Work and its meaning differ in many contexts and it is crucial for female studies to acknowledge that there is often a gap of common understanding. In some cases it is not clear whether childrearing and taking care of the home and children is viewed as work by the individual or community. In most cases paid labour in considered work by individual and community, therefore undermining duties of child rearing and house keeping. However, recent researchers seem to acknowledge this gap and have been looking at ways of addressing these inequalities. Therefore, work refers to any form of paid labour and/ or any other form of activity viewed by individual women as work and that includes childrearing and taking care of domestic duties such as cleaning, cooking etc.

2.4 Women and work: South Africa

Women actively participated in the struggle against apartheid since 1913 (Wells cited in Kadalie, 1995). However, the struggle for women's rights went beyond overthrowing a racist regime to include challenging gender-based discrimination.

Women in the ANC and civil society used their participation in the struggle to put gender on the liberation agenda. This occurred in various ways, including a protest whereby a number of women in South Africa under the leadership of the African National Congress Women's League took to the streets to challenge the "exclusion of women from multiparty negotiations" regarding a democratic South Africa (Kadalie, 1995:208).

Kadalie (1995) asserts that one of the gains made by women through these protests was the subsequent involvement of women in the negotiation process at the time. Their participation in the negotiations culminated in further gains which included, *inter alia,* the inclusion of an equality clause in the new South African Constitution of 1996 and the establishment of the national gender machinery to promote gender equality. The collaboration between women in the ANC and civil society organisations working on gender issues under the umbrella of the Women's National Coalition also resulted in the drafting of a Women's Charter for Effective Equality. The Charter spells out twelve critical demands, which are said to be crucial in attaining gender equality in South Africa. These twelve critical equity demands are: equality in law and the administration of justice; economy; education and training; development; infrastructure and the environment; social services; political and civic life; family life and partnerships; custom; culture and religion; violence against women; health and media (Women's Charter for Effective Equality, 1994). The Charter was subsequently given a stamp of approval in 1994 by the ANC (Women's

Charter for Effective Equality, 1994). Giving the Charter approval propelled the ANC to deliver on these demands as a ruling party.

2.5 Defining Family

Family is a term that has acquired popularity over time. Changes in terms of mindset and structure have evoked debates around the definition of 'family' within social circles. There are however differing schools of thought as regards the meaning of this rather fluid concept which has resulted in the concept being differentially defined. Gittins (1992:67) defined family as a "social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation, and reproduction." Such thinking presupposes that the family as a unit has an intimate biological relationship structure. The question that arises from this definition is who has to carry the load of duties and how these are negotiated within the family unit.

On the other hand, Potgieter (1998:134) argued that "Any unit of people which is described by its members as "my family" should actually be seen as the basic family group for that person". This approach is crucial in defining the modern family unit as viewed and experienced by society cross-culturally. The changing nature of the family functions requires a concomitant change in how family is defined. The societal definitions of family seem to have taken different forms and arise from varied sets of values. Silva and Smart (1999:10) point out that new arrangements of family structures are emerging, such as: "families of choice, single parent families, step

families and other forms like sperm donors, genetic material contribution and homosexual partnerships." Furthermore, it can be suggested that families may be described by what they do rather than relying on institutional definitions. It can be argued that family refers to a group of people who either perceive themselves as family or are defined so by the society. It is on this premise or understanding that this research is based. It should be noted that these definitions do not explore the aspects of communication, power and decision-making within the family structure. In addition, the interplay of gender and economic issues and how they manifest in the family structure are important in understanding the dynamics of economic power relations in the family.

2.6 Decision-making and power in the family

There are several questions pertaining to decision-making in the family that need to be explored. Potgieter (1998) asserts that the notion of the family unit is the first defining arena of gender-based power relations. Hence it is of paramount importance to try to understand who has the power in the family and how it is communicated across the structure. Once more the aspect of division of labour is crucial in analysing the notion of power in the family and how this impacts on gender equality. Duffy and Pupo (1992:75) argue that working class women are the most oppressed in terms of power relations and division of work in the family. Working class women tend to have extended informal labour into their families, tasks that are expected to be carried out in order to have a functional family unit. Philips (1992) asserts that

working class women had extended work shifts in their families that went unnoticed as a result of gender power relations. It should therefore be argued that having access to resources gained through wage employment does not automatically result in gaining control over gender relations. The lack of transformation in gender-based social relations at household level can further entrench a woman's state of disempowerment despite having access to employment opportunities. According to Kabeer (2000), subordination by the social structure in the form of customs, norms and values, contributes to the disempowerment of women. Asserting men's role as provider and women as dependants continues to facilitate the social structure of subordination. It is thus essential to examine the social conditions that have predisposed women to disempowerment.

Earning an income enables a woman to contribute towards household resources, which can boost her confidence in making independent choices that can be difficult to achieve if a woman is dependent on the resources provided by a man for subsistence. Employment opportunities can therefore facilitate the empowerment of women. Empowerment through employment creation however, does not deal with the question of why women have been denied access to employment opportunities in the first place. The patriarchal culture that exists in South Africa defines a clear division of labour between men and women, with the public realm being portrayed as a male domain, while women's roles are confined within the domestic realm (Pape, 2001:21). Consequently, there is still an under-representation of women within public spheres such as labour markets (Dominelli, 1991:154). The patriarchal culture also

constrains women from fully exercising control over their resources because of their subordinate social positioning determined by gender norms, thus making them vulnerable to poverty (Pape, 2001:29).

2.6.1 Defining empowerment

Empowerment is a term that has acquired popularity within developmental circles. There are however different schools of thought regarding the meaning of this concept. On the one hand, Mosedale (2005:243) argues that empowerment is articulated as a development goal or outcome. On the other hand, empowerment is described as a process, which involves active participation by the disempowered in their own empowerment.

Oxaal and Bandel (1997) assert that disempowered groups should initiate their empowerment processes rather than the processes being planned by those who purport to empower the disempowered. Consequently, they argue that external forces cannot empower others but can only create conditions that are enabling for empowerment to occur (Oxaal and Bandel, 1997). Evident in this understanding of empowerment as a process is a participatory approach to empowerment, which involves the participation of people at grassroots levels in identifying their needs and initiating interventions they envisage as necessary for their empowerment. This approach could be considered crucial in ensuring that people own the process of empowerment and its outcomes, instead of having development interventions imposed upon them. However, an assumption that may be inherent in this kind of

approach is that empowerment needs identified by the general community reflect the needs of everyone in the community. This assumption does not take into account the fact that unequal power relations also exist between people who are said to be disempowered. Therefore, what could be raised as needs by the most vocal individuals within the community may not necessarily result in the empowerment of the majority of marginalised voices. This argument is also supported by Narayanan (2004), who argues that genuine participation can only occur when people are not entangled in unequal power relations.

Oxfam (cited in Oxaal and Bandel, 1997:2) defined empowerment as "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 them their human rights". Empowerment in this definition is about challenging structures of oppression, which give people unequal access to power. This is a very useful definition in understanding sthe empowerment of women because it allows one to question the real underlying causes of women's disempowerment, which can be attributed to unequal relations of power between men and women, sanctioned by the social structures in the form of gender norms.

One can therefore begin to challenge the cause of the problem rather than its impact. Control, influence and authority are the key elements of power, which can enable powerful people to deny, or give others access to, decision-making structures. Power can be used positively to create an enabling environment for the powerless to begin to

gravitate towards empowerment through making resources available. Oxaal and Bandel (1997:5) refer to the use of power to provide support to the others as "power to" rather than "power over". Kabeer (1994) also maintains that the availability of resources can enable individuals to make choices that are likely to change conditions of disempowerment. The role of power therefore is crucial in extricating individuals from, or keeping them in, conditions of disempowerment.

2.6.2 Gender based assumptions of women's empowerment

The main assumption behind the empowerment of women is that freeing women from poverty will result in women's emancipation. Gender becomes depoliticised in this regard as poverty is assumed to be a cause of women's disempowerment rather than unequal power relations between men and women which often determine who gets to make decisions and gain access to what resources. Jackson (1996) criticized the notion that freeing women from the poverty trap will result in gender equality. He argued that women's inferior position in society does not emanate from poverty but other variables, such as gender relations which need to be explored. In the South African context, Jackson's arguments raise critical questions such as why African women constitute the majority of the poor if both African men and women experienced direct underdevelopment due to the apartheid government and are still experiencing its legacy? In addition, why would white women who were not deliberately underdeveloped by the system of apartheid, still experience subordination? It could be argued that women are made vulnerable to poverty and

disempowerment by r limited access to resources due to gender restrictions. It is therefore important in the South African context to understand how economy and power processes relate to other forms of inequalities, such as those of gender and race.

Another assumption is that women have *control* over the resources provided to them, or those they may acquire, through participation in economic activities outside the domestic realm. "Women's ability to retain control over resources allocated to them is mediated by the powerful relations and gender ideologies that render them subordinate and not fully autonomous in the first place" (Razavi and Miller, 1995, p. 16-17). Gender norms give men power to control resources because of their gendered roles as household heads and providers. This is based on an assumption that women do not make contributions towards resources accumulated by a household. It therefore becomes normal for men to control the flow of resources within households as providers. This could sometimes be done with women's co-operation, as women may perceive their needs as interrelated with those of men. Women's resources are also likely to be shared with members of the household including children (Razavi and Miller, 1995). Women could be propelled by their reproductive roles to share their resources with the rest of household members in an endeavour to efficiently perform their household duties. Therefore, even access to resources which is not accompanied by control over the resources, could prevent women from attaining empowerment.

2.6.3 Empowerment through work

The Women's Charter called for the removal of barriers to women's economic participation, such as gender stereotyping in employment, poor working conditions for women, unequal benefits and sexual harassment (Women's Charter for Effective Equality, 1994). Since coming into power in 1994, the ANC led government has passed legislation in order to improve the working conditions of both men and women and to increase the participation of women in the economy. One of these progressive legislations that the ANC led government has passed is the Employment Equity Act (No.55 of 1998).

Kabeer (1997:19) states that access to paid employment can increase women's decision-making powers within households as well as their independence. This means a woman's contribution towards household resources can boost her confidence in making choices, which could be difficult if a woman remains dependent on the resources provided by the man for her subsistence. A women's bargaining power can be enhanced because earning an income can provide her with a sense of security, which can enable her to re-negotiate her subordinate position within the household. Income then acts as a buffer against the negative outcomes that may emerge if bargaining fails.

South Africa's integration into the global economy has presented both challenges and opportunities to the empowerment of women through the provision of wage employment. Lim (cited in Tinker, 2000) argues that the expansion of export industries under globalisation has resulted in an increase in the number of women

employed in these industries, which has provided them with income earning opportunities. On the other hand, Beneria (2003) argues that this increase has mainly been characterised by the informalisation of work with no employment benefits, worsening working conditions and providing only part time employment, for example in the export industry, which results in job insecurity. Labour market flexibility is not a phenomenon unique to female workers. In this era of globalisation it affects both men and women. A question that needs to be asked therefore is why export industries would deliberately seek to employ women and not men? In the interviews Kabeer (2000) conducted with employers to ascertain their reasons for the female labour preference, an overarching reason highlighted by employers was that "men made trouble" (Kabeer, 2000, p. 71). This basically implies that men are more likely to challenge employers than women.

According to Duffy and Pupo (1992:77) "Many women's decisions regarding part time work are not based on notions of individual choice and action but rather reflect the structure of the economy and the nature of job opportunities." Women's choices therefore are limited as they have to work to support their families amid the retrenchment of their husbands (Pape, 2001). The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 is therefore unlikely to benefit a large proportion of women in South Africa who find themselves in informal and flexible types of employment, which is often not protected by the labour laws. The extension of labour laws such as the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, etc, to the informal sector, can facilitate the effectiveness of the Employment Equity Act in facilitating the economic

empowerment of a large number of women in South Africa currently working in the informal sector.

2.6.4 Empowerment through education

A progress report on the ANC-led government's delivery on female issues, drafted by the ANC, highlights compulsory schooling for children under the age of ten as stipulated in the South African Schools Act, as among the gains for women (ANC, 2004). The Act has been crucial in ensuring that both the girl and boy child are afforded opportunities to go to school. This law compels parents to enroll their schoolgoing children in schools irrespective of gender. Girl children therefore are provided with an opportunity to go to school, which some parents may not have considered a priority. Kabeer (1997) argues that there is evidence which indicates that education sharpens women's abilities for critical thinking, which could enable women to begin to challenge their oppression. Education can also enhance women's self-esteem to deal with the public environment (Kabeer, 1997). This means that women who are educated are likely to know of their rights and entitlements; hence being able to claim these and deal with the violation thereof. Education also increases women's chances of participating in the formal labour market. In South Africa, women who are educated are likely to benefit from policies such as affirmative action policies in sectors that require specialised knowledge and skills, such as the financial sector and science, which are still male dominated. A lack of education therefore may contribute to women being subjected to precarious forms of employment due to the lack of

specialised skills which could make them easily replaceable, thus making it difficult for them to organise collectively in order to challenge poor working conditions.

Kabeer (1997) argues however that inequalities, including those of gender, can be perpetuated by the education system. The experiences of boys and girls within the education system are often shaped by the notion of a hidden curriculum, which prepares boys and girls for specific careers that are compatible with gender norms. Kabeer (1997) argues that through the hidden curriculum, girls experiences of education are characterised by feelings of inadequacy as compared to their male counterparts. This can happen when teachers use gender stereotypes to make girls feel that they are not clever enough in certain subjects, which are perceived as the exclusive domain of boys such as Science and Mathematics. As a result, girls may take "soft science" subjects because they think they will succeed in them and this choice is often based on gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes can also exert pressure on boys to take subjects that exude masculinity even if their interests lie in subjects that are portrayed as feminine. Therefore, as secondary socialisation institutions, schools can perpetuate gender stereotypes.

2.6.5 Empowerment through political participation

The Women's Charter identified the problem of exclusion of women from political participation; hence it demanded equal representation of men and women in decision-making structures (Women's Charter for Effective Equality, 1994). The ANC has been hailed for introducing the one-third quota representation of women in all its structures, which has culminated in an increase of ANC female parliamentarians and

cabinet ministers. The participation of women in politics has resulted in a number of gains for women in South Africa which included among other things, the passing of legislation such as the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 92 of 1996 which gives a woman the right to have her pregnancy terminated should she so request. Other significant legislation includes the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 which provides legal protection to abused women, legal recognition of customary marriages, establishment of the national gender machinery within government which resulted in the establishment of the Office on Status of Women located in the presidency, gender desks and focal points in government departments and others (ANC Women's League, 1999). In the light of the above-mentioned achievements, the participation of women in parliament has resulted in women having a direct influence on some government policies.

There are however various factors that can enhance or hinder female parliamentarians' abilities to put gender on the decision-making agenda. These include, among other things, interests, accountability and the patriarchal culture of institutions like parliament. Moser (1993) argued that politics is used to maintain ideologies regarding the dominant position of men in society. Women can find themselves in an environment that is structured around the needs of men based on a long-standing, archaic ideology that participation in politics is exclusively reserved for men. The patriarchal culture of parliaments can hinder women from voicing their interests when important decisions are made through undermining or ignoring their contribution. Their commitement to gender issues will influence the extent to which women parliamentarians put gender on the agenda amid this patriarchal culture.

Women therefore may have to deal with gender stereotypes before they begin to derive a sense of empowerment from political participation.

South Africa practices proportional representation (PR) as an electoral system. Kabeer (1997) argues that the system of proportional representation is likely to increase the participation of women in politics. The system, in conjunction with the use of quotas, has proven effective in bringing more women into parliament. Hassim *et al.* (1993) however argue that elected representatives tend to prioritise accountability to their party rather than that of their constituencies. This may mean that female parliamentarians could overlook the gender interests of women who are not members of the ANC. A question that thus arises is who is representing whom? Are ANC female parliamentarians representing the interests of the ANC under the name of women or vice versa? For some women political participation has become a career that enables them to support their families. Therefore, raising dissenting views, which would not be welcomed by the party, could minimise their chances of getting re-elected or advancing up the political ladder.

2.7 Reproduction and Care

"Women stand at the crossroads between production and reproduction, between economic activity and the care of human beings, between economic growth and human development. Women are workers in both spheres—the most responsible and therefore with the most at stake, those who suffer most when the two spheres meet at cross-purposes, and those most sensitive to the need for better integration between the

two" (Sen, 2006: 26). Therefore women play a triple role in development (adapted from Sen 2006 and Moser 2010):

a) Through participation in the workforce, women contribute to the growth of the economy. Women's *workforce involvement* has been increasing for decades.

b) Women are the primary providers in *social reproduction*, the care and maintenance of human beings, yet in almost all countries this contribution to the nation's economic well-being is still being overlooked in national economic accounts.

c) Women bear all but a tiny part of the *physical* load of *reproduction*. A woman makes a significant investment of nutrients and energy over the nine months of pregnancy, the intense mental and physical effort of childbirth, the healing weeks of post-partum recovery, and the 24-hour-a day process of producing and delivering milk to protect, nourish, and nurture her infant for months or years after birth.

All three of these female economic roles offer opportunities to achieve gender equality. Maternity Protection includes an adjustment of a woman's workload during pregnancy, birth/recovery, and lactation; it is a basis for gender equality at work. Enabling mothers to feed their children optimally means supporting exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding with appropriate and adequate complementary foods until age two or beyond. Breastfeeding is a contribution to social reproduction that only women can make, but they do not make it alone. Fathers, grandparents, other relatives, co-workers, employers, and health policy-makers have key roles to play. The gender roles that a culture assigns to women affect a mother's power to decide how to use her own time and energy. Many

times in each 24-hour day, a lactating mother of an infant or young child makes a decision whether to give the breast, or to care for herself and her child in some other way. In an enabling environment that respects her decision to breastfeed, she is free to make that choice based on her needs and her child's needs.

"Breastfeeding may look like a private activity, yet during the months or years when women are lactating (producing milk) they can and should fulfill a variety of public roles in addition to their role as mother. The world needs to hear the voices of breastfeeding women in committee rooms and board rooms, in union halls, in parliaments, in town meetings, at debates and rallies" (Sen, 2006:31). This of course points out the dilemma of reproduction and care that women have to balance in their attempt to participate meaningfully in the economic sphere.

It is also important to acknowledge that South Africa has put in place policies to protect women's right to maternity leave as part of Llabour Law. Maternity Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 protects and promotes rights of women to reproduction and care. However, one can argue that a lot is still to be done since four months of maternity leave does not address the issues of care beyond this period. The fact is that women continue to juggle between work and family responsibilities of care and ensuring proper structures for their children to be cared for either at home or centers.

2.8 Conclusion

Women's involvement in the liberation struggle enabled them to influence a number of decisions, for example, the inclusion of the equality clause in the South African Constitution. The presence of women in the ANC propelled the party to adopt the Women's Charter for Effective Equality in 1994 to denote its commitment to the notion of gender equality. In responding to the demands espoused in the Charter, the ANC has used its powers as a ruling party to develop interventions aimed at achieving the emancipation of women. These included the enactment of the Employment Equity Act and affirmative action, as well as the adoption of a quota system to ensure that women are represented in parliament and that there is investment in their education. These strategies can create an enabling environment for women's empowerment to occur.

It is important to note that not all women derive empowerment from these sets of interventions, as these may not directly challenge women's subordination. The creation of economic opportunities for women through affirmative action is challenged by the changing nature of work, which has resulted in the concentration of women in insecure and precarious forms of employment. These forms of employment can minimise women's chances of benefiting from affirmative action. South Africa's macro-economic framework (GEAR) lacks a gender perspective; hence it advocates economic growth strategies that could further disadvantage women. According to Taneja, Pryor and Humphreys (2009:18) "Gender equality can be achieved by providing visibility and support to women's contributions in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs for the equal benefit of men and women". GEAR has indeed created a platform for women to

participate in the economy, yet it lacks visibility and support to women. A question that arises from the lack of a gender perspective in the macro-economic framework is the extent to which female parliamentarians have influence in the development of economic policies. A lack thereof denotes double standards that could be inherent in the ANC's commitment to gender equality, as gender issues cannot be incorporated in certain aspects and ignored in others. Gender relations affect all spheres of women's lives and gender should be treated as a cross-cutting issue. Some women may be politically empowered because of their abilities to participate in decision-making processes, but this may not translate to empowerment within the household if unequal power relations persist. Therefore, a shift from women's practical gender needs to include strategic gender needs is necessary in attaining women's empowerment.

CHAPTER THREE

VIOLENCE AND ABUSE OF WOMEN IN FAMILY LIFE

3.1 Introduction

Over the last two decades, feminist research and activism on sexual assault and domestic violence have generated campaigns and services on local, national and international levels and an increasingly popular culture of resistance, which has helped to unveil the global pandemic of violence. South Africa has also participated in this awareness and different approaches in dealing with domestic violence have been implemented at policy levels both local and national. In spite of all these efforts, from a structural point of view, family 'domestic violence' remains as an area that has not been explored extensively in relation to women at work and empowerment. The realm of family remains a private domain that serves as a field for women abuse. This chapter examines the link of domestic violence, power negotiations in the family and how the development of laws in protecting women and promoting gender equality have, or have not, penetrated the family unit within the South African context.

3.2 Historical Background

Women in South Africa have long been at the core of politics fighting for liberation. It was for this reason that 'The Women's National Coalition' (WNC) was formed in 1992. The primary aims for this coalition were:

> "to create an environment where women could develop strategies around issues and campaigns of mutual interest…ensure that women's issues were prominently addressed during transition to a new democratic South Africa, that women participate in the constitution writing process to ensure effective equality in all spheres of women's lives; to produce a national women's database, research and information on gender and women; to advocate and lobby for gender-sensitive policies; to engage in public education and awareness on gender and women" (Zulu, 2000, p. 171).

This coalition led to the Women's Charter for Effective Equality 1994, a document that embodied women's demands for respect and recognition of human rights and dignity through effective change in status and material conditions. The Preamble of the Charter boldly states women's claim for full and equal participation in the creation of a non-sexist, non-racist, democratic society. The following articles of the Charter are particularly important:

> **Article 1**: Equality - achievement of social, economic, political and legal equality is indivisible and the struggle for equality involves the recognition of the disadvantages that women suffer in all spheres of life.
>
> **Article 2:** Law and Administration of Justice – that this can be achieved only with the full participation of women; the position of women must be taken into account in deciding policy, determining legislative priorities, formulating, interpreting, adjudicating enforcing all laws.

Article 3: Economy – women claim involvement in decision-making and full participation at all levels,and in all aspects of, the formal and informal economy.

Article 4: Education and Training – women and girls claim the right to education and training, including curriculum development, which should acknowledge and accommodate the diversity of women's needs and experiences in every aspect of life.

Article 5: Development and Infrastructure, and the Environment – women shall have access to the full range of basic development resources and services necessary to sustain a healthy and productive life.

Article 6: Women are primarily responsible for maintaining the household and the community. Access and affordable development-orientated social services should be a right and not a privilege.

Article 7: Political and Civic Life – women shall have the right to participate fully in all levels of political, civic and community life.

Article 8: Family Life and Partnership – all family types should receive recognition. Acknowledgement of women's responsibilities must be reflected in their decision-making powers.

Article 9: Customs, Culture and Religion – as they affect women's social status, shall be subject to equality.

Article 10: Violence against Women – women shall be protected from all forms of violence in all spheres of life.

Article 11: Health – equal, affordable, accessible and appropriate health care services, which meet women's specific health needs.

Article 12: Media – the diversity of women's lives and experiences, and their contributions in all areas of public and private life, shall be reflected in the media. **(*Adapted from The Women's Charter)***

These clauses were to be a guide in all government policies, and indeed most of these are reflected in most policies. However, the question that remains pivotal regards the abuse of women is the extent to which these policies can penetrate the family unit. Article 10 clearly states that women shall be protected from all forms of violence including within the family unit. Family violence remains a source of social concern as it is treated as a private unit and is in most cases justified by cultural and religious belief (Elliot, 1996).

3.3 Conceptualising Violence and Abuse in Family Life

Violence against women continues to be a global issue that attacks women where they should be safest, at home. Domestic violence tortures women physically, sexually, economically and psychologically. According to UNICEF (2000, p. 2) "Domestic violence is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women equality, security, dignity, self-worth and their right to enjoy fundamental freedoms". What is evident is that domestic violence against women is present across different cultures, class, education, income, ethnicity and age. (UNICEF 2000) However, South Africa presents a complex context where this crime occurs under the garb of cultural practices and norms, or through misinterpretation of religious beliefs. Since domestic violence takes place within the family unit, it is usually silenced by the understanding the

family life remains a private agenda not to be exposed to the public. Therefore, this remains the most difficult, ignored and hidden form of violence against women. As a result it is extremely difficult to access reliable statistics of female abuse in the South African context. Nevertheless, there are statistics that gives a close estimation from the study conducted by Vetten (2009) of 269 women in South Africa. Below is the summary of statistics adapted from (Vetten 2009: 5):

- 80% of women in the study had experienced emotional abuse: being humiliated in front of others was most commonly reported.
- 90% had experienced physical abuse: being pushed or shoved and being slapped or hit were highlighted.
- 71% had experienced sexual abuse: attempts to kiss or touch followed by forced sexual intercourse occurred most often.
- 58% experienced economic abuse: money being taken without consent was most common.
- 42.5% of women had experienced all four forms of abuse.
- Many women experienced economic, emotional, physical and sexual abuse on an ongoing basis.
- Most abuse occurred in the confines of a home and was largely perpetrated by a lover, partner or spouse.

It is important to note that this study was conducted with a sample of 269 women. Even though this study was not on large scale it clearly demonstrates the intensity at which women experience different types of abuse in the South African context. The main

problem is that family is generally equated with love, security and safety, however as the evidence points out, it is also a place where women are subjected to some of the most drastic forms of violence perpetrated by males who are in positions of trust, power and intimacy as husbands/partners.

In recent years there has been a move to broadening the terminology of women abuse. Women abuse can be defined as any physical violence, emotional harassment, financial and psychological abuse. (Elliot, 1996) The broadened definition of abuse also challenges some practices that have been accepted culturally as forming part of disciplining women by their partners in the form of a slap, pushing around or serious beating. The new developments have meant that the other kinds of abuse also need to be taken seriously. The changing nature of the South African context has also challenged the definition of domestic violence to include other facets of abuse that have been ignored for a long time.

3.3.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the most common form of abuse that is visible and also well reported by the abused and by researchers. However, in most cases this form of abuse has been culturally and religiously influenced. In some cultures beating of women by a husband /partner is viewed as a sign of love or acceptable form of discipline. Elliot (1996) points out that pushing around and slapping of women in some cultures is not seen as abuse, but this understanding has changed with recent research. Vetten defines physical abuse as

"any form of physical harm including slapping, arm twisting, punching with a fist, kicking, pulling of hair, hitting with an object…" (Vetten, 2009:11)

3.3.2 Emotional Abuse

According to Vetten (2009, p. 80) " psychological abuse refers to threats of violence, humiliation in front of others, preventing one from communicating with others, threats to kill or commit suicide, as well as control of ones movements outside the house". These are kinds of abuse that in most cases are considered by the perpetrator as a form of protection, while in reality it affects the emotions of women. Subsequently, women who are working can, and do, experience a lot of emotional abuse from their partners. Some are controlled in terms of their movement or relationships, accompanied by threats should they fail to obey. Economic participation and level of education are argued to be good factors in empowering women, however this evidence of emotional abuse still persists despite these being present. Contrary to physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse is extremely difficult to relate and report, as a result it persists in silence and is also difficult to measure quantitatively.

3.3.3 Economic Abuse

This relates to the unreasonable deprivation of economic or financial resources, such as prevention from access to or knowledge of family income. This is evident where women are forced to hand over money or are prevented from earning money or, in other cases are

forced to become the breadwinner for the family. (Vetten, 2009) This is another form of abuse that is hardly reported or seen as abuse because in most cases culture and religion has been used to justify it. Evidently researchers have emphasised this kind of abuse as silent and not easily visible, unlike physical abuse. Therefore, one can argue that economic participation by women does not necessarily translate to empowerment and better power negotiations in the family.

3.4 Cultural and Religious Practices

Culture for many groups of people is a defining core of their beliefs, attitudes and values. Therefore, culture is viewed as that aspect that embodies the human behaviour, interactions and aspirations of individuals within a particular group. It tends to minimise the autonomy of individuals and promote collective goals. Cheung and Chan (2007:159) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another." It is notable that values are the integral part of culture, and understanding of culture for a specific group is important in understanding how they respond to their environment and all the challenges they encounter. Through reference to culture people are able to contest their identity, justify patterns of power relations and qualify gender norms and practices.

The South African context presents its own experience of diverse cultural practices, and values attached to these practices. The apartheid regime system in many ways was able to suppress the freedom of cultural practices to a great extent, thus the constitution seeks

to protect and promote cultural values. This historical background renders controversy and high levels of debate regarding which practices are life enhancing and those that hinder human growth and tend to oppress certain groups of people. This argument raises question of power, oppression, and protection of values, but mainly questions who articulates and define such practices. More importantly the question that cuts across ethnic groups looks at why women are the bearers of culture that does not promote the empowerment of women and gender equality?

3.5 Politics, Law and Culture

One of the resources essential for people to extricate themselves from the conditions of oppression is land. In most African countries, customary law determines resource entitlements including land, thus granting land tenure protection to those who are entitled to own land. More often than not, custom does not encourage women to own land (Kwamara-Mishambi and Ovonji-Odida, 2003). Similarly, the ownership of customary land in South Africa is still male dominated, as chiefs prefer to give land and subsequently land tenure to men, rather than women. Women are allowed to use customary land without securing ownership thereof. This creates insecurity and vulnerability among women, as they are likely to be evicted from the land by the male landowners during separation or divorce. Furthermore, because custom does not encourage women to own land, women are dependent on the goodwill of the male who inherits land from their husbands or fathers to gain access to land in order to earn livelihoods. It is therefore pivotal that such structural disadvantages, which make women susceptible to oppression, are tackled when gender equality policies are formulated.

Kabeer (1999) argued that having access to resources does not translate to the exercise of choice by the disempowered but rather reflects the ability to do so. Although having access to resources gives women the potential to exercise choice, the environment must be conducive for women to exercise choice. Having access to resources in an environment that does not allow women to own resources can subject them to resentment by community members, thus hindering them from exercising choices they deem necessary to reach a state of empowerment. Facilitating the empowerment of women therefore in an environment that does not allow women to be empowered could defeat the goal of women's empowerment. An amalgam of interventions aimed at tackling structural barriers to women's empowerment, such as gender norms and customs, need to be understood and applied in its unique context and environment.

3.6 Interplay between Power, Gender and Culture

Inequality is exacerbated by powerlessness, which restricts an individual's ability to access resources (De Beer and Swanepoel: 2000). The low social position that women in male dominated societies occupy renders women powerless, which restricts their abilities to acquire resources, thus making them vulnerable to oppression. Kabeer (2000: 86) stated "disadvantage results in social exclusion when various institutional mechanisms through which resources are allocated and value assigned operate in such a way as to systematically deny particular groups of people the resources and recognition which would allow them to participate fully in the life of that society". In South Africa, social institutions such as customs, norms and values governing the masculine and feminine

gender are designed in a manner that favours the masculine gender, thus granting it easy access to resources that are essential in reducing poverty, such as land.

The feminine gender on the other hand is deprived of easy access to resources by cultural gender norms and struggles to gain recognition that would allow them to participate fully in the life of the society. Hence, women often find themselves having to access resources through relationships with the masculine gender such as fathers, husbands and sons (Kabeer, 2000). Consequently, women who do not have immediate relationships with the male gender are made vulnerable to poverty and oppression. This is echoed by Kabeer (2000) who argued that women who access resources via a male figure are likely to experience social vulnerability and economic difficulties in the absence of a man. Kabeer and Whitehead (2001) argued that programmes targeting female empowerment are often based on an assumption that the creation of employment opportunities for women would translate into an enhanced welfare of the household, as women's expenditure is likely to be informed by the needs of the household. Kabeer and Whitehead (2001) also asserted that studies conducted in the Sub-Saharan Africa region indicated that there was a positive correlation between gender inequalities and cultural experiences which rendered women disempowered in spite of increased income for women.

3.7 Conclusion

It is therefore important that education and training adopt a holistic approach covering different aspects of women's lives, which transcend the scope of female emancipation in order to empower them with a variety of skills, including life skills. One of the challenges

currently facing South Africa is the ability to conceptualise the feminist approach so as to enhance women's potential to negotiate better power dynamics with men. Therefore, one could argue that gender relations and power are the most fundamental social criteria on which power inequality is based. Thus, we conclude that feminist theories are key, yet not sufficiently adequate, to explain the locus of power inequality within the family setting where power and gender are intertwined.

Although there is a link between culture, religion and women's empowerment the notion of gender equality has been, and continues to be, influenced by several factors over and above the ones that this chapter has attempted to conceptualise. This chapter has questioned structural causes of female disempowerment, such as gender norms, religion, culture and customs, which places women in a subordinate social position, thus making it difficult for them to access resources the same way as men do. Hence, one could conclude that these elements are crucial in understanding the power dynamics in a family setting and help us to understand the environment and contextualize the influences of gender inequality.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study. It describes the research design, the sample, its size, nature and characteristics, the sampling technique, the data collection methods as well as the study limitations and ethical considerations followed. This chapter also outlines the research process that was followed in conducting this study. The aims of the study are also reiterated in this section.

4.2 Research Questions

Primary Question

To what extent is the empowerment of women evident at a family or household level, despite apparent achievement at macro-level?

Specific questions:

2. What, if any, impact does the participation of women in paid employment have on gender power relations in a household or family?

2. To what extent can the economic empowerment of women help address gender bias experienced by women in South Africa?

4.3 Research Design

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study, and one-on-one qualitative interviews were conducted in order to collect the data. The qualitative data collection technique is one of the most preferred data collection methods in the social sciences because it is the only way of obtaining an in-depth understanding of social phenomena (Robinson et al, 2002). The advantage of using a one-on-one qualitative interviewing method lies in its flexibility and versatility which allows the researcher to tackle complex and sensitive issues, such as the gender and power relations in the family under investigation in this study. Moreover the one-on-one qualitative interviewing method is appropriate because it allows the interviewer/researcher to catch verbal and non-verbal cues which will enhance the reliability, validity and the quality of the data collected (Bibby, 2006).

4.4 Methodology

4.4.1. Data collection method

As mentioned above, there is a whole continuum of data collection ranging from the highly structured, semi-structured to the unstructured forms of interviewing. The decision to choose any interview method along the continuum is largely dependent on the nature of the research question, the sample size and the research context (Rubin and Rubin,

1995). A semi-structured interview method was chosen as the most appropriate data collection method for this study for two reasons:

- the sensitive and complex nature of the research question pursued in this study; and
- The need to deepen the understanding of gender dynamics mediating the emancipation of women. That is, the need for in-depth understanding of the phenomena affecting women empowerment. The semi-structured interview method is capable of obtaining meaningful qualitative information to elicit issues related to gender relations and its influence on female emancipation that would otherwise be missed if the data were collected using a survey questionnaire.

The benefit of conducting semi-structured interviews was that, unlike other data collection methods, it allowed participants' detailed responses while ensuring that the core focus of the interview was not lost (Bibby, 2006). The other advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that although it does not provide quantifiable answers, it generates quality data, which helped to develop new concepts that are relevant to the understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Longhurst, 2009). This is because it allows the interview process to freely flow by guiding the interviewer against bringing preconceived ideas and theories into the discussions (Barbie and Mouton, 2001).

The researcher designed a semi-structured interview guide after having thoroughly researched the main topics and related sub-topics. This interview guide included key or main questions, follow-up questions, as well as probes. Some of the questions were

closed-ended but were followed up with probes. This helped the researcher to elicit information that was relevant to the pursued research question by asking the respondent the right questions at the right time. By so doing, all the issues were elicited to the depth as planned. The questionnaire was approved after the researcher administered a pilot project on five women in the same organisation. Subsequent to the pilot study some questions had to be adjusted to avoid unintended or vague responses. Women who participated in the pilot project were not included in the mainstudy sample.

4.4.2. Population and sample size

The study targeted women who had suffered some form of gender-based violence and/or were abused by their intimate partner or any other male either in the family. Since it is difficult to identify these specific women in the community, the researcher approached the Institute for Women's Development (NISAA), a service provider organisation to women who have suffered abuse, and requested permission to access their clients. The researcher decided on a total of 30 women for the study. All the women who accessed services from NISSA had an equal chance to be chosen for the study. However, in order to be eligible, a woman had to have suffered some form of gender-based abuse either by her intimate partner or male family member. The women who participated in the study came from various social backgrounds but, in terms of race, only black and Indians were included because at that time no women from other races sought services at NISAA.

After permission was granted by the organisation the researcher agreed that the potential participants must have utilised NISAA services no longer than three years ago. Thirty

women were randomly chosen from their data base to participate in the study. The process of informed consent and information regarding the study was adhered to with all the participants. The organisation agreed to offer a private room for the interviews to take place at NISAA offices.

4.4.3 Data management and analysis

After each interview, the researcher immediately ensured that all the field notes were written accordingly on each interview guide. Thematic method of analysis was followed. Bailey (1994) points out that research that effectively deals with behavioural functions, social adjustment, and interactional relationships is best analysed thematically. Key and recurring themes were identified and coded accordingly and then analysed in a discussion format to see how they affected female emancipation and empowerment. The process involved going through each interview guide and recording key themes as presented by each participant. This was to assist in drawing out significant discussions as well as conclusions. Where appropriate direct quotations were used to emphasise the importance of the argument. The analysis was also informed by relevant theory and at times was able to confirm existing theories. In some cases significant themes did not necessarily resonate with existing literature, but these were also included in the analysis. In addition, the socio-demographic information (background information of the respondents) was presented in descriptive statistics and was linked with identified themes.

4.5 Interview Process

Before beginning the interview procedure, the researcher did some basic preparation. Firstly the researcher had to familiarise herself with the interview guide to avoid unnecessarily distortions of the interview process. Then the researcher prepared the interview guide and negotiated with the NISAA the venue for interviewing. All thirty women were interviewed at NISAA premises. The advantage of using NISAA as the interview venue was that it was comfortable and private, which enhanced the rapport between the researcher and participants, improving the quality of the data collected. It was assumed that, with guarantees on privacy, comfort and confidentiality, the participants would feel more at ease and express their feelings and experiences freely. All the interviews were administered individually so as to allow sincerity in responses. Since the respondents were not tape recorded due to the confidential nature of the subject investigated; the researcher tried her best to note down most of participants' responses.

In brief the researcher established the following elements before proceeding for interviews:

Research Process:

- The researcher went through the process of clearance in order to conduct this particular research. Clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand and from NISAA as the organisation where research was conducted was gained.

- The researcher developed the interview guide to ensure consistency and also standardised the content of all the interviews with participants.

- Extensive literature was reviewed in relation to the topic being researched. This was done in order to ensure the researcher was well informed about the topic and also able to formulate relevant questions to be asked.

- The interview guide was piloted at the same organisation with five women to ensure the questionnaire was appropriate. The participants that took part in the pilot were all excluded to participate in the main research.

4.6 Limitations

This study had some theoretical and methodological limitations.

4.6.1 Research Tool

The research tool was developed by the researcher with the aim to address specific aspects. It was structured in sections that covered different aspects of the topic. However, when analysing the data it was clear that not enough demographic information was collected regarding the participants. Another limitation was the lack of data on the different types of violence experienced by the participants.

4.6.2 Data Collection Method

Even though the interview guide was developed in order to enhance consistency, it must be noted that this guide was developed by the researcher, therefore it seeks to pursue areas of the researchers' interest. As a result the researcher might have missed other critical questions related to the topic. Due to the sensitive nature of the research the

interviews were also not tape recorded and this might have led to some key responses being missed by the researcher. The researcher had no opportunity to replay and listen to subtle key responses that could have been missed during the interview session. The fact that the interviews were conducted at NISAA might have led the respondents to give answers deemed correct by the organisation and the researcher.

4.6.4 Analysis

Methodological limitations

This study presents two main methodological limitations that could potentially limit the study's conclusion, inference and the validity of the study's findings. Given the complexity of the concept under investigation – the emancipation of women, 30 women is a relatively small sample, considering the biological dynamics that may be at play in theorising the emancipation of a woman in her family and in the society at large. The level of sample heterogeneity required for such a study is likely to be compromised in the analysis as some significant factors remain invisible or unaccounted for, given the context.

In addition, another methodological limitation worth mentioning is the possible reactivity that may have occurred during the interview as the researcher herself is a woman. This may have introduced some degree of bias as a result of lack of emotional balance between her own feelings and the feelings of the respondents about gender power relations on one hand, and the possibility that some respondents may have provided answers they thought the researcher expected since they could relate to her with regard to

the issues discussed. Moreover, as Robinson et al (2002) point out, the researcher's own preconceived ideas, subjective convictions and assumptions could distort the objectivity in the data collected. Thus, the researchers gender , could have led to methodological and practical bias. However, the fact that the researcher chose a semi-structured interviewing method, whereby the respondents were allowed the freedom to pursue issues they feel are important to them (see Bibby, 2006; Longhurst, 2009; Robinson et al, 2002) with regard to gender and female empowerment, allowed her to avoid the possibility of bias.

Lastly the fact that the respondents were not tape recorded represents a significant limitation. When the qualitative interviews are not recorded, there is possibility of constant disruptions in the interview flow as the researcher stops, from time to time, to take notes. It is also more likely that the interview missed important key words and other verbal cues that could add value should she have tape recorded the interviews. Moreover, when the interviews are not recorded the interview is likely to take longer and place unnecessary burden on the respondent who might in reaction provide information they think the researcher needed as a way of speeding up the interview process. To avoid, this the interviewer tried to be very effective in field note taking and also trying to keep accurate record of the respondents' narratives shortly after the interviews to ensure that key words were not missed or forgotten.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

This research meets ethical requirements for social research. Firstly, the researcher anticipated that given the possible trauma related to gender and family issues it was crucial to put in place appropriate measures for counselling or debriefing, should the

respondent become emotional or distressed during the interview process. This is one of the requirements in qualitative interviews; the researcher or interviewer should have a plan should the respondent become upset during qualitative interviewing (Robinson et al, 2002). Therefore prior arrangements with relevant personnel in the organisation were made to offer professional counselling or debriefing services if deemed necessary for participants.

As a matter of social research ethical requirement, the researcher took each potential participant through the consent process prior the interview session. The consent form was explained to the participants and the explanation emphasised the following elements to potential participants:

- That participation in the study was entirely voluntary, thus participants could withdraw from the study at any time and that they were free to terminate the interview process whenever they felt they were no longer interested, without any consequences.

- In addition, it was explained to the participants that if they agreed to participate they were not obliged to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable answering.

- During the consent process, the researcher explained to participants that any information that they shared with the researcher was to remain confidential and that their identity would not be revealed to anyone.

- It was made clear to potential participants that data collected were to be used only for the sole purposes of this study, although the organisations where the research was conducted were promised feedback and a copy of the dissertation.

- Lastly, the researcher explained to the participants that by participating they would not lose their rights as research participants.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected and interprets it in relation to the aims and objectives set out in the first chapter. The presentation and analysis of findings will start with respondents' identifying information. Followed by respondents' personal employment history and conditions, thereafter the main focus will be on the economic roles and power relations in the family.

5.2 Sample Characteristics

Sample characteristics refer to relevant information about respondents' descriptions and affiliations, ranging from their demographics to their socioeconomic background, likely to have some bearing on the pursued outcome. Table 1 below presents respondents' characteristics and other relevant information.

5.2.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=30)

Ethnic	**N**	**%**
Black	24	80%
Indian	6	20%
Age		
18-25	3	13.33%
26-35	13	13.33%

36-45	9	33.33%
46 and older	5	16.67%

Whilst the initial intention of the research was to obtain a representative sample of all racial groups this was not achieved as the organisation only had clients from two racial groups; 80% (24) of the sample comprised of black women and the remaining 20% (6) was comprised of Indian women. The majority of the sampled women were aged between 25-34 years old, while the youngest group of women (age 18-25) represented the smallest group in the whole sample.

5.2.2 Socioeconomic characteristics of the participants

Table 2: Socioeconomic Characteristics (N=30)

Education (N=30)	**N**	**%**
Primary	5	16.67%
Some secondary	6	20.00%
Matric	10	33.33%
Tertiary	9	30.00%
Have children (N=20)		
Yes	18	90.00%
No	2	10.00%
Monthly Income (N=26)		
<R1,500	13	50%
R1500-R3499	0	0%

R3500-R5499	7	26.92%
R5500-R7499	2	7.69%
R7,500+	4	15.38%

As the table above shows, the majority of respondents over 60% (19) completed Matric. Only five respondents did not go beyond primary school level. Most (90%) of interviewed women have children; only two women reported not having children. The personal income of individual respondents ranged from less than R1,500 to over R8,500. These classifications are important since the main question pursued in this project is to understand whether income or economic participation leads to the emancipation of women at family level.

Table 2 above shows interesting patterns. Although the sample is too small to make a far reaching conclusion, it is interesting to note the contradictory feelings between the women at the two ends of the income range. Women who did not have an income, or with an income below R1,500, thought that an income or a bigger income would guarantee the woman freedom in the family; while on the other hand, women who do earn a higher salary feel that income does not necessarily guarantee empowerment to women. This can be detected from this participant's assertion from the group of low income bracket that:

"*Yes women are so strong and courageous; if we can only get jobs that gave us a good salary we are going to change the world."*

Or this other participant who, apparently, has a higher income but asserts that income is not necessarily the panacea to female disempowerment, in these words:

"Not necessarily, we still have our own life as women beyond money".

Basically, the assertions above suggest that income alone does not lead to empowerment although, according to some participants, it does contribute to female empowerment. Vetten (2009) argues that family life remains a private affair that serves as the field for women abuse. Therefore, one can point out that women who have been abused are not necessarily freed by income as patterns of subordination in the family continue to persist.

Job satisfaction appeared important although the impact can not be determined; as it seems to depend on individual women and their specific familial contexts. Women who are very unhappy with their current jobs think that a better position would make them empowered, whereas those who admitted they were happy with their current occupation do not necessarily think so. The majority of women (19) in the study felt that job satisfaction has some degree of positive impact on the emancipation process of women, although only to a limited degree. However the category of women who admitted to being happy with their current jobs remained almost completely divided with regard to what leads to empowerment. Whereas, according to half of the women, job-related happiness does not necessarily lead to the feeling of empowerment at home, the other half of the women presented with the completely opposite feeling.

Another pattern worth mentioning is the significant relationship between length of time on the current job and female decision-making powers or freedom over important family spending. The degree of women freedom have to make decisions over important family

spending has been identified as a good indicator of the degree of emancipation at family level. (Vetten 2009: 8). Evidently, women who reported the ability to make decisions in the family felt more empowered than those who could not make decisions. Therefore, one can argue that there is a strong link between decision-making in the family and the empowerment of women, considering that the family unit, as mentioned before, acts as a field for women abuse and subordination. Figure 2 below is a description of some of these patterns.

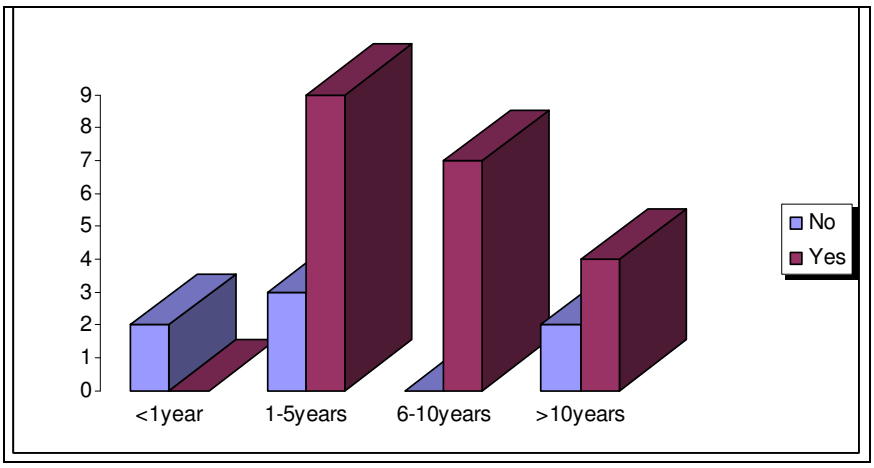

Figure 2: Length of time on current job in relation to participants' perceptions regarding their decision-making ability (N=30)

What is obvious looking at figure 2 is that, apart from those who only have been employed for less than one year on their current jobs, the rest seem to show a positive relationship between length on the current job and the freedom to make important decisions regarding family matters. Whether that has to do with familiarity or taking charge over time by women in their homes; or whether this is related to the benefits of accumulated income that raises confidence, remains to be established.

Women who perceive that they contribute in their decision-making at work also seem to more easily take charge at family level. Most of the women who stated that they are often consulted in decision-making at workplace, irrespective of the job position, felt in charge when it comes to making the decisions affecting their households. This is a very interesting trend which confirms a good body of literature that has suggested that participation in economic development is a good starting point for the empowerment for women.

5.2.3 Employment Sector, Job type and duration at the job

Table 3: Employment History of participants (N=30)

Employment Sector	**N**	**%**
Domestic	9	32.14%
Education	1	3.57%
Entertainment	1	3.57%
Human Resources (HR)	1	3.57%
Health	6	21.43%
Social services	8	28.57%
Other – Self employed	2	7.14%
Time on the job (N=27)	**N**	**%**
Below 1year	2	7.41%
1-5years	12	44.44%
6-10years	7	25.93%%
Over 10	6	22.22%

Women who participated in the study were selected from a variety of sectors of employment including domestic, education, entertainment, human resources, health, social services and others. As it can be seen though, most of the women (9) in the sample were employed as domestic workers. The next biggest group reported working in the social service sector where they interacted with a number of women on various domestic issues, including, amongst others, the gender roles in their respective households. Some other women were employed in highly professional positions such as a Human Resources (HR) department, as can be seen in the table above. Not all the respondents received their income from an employer, some of the women reported having their own businesses.

5.2.4 Satisfaction with the current employment job

In order to examine the importance of economic participation as relates to personal emancipation at household level, women were asked to rate their satisfaction on their current job or employment position. Some scholars, including Kan (2008), suggest that access to economic resources is one of the crucial factors affecting one's bargaining position in the family. Accordingly, the higher the relative level of resources that individuals bring to marriage, the stronger their bargaining position vis-à-vis their partners (Kan, 2008). That is, in the context of this project, where the individual woman feels dissatisfied with her current job position, this is likely to have a negative impact on their emancipation process vis-à-vis her partner or husband. Looking at the cycle of abuse that tends to penetrate all spheres of womenhood, the assumption will be that those who feel less empowered at work will fare worse in the family as they are faced with additional pressures of culture and religion. The table below outlines the levels of

satisfaction with current employment conditions by the women who were interviewed for this study.

Table 4: Job Satisfaction of participants (N=28)

Job Satisfaction	N	%
Happy	15	53.57%
Neutral	2	7.14%
Unhappy	1	3.57%
Very Happy	4	14.29%
Very Unhappy	6	21.43%

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5.3 Women emancipation at household level: empirical evidence – secondary aim

5.3.1 Background

The scholarly theoretical debates regarding factors underpinning female emancipation vis-à-vis spouses or male partners have not been conclusive. In fact, such debates have fallen to oblivion after the initial wave of feminists achieved public recognition of gender equity and equality. This important achievement led to the development of gender sensitive laws and policies to protect womens rights and dignity in the public domain. While these laws have played a crucial role in promoting empowerment for women, this privilege has not necessarily penetrated families and households as these are seen as intimate and private nuclear units. Hence, on one hand, Kan (2008) argues that the achievement of female empowerment or emancipation vis-à-vis spouses or male partners significantly depends, above all else, on the characteristics of their partners. On the other hand, Hakim (2000) and Campton and Harris (1999) disagree and suggest that, rather,

preferences, limited choices and constraints at household level, have a negative impact on women's conditions and career goals and consequently on their emancipation process. Vetten (2009) argues that for women who are abused it is even harder for them to assert or grab opportunities that lead to their empowerment. Some of the reasons given are based on the fact that this oppression has been viewed as normal by the affected women, for lack of anything different from oppression and abuse. Are women really suppressed by their own choices and preferences? Or do they rather have limited choices due to specific circumstances surrounding their relationships with their male partners or husbands? These are some of the key questions this research sought to answer.

In order to determine whether women were feeling empowered and independent in their homes and in their relationships with their partners, they were asked various open questions, the answers to which would give an indication as to what mediated or hampered their emancipation or empowerment processes at household level.

5.3.2 Factors affecting the female emancipation process

In the view of O'Neal (2000), factors underlying human behaviour are complex, can change over time and are context bound. Indeed, Lorde (1994) cited in O'Neal (2000), states that although "there is a pretence to a homogeneity of experience...", "truth especially concerning human behaviour is often subjective" (see O'Neal, 2000: 196). This implies that universalistic theories that are purported to be time and context free would not apply in explaining female emancipation processes simply because human truth, especially between intimate partners such as husband and wife, is private and thus

subjective. Several questions were posed to 30 women who participated in the study in order to detect different factors that discourage female emancipation or independence, at household or family levels. These questions included those regarding the importance of paid employment, income size, current job satisfaction and involvement in important decision-making at work and at home.

5.3.3 The impact of paid employment on feelings of empowerment in the eyes of their partners

As suggested in the literature review, paid employment or proactive participation in economic activities has been described as the panacea to women's feelings of disempowerment in the eyes of their husbands/partners, especially in poor low-resourced settings. This assertion has been tested here. In order to check whether paid employment boosted women's feelings of empowerment, participating women were asked the question as to whether paid employment is the solution towards the achievement of independence in their households, particularly in the way they relate to their husbands/ partners.

As the results show below, there is no link between women feeling of empowerment and paid employment. The feeling of empowerment brought by paid employment seems to vary from one woman to the other. Chart 1 below represents various respondents from the 27 women who answered the question regarding the connection between paid employment and female emancipation or empowerment.

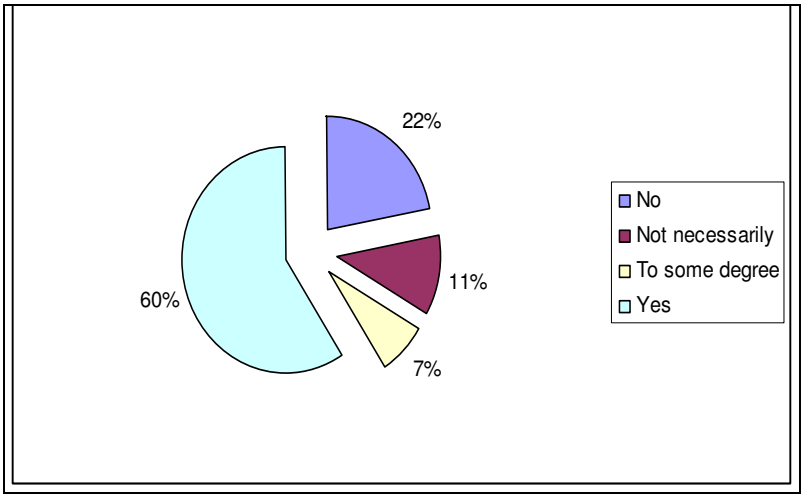

Figure 4: Empowerment through paid employment: participants perceptions (N=30)

Some of the answers to the above questions are quite interesting and, indeed, may suggest that there are deeper and important underlying factors involved in each case. The fact that 11% (3) of the women started their answers with something like "*not necessarily*", or "to some degree" 7% (2), makes it obvious that, although paid employment may have some significant positive impact, other factors that may be even more important in the process of female emancipation may not be visible. This is, for instance, illustrated in the words of this participant who is working but who says:

"*I still feel I have no power*"

Or this other participant who says:

"*Yes but one still has to feel empowered inside*".

More importantly, as it is indicated on the figure above, 22% (7) of respondents felt that paid employment has absolutely no influence on women's feeling of independence vis-à-vis their partners or husbands at home.

Nevertheless, the remaining 78% (23) of respondents felt that paid employment is key toward female emancipation in their homes. Therefore, Krishnan et al. (2010: 137) argument that "Employed women are more at risk of experiencing domestic violence because they maybe more likely to challenge their husbands/partners authority, or due to perceived threat to their authority by their husbands/partners". Such thinking challenges the notion that paid employment is key to women empowerment. Some of the comments made by women clearly point to this argument.

Table 5: Participants perceptions of paid employment as key to woman empowerment (N=30)

Respondents answer	**Theme**	**Quoted explanations**
No	Lack of control over resources	"I can't control everything because I earn less money so I got nothing to say" "My husband still makes all the decisions especially if they involve money" "No, I still feel I have no power…" "I still feel that my partner is in control" "No because I'm working but do not feel empowered"
No	Lack of self-worth	"Not necessarily we still have our own life as women beyond money" "No but it does contribute. Self -awareness, self- understanding is the main drive to women empowerment" "No the nature and understanding in the relationship is rather more important" "Money on its own is not enough…"

Yes	Independency and self-worth	"Definitely it raises women self-esteem and confidence. It gives her" power to make decisions" "Yes because if you earn your own salary you do not have to depend on your partner financially…" "Yes, but it one still needs to feel empowered inside" "Certainly you become more free and autonomous" "Yes because you don't have to depend on someone else" "To be paid is key to women's empowerment" "Because if you earn your own salary you do not have to depend on someone else…" "That is how we get our freedom, space, and our independency go women power…"
Yes	Power negotiations and control over resources	"We have balanced control over resources; we discuss everything and find out what suits both of us" "My husband and I we all contribute in everything and take control over resources" "You do have control if you contribute, you even have the respect from your partner"
Yes	Freedom to spend and to make decisions	"Because she can do whatever she wants anytime and everyday…it is freedom for us… me to discuss financial matters with my husband" "My money is my mine and I decide how to use it; whatever I own remains mine in this relationship" "Yes for you will have opportunity to do your own things not asking as long as it is right"

Looking at the responses from participants, it is difficult to make a conclusion regarding female empowerment brought by paid employment and the contribution to the household expenditure by women. Of course as it can be detected in the responses, income is a very

important starting point for female empowerment at household level. However, while the size of the income seems to significantly matter in gender power negotiation between the partners, it is important to note significant differences affecting, amongst other things, the status of the relationship and above all, the prevailing conditions in that relationship. This is illustrated, for instance, in the fact that, irrespective of income balance and contribution towards household expenditure from both male and female partners, some are able to negotiate objectively towards what is best for both and the household as a whole.

Table 6: Paid employment as source of power to negotiate decisions in the household income expenditure (N=30)

Respondents' Responses	**Themes**	**Further explanations: quotes**
Yes	1) Better negotiation powers	"Because I contribute so my opinions are essential"
		"if there is a salary coming in, you can make decisions"
		"if a person earns a salary, she does have a say in the decision making"
		"there is equality when it comes to that; we sit and discuss the budget"
	2) Salary is a weapon to enforce power negotiation	"having income helps me to negotiate decision of spending money"
		"Well,… I don't have to beg for anything from him, so I feel having a good job is helpful"
		"yes, but he always makes the final decisions"
		"Yes, I can take responsibility for my decisions"
		"Yes, I buy groceries, pay school fees for younger brother and some other household things…"
		"Yes, e.g. buying groceries"
	3)Better buying/spending powers	"Yes, if a person earns a salary she does have a say in decision making"
		"Yes, having income helps me to negotiate decision of spending money…"
		"Well I don't have to beg for anything from him. So I feel that having a good job is

		helpful" "Yes I get to prioritize and do things that I feel are the most important…" "Well at least I attempt to negotiate even though it is so difficult" "To some extent yes the salary act as a weapon for me to negotiate"
No	1) Inner power to make decisions	"I have always been able to negotiate decisions regardless of employment"
	2) Dependency-no powers to make decisions	"not necessarily, my money is small so I cant say nothing" "No, the power still lies with him and I'm not allowed to make any decisions" "Not at all he is such a control freak"

As is evidenced above, income is certainly an important component in the process of female emancipation at the household level. The majority of women expressed clearly that an income has helped them to confront their dominant male partners. However, again, the prevailing conditions in each relationship can not be underestimated in the process., There are however cases where women are still empowered to negotiate with their husbands in all important matters regarding their household even though they do not bring in any income and there are also cases where a woman is powerless in important family matters directly affecting her despite her contribution towards household expenditure.

5.3.4 Income size as a predictor of woman emancipation at household level

According to Kan (2008), the higher the relative levels of resources individuals bring to the marriage, the stronger their bargaining position in important family decisions. Against this background, beside the question whether paid employment positively contributed to their feeling empowered, participating women were also asked whether they felt independent and free to make important decisions affecting their lives in their families and were probed to further explain their answers. While 75% (23) of respondents felt they had the necessary freedom to make decisions affecting their lives in the family, 25% (7) felt that they had no control over issues regarding their lives in their homes. As to whether women would have the power to control resources in their family if they got opportunity to contribute to their household expenditure, the majority of respondents 62.07% (19) responded positively, while 37.93% (11) felt they were not. One participant said:

"I earn less money, so I have nothing to say".

This assertion makes it clear that, indeed in her view, and as noted above, an income can significantly empower women.

Another participant cements this perception by saying that:

"*When you contribute, you even get the respect from your partner".*

Some other respondents remain ambivalent. Like one participant who says that despite her contribution, she feels that her partner is still in control. The figure below shows the

association between the income size and the women's independence and freedom to make important decisions regarding her household.

5.3.5 Satisfaction with current occupation

The cohort study conducted by Everingham et al. (2007) on working class women in Australia demonstrated that, for a significant number of working class women, staying at home to care for young children was a "luxury". This implies that some working class women would wish to have that "that quality time" time to care for their younger ones but their working commitment cannot permit that. However, according to Hakim (2000) in her exploration of the contemporary British and other western feminine conditions, women's position in their homes and labour market is essentially the result of their preferences and their choices. Everingham et al. (2007) assert that gender shapes young women's working lives in more complex ways than it did in their mothers' generations. Today, since there are laws and policies that are favourable towards the emancipation of women under all conditions, whatever the contemporary woman chooses to do with her life, is entirely her responsibility. Hakim (2000) classifies women's choices in three categories:

(1) **The adaptative** women who prefer to try combining both home and working life to achieve as much as possible in terms of personal independence and to ensure the best for their family.

(2) **The home-centred**: The house executives who are fully committed to being housewives by choice

(3) **Those who are work-centred:** these are women who are ready to fight in a male dominant world thus do not see gender as a primary concern or obstacle to their lives and career choices.

Table 7: Participants' satisfaction in their current occupation (N=30)

Respondents' responses	**Themes**	**Respondents' quoted further explanations**
Very Unhappy	Not acceptable monetary reward	"I'm not happy because keeping your house clean is work without income" "It's too below…" "I'm not recognised and don't get paid enough" "…too much work and too much stress and no income"
Unhappy	Need for personal growth and recognition	"its not where I want to see myself, have goals I need to achieve in life" "I feel that managers don't appreciate the work that I'm doing"
Very Happy	Passion and fulfilment	"my work is fulfilling and one has support and resources to perform well" " I work in a place that promotes self-esteem and empowerment" "Happy because this is the job I like and I'm experienced in this job" "Every month I'm earning something by doing that life goes on, less abuse and no stress"
Happy	Self-worth	"It is the only job I have ever done and good at it…" "I'm happy because I'm doing something at the moment…" "I'm happy at least, I'm doing something"
Happy	Personal growth and career	"My job is very flexible which allows me to accommodate for my family" "I like my position and salary is good" "I'm at a point where I need to improve my skills in this field and company does offer such…"

	fulfilment	"Like working with children and keeps me busy" "getting people to voice and re-discover themselves gives me joy" "I like doing books and my boss is a very nice person" "I have direction and better understanding of my work. I do not drag myself out of bed …" "I like nursing and the salary has increased in the past two years…" "I just like my job and would want to continue growing in it" "I'm content and likes getting in touch with people" "Its my passion and would always want to be in the health sector"

The patterns in the above table reveal similar patterns as those in figure 2. Job satisfaction seems important although, once again, the link can not be absolutely determined; it all seems to depend on individual women and their familial contexts. As it can be seen on the table, women who are very unhappy with their current jobs feel that a better job would make them empowered whereas those who admitted to being very happy with their current occupation do not necessarily agree with the notion that better job would result to empowerment. Based on the information from the majority of women in the sample being fairly satisfied with their current occupation one can perceive it is a significant and positive sign of women feeling genuinely independent and empowered. However, it is equally fascinating to note that the category of women who admitted to be happy with their current jobs remain completely divided with regard to what lead to empowerment (see the table above).

Whereas job-related happiness does not necessarily lead to the feeling of empowerment at home for some, the other half of the women present a completely opposite feeling (see table 7 on the category of happy). The results in both tables above (6, 7) are suggestive of

the unpredictability of female emancipation and processes and factors that lead to that outcome. The table above rather describes the illusion whereby a woman without an income or a woman frustrated in her current occupation thinks that an income or a satisfying occupation would guarantee her independence and empowerment vis-à-vis their partners. Some of the women who reported having satisfying income and being happy with their current position felt that happiness satisfaction in your current job and income do not always foster the feeling of emancipation in their eyes of your male partner. This means that the nature of the relationship between a woman and her partner may be more important than any other factor discussed above and may often be very subjective.

Table 8: Participants perception of freedom to make important decisions affecting your life in the family (N=30)

Respondents' responses	**Themes**	**Further explanation quotes**
No	Dependency on the partner	"not at the moment" "I depend on my partner in everything" "what I'm earning at the moment is not enough so I still have to depend on my partner on other decision making" "Someone always has to approve or decline" "No, someone always has to approve or decline" "No, my husband needs to approve of any decision" "No, only when it comes to kitchen matters he allows me to make decisions" "What I am earning at the moment its not enough so I still have to depend on my partner on other decision making"

		"No, only when it comes to kitchen matters he allows me to make decisions"
Yes	Some level of decision making	"I'm free but always in dialogue with my husband" "Yes free but always in dialogue with my husband" "I do make decisions but my partner is always a stumbling block"
Yes	Power to make decisions	"Surely I make my own decisions after all its my life" "Yes, I am independent because I manage to do everything that I want to do" "I am already independent because I'm not relying on my husband because he does not give me his money" "whether I'm employed or not, no one has more power over another person's life except the person that you are" "we have an understanding with my partner that I'm an independent person even though we live together"

Similar to the patterns above, the independence and freedom to make important decisions affecting her life in the family seems to depend on whether the women has some financial contribution towards the running of the household, except for few cases where two partners have a working relationship whereby everything must be discussed, irrespective of how much one brings to the marriage.

5.3.7 Participants' involvement in decision-making at their work place as an indicator of their empowerment at home

Everingham et al. (2007) found that most of the working class women do not see gender as a significant obstacle to their aspirations. According to working class British women studied, gender was only a barrier to the older generation; it is a thing of the past. Whereas in Africa the nature of female subordination and abuse is still a significant concern and mainly perpetrated under the disguise of culture and religion. This suggests that a woman who is proactive in decision-making at the workplace, whatever the nature of their job and the position in the company, is highly likely to have gained the necessary empowerment to make independent choices for herself and for her family. In order to understand to what degree women in the sample were proactive in decision-making in their current occupation, they were asked the question whether they felt they were allowed to make contributions towards important decisions in the context of their job. Their responses are reflected below in the table.

Table 9: Participants' contribution in important decisions at work (N=30)

Respondents' responses	**Themes**	**Further explanation quotes**
No	Follow orders or instructions	"I have no powers" "I just accept everything" "I'm not allowed to make important decisions. My partner feels that he is the one who opened the business for me so he decides about everything" "No, he only gives me orders. I listen to what he says" "No, but must follow protocol"

		"No, I'm not allowed to do any contributions…" "No, I just do my job to the best of my ability" "No, but I don't have much choice for now"
Yes	Consulted and empowered	"I work in a democratic environment, we are consulted on almost everything" "they involvement most of the time when they need to make decisions regarding my job" "As a senior staff member I'm able to voice my opinions even though at times nobody listens to me" "Yes, as a senior staff I'm able to voice my opinions even though at times nobody listens to me" "Yes to some extent I do contribute to important decisions" "Yes, actively involved…new programmes for the study" "Some important decisions e.g. policies etc. not when it comes to money" "Indeed at work I am part of management" "Yes, I contribute in everything…" "Yes, I do contribute towards decisions making" "Because this is my business I do all the decisions even though at times I don't think that they are accurate"

Although the sample is small, it is clear from the quotes that having, or not having, decision-making powers at work is not significantly dictated by terms of gender, but in terms of job position, and more importantly, on what you are able to offer in terms of your material or intellectual contribution towards the success of the business you are involved in.

The results of the interplay between women's involvement in work place decision-making and the relative degree of empowerment and freedom to make relevant decisions at family level, are presented below.

Table 10: Comparison of participants ability to make decision at work with decision making at home (N=30)

Work Decision Making	HomeDecision Making	N	%
Yes	Yes	10	33.33%
Yes	No	6	20.00%
No	Yes	5	16.67%
No	No	9	30.00%

Participants were asked the question whether they were consulted in decision-making processes and their respective responses were connected with their independence to make important decisions affecting their families. The table above is not able to demonstrate a significant link between decision-making powers at work and the decision-making powers at household level. In other words, a woman without decision-making power at work place does not usually have it at home either. What is interesting to note is that those who do get occasionally consulted in decision-making processes at work are also occasionally consulted at home. This pattern, where a woman who is consulted in important decisions at work irrespective of their job position and easily takes charge in matters and decisions affecting their households, confirms a good body of literature that suggests that participation in economic development is a good starting point of women empowerment.

5.4 Findings-based summary of empowerment at family level

Although the findings in this study may not be extrapolated elsewhere since the socio-cultural context where these processes take place substantially differs, the results presented here are quite important in the current debate on gender equality and equity. In summary, this study yielded the following key findings:

a) Paid employment does not necessarily lead to female empowerment at the household level because in some cases and according to some participants, the fate of their income still has to be decided by their partners. On the other hand, less income or no income at all did not mean disempowerment. Some of the participants in the study remain content at being housewives, while others believed that if they could get better jobs they would feel more empowered.

b) A women's happiness with her current job did not necessarily equate to emancipation or freedom at family level and higher salary at work did not imply happiness or freedom at household level for participating women.

c) At least for women in the sample used in this study, education level didn't impact on the process of female empowerment at household level because some women with tertiary level education were worse off compared to their counterparts who were not that educated when it comes to experiencing emancipation at home.

d) Lastly, it was interesting to find that a significant number of women who reported being consulted often in the decision-making process at work also reported significant freedom to make important familial decisions.

5.5 Conclusion and Research Implication

This study investigated different factors that affect the empowerment of women at family or household level. The objective was to establish to what extent the widely held view that poverty equals disempowerment of women, while income or participation in economic development is equated to guaranteed emancipation in their household. Although the findings in this study may not be extrapolated elsewhere since the socio-cultural context where these processes take place substantially differs, the results presented here are quite important in relation to the current debate on gender equality and equity.

This data analysis reveals interesting findings regarding gender equity and equality in the context of a woman and her partner. The main expectation for the researcher was to establish whether participation in economic activities and the resulting income, and the woman's financial contribution towards the household expenditure would guarantee her the necessary empowerment and freedom to make choices regarding issues directly affecting her life in her family. While the study reveals that having a job is not sufficient in guaranteeing female empowerment and independence from their male partners, having an income, and the subsequent contribution towards the household expenditure seems almost an important weapon to enable a woman to have a crucial say in important family matters such as spending. However, in a few cases, the analysis reveals a pattern where

the satisfaction in what one is currently doing, the salary and its size, seems not to supersede other factors in influencing the feeling of empowerment for women. One can summarize these findings as follows:

a) Paid employment does not necessarily lead to female empowerment at the household level because in some cases, according to some participants, the fate of their income still has to be decided by their partners. On the other hand, less income or no income at all did not mean disempowerment. Some of the participants in the study remain content to be housewives.

b) At least for women in the sample used in this study, education level didn't impact on the process of female empowerment at household level because some women with tertiary level education were worse, off compared to their counterparts who were not that educated, when it comes to a feeling of emancipation at home.

c) Lastly, it was interesting to find that a significant number of women who reported being consulted often in the decision-making process at work also reported significant freedom to make important familial decisions.

The fact that the patterns that seem to contradict each other show that no single factor investigated in this study leads to the process of female empowerment alone. It is obvious that there is whole range of socioeconomic, cultural, and psychosocial conditions (including the status of the relationship of the woman and her husband itself) that interact to affect the female empowerment process. To a significant extent, the study agrees with the previous studies that deprivation plays quite a significant role in delaying or fostering

women feeling of disempowerment, but it also shows that some deprived women still feel more empowered than their counterparts who are relatively stable financially.

5.6 Research Implication

Due to the sample having limited representivity, the findings in this study can not be generalised to other women with different characteristics in different socio-cultural settings. However, the research yielded results that pave the way to further anthropological studies into what exactly constitutes durable empowerment for women. It would be interesting to see what a larger scale study with better representivity can yield in terms of women empowerment or emancipation at the household or family level, especially where gender mainstreaming is the order of the day both in national and international policies.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

While in most western countries gender inequalities no longer qualify as a significant barrier to a woman's self-realisation (Hakim, 2000; Evaringham et al, 2007), traditional gender roles assigned to men and women remain an organising principle of social life in South Africa. Although, for the past two decades, feminist activism has led to considerable advancement in the development of gender sensitive legislation across the globe, there is still little evidence demonstrating that this legislation has penetrated the smallest but most important social unit - the family, primarily viewed as a private institution. Unfortunately, within a family context very few cases of gender-related abuse, exploitation, suppression and other unacceptable domination between husband and wife are reported, simply because, as noted by Kan (2008), bargaining in marital relationships depends on the avoidance of divorce and other unwanted outcomes of conflict. This is partly one of the reasons why gender-based domination occurring at household level, between husband and wife, is kept silent, particularly where the woman foresees limited alternatives to her situation.

So far researchers on gender relations have focused on the most obvious cases such as reported domestic violence, cases of divorces and other reported disputes between women and their partners. Few researchers have extended their efforts to enquire deeper to explore the aspirations of women within their marital relationships and to what extent they feel equipped to realise those aspirations or dreams.

This study explored the various degrees of empowerment or emancipation within the household. The main objective pursued in this study was to identify factors that underlie the perception of female empowerment at household level among women who have been abused and are currently in relationships. Below we summarise key findings of the study.

6.2 Summary of main findings

The key aim of the study was to explore contemporary female expectations and experiences of gender power relations and to understand how participation by women in economic activities shapes their power negotiations in the family. Data was obtained from 30 women who were abused around Johannesburg in reference to the objectives set out in the first chapter of the study, using a qualitative semi-structured interview guide to achieve the following specific objectives:

1) To identify the gender-based challenges that women experience in their homes
2) To determine the working women's perspective concerning gender equality issues.
3) To identify supportive elements which contribute to better power negotiations in the family.

6.2.1 Gender-based challenges that women experience in their families

Evaringham et al (2007) noted that there are often on-going discrepancies between expectations when a woman walks into a relationship as compared to the actual experience of that relationship. A significant number of women in the study sample provided varying responses with regard to their personal experience with gender-related issues. The majority of women reported not having sufficient negotiation power with their husband but they provided different reasons for that. Some said it was because their contribution towards the household expenses was very minimal, while others said they had no negotiation power on issues regarding their families, despite their significant contribution towards the household expenditure. One of the key interesting findings in this research is that some women expressed frustration that can be better described as "entrapment" in a relationship. This is illustrated in a statement such as the one below where one respondent who, when was asked whether the paid job increased her powers to make important decisions regarding household expenditure, exclaimed:

"*Not at all, my husband is such a control freak*".

In brief, the findings of the study confirm Kan's (2008) argument that the characteristics of the partner/husband have a significant impact on the processes that shape gender power relations in a family, which explains why this study reached various outcomes. In addition the context in which abuse takes place is significant for this sample since all are from an African cultural background that enforces the sense of entrapment and subordination. It has been found that women in the South African context experience all forms of abuse ranging from physical, psychological, sexual and economic abuse. The

cycle of abuse in most cases begins to affect girls within the family setting through cultural beliefs and values. Subsequently, this is played out in different sectors where women engage, including within the workplace.

6.2.2 The nature and impact of female participation in paid employment on their level of empowerment at home.

According to Kan (2008), access to economic resources is a key factor that shapes one's bargaining powers in the family. According to this theory one is respected for what he/she brings to the relationship at its beginning and the value of his/her contribution going forward. Certainly, as in many social settings, income plays a crucial role, not only in the way individuals are seen in the society/communities. However, the effect of the salary/income on the way individuals are perceived in their respective communities and families can greatly improve their socio-demographic and position in the family. Studies have indicated, for instance, that the way a salary or income shapes the process of emancipation and independence substantially differs by gender. Warren (2007) argues that in the west, the independent wages of women gives them power and more control over resources and it enhances their choices and ability to make decisions concerning their own lives. While this study's finding demonstrated similar patterns showing that income or paid employment represents a powerful weapon in the struggle for female emancipation in the context of the family unit, the rule does not necessarily apply to all women. The findings in this study have demonstrated that some professional women with a fairly good salary did not necessarily find that their salary was a sufficient weapon to

achieve their emancipation. In fact, some women who had a small income felt that they had the necessary confidence and freedom to follow their preferences and make necessary choices towards their aspirations. These findings contradict each other and this means that female emancipation at household level can not necessarily be explained by some obvious factors; it is rather a process that involves a complex mix of factors, including the nature of the relationship between the woman and her partner, cultural beliefs and community expectations and, as one of the respondent puts it: "*inner empowerment*", which may considerably differ from woman to woman.

6.2.3 To determine participants' perspectives on issues regarding gender equality at household level.

A number of studies have explored the issues of gender equality in the family context (Warren, 2007; Crompton, 2006; Daly, 2002). The debate around family context gender equity and equality has raised heated debates around various concepts with the most contentious being "breadwinning". Warren (2007) notes that "breadwinning", given its importance in gender power relations, has been for so long a taken-for-granted unproblematic notion. Often breadwinning has been associated with subordination and dominance, and as the monopoly of male partners within the household. However, even with the current increase in dual breadwinning, shared by both partners or belonging to exclusive female breadwinners in the household (Warren, 2007), this has not necessarily translated into female independence and freedom. Warren (2007) stresses that to be considered as a breadwinner, you need to be the sole income provider for the family. She

therefore makes an important distinction between breadwinning and dual earning. According to her argument, a couple is considered as dual breadwinners when they both have a good enough salary that together affords the expenses for basic family needs. On the other hand, you are dual earner when you both earn something but both, or one of the incomes, are insignificant towards the daily family needs. This implies that a woman with a small income may still feel powerless in power negotiations with her husband because she is still his dependant. Related or subsequent psychological abuse tends to silence and impose a certain degree of fear to the women who are abused. As Vetten (2009: 9) points out, women who are working can and do experience emotional abuse from their partners, regardless of their income.

In order to explore and understand women's experiences regarding gender power relationships, the researcher asked women the question as to whether they felt they had the necessary empowerment to make important decisions affecting their lives and to make necessary choices that would help them to pursue their aspirations. To be more specific, the questions regarding the distribution of household chores and child rearing were chosen as good indicators of various degrees of female emancipation.

6.2.4 Factors enhancing better gender power negotiations between women and their partners.

The general objective of this study was to identify socio-demographic and economic elements that enhance the balance in household gender power relations between husband

and wife. The findings in this study are in line with other research done on processes affecting the emancipation of women, though to a limited extent. Similar to other research findings this study has demonstrated that income, paid employment, or in other words, active participation in economic activities, represents an important tool that allows a woman some power to negotiate regarding important decisions affecting her life in the family context. Equally important however, is that this study yielded contradictory findings which showed that some women without income, managed to be well equipped to make important decisions in their home and were free to pursue their aspirations. This finding can be interpreted in different ways. Although we do not have sufficient empirical evidence to support our assertions, it could be argued that the socio-demographic characteristics of both partners, especially the husband, together with the prevailing conditions and status of the relationship, shape this outcome as evidenced in Everingham et al (2007) and Kan (2008).

6.3 RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 Research Implications - Theory

Due to the limited representivity of the sample, the findings in this study can not be generalised to other women with different characteristics in different sociocultural settings because the issues treated in this study [empowerment of women] are time and context bound. However, the research results did pave the way for further sociological and anthropological studies into what exactly facilitates the empowerment of women and sustains it at household level. Further inquiries are needed to look into and explain the following:

(1) The theoretical paradigms underpinning disempowerment of women in the household in an era of progressive laws and gender sensitive legislations promoting female empowerment.

(2) To explore culture-based gender norms and their impact on the emancipation of women within a family unit.

Future research should explore the current state of gender power relations at household level with a specific focus on women in "invisibly" abusive marital relationships in order to feed new policies with empirical evidence to address inequalities in private social units such as the household. With such an undertaking, hopefully, gender domination at the household level, which is often bypassed by researchers and clouded by the gender equity and equality at macro-level, will soon be placed at the centre of sociological debates and given the attention it deserves.

6.3.2 Research Implications -Practice

Gender mainstreaming is currently emphasised across all spectra of society and there is legislation that can defend that, but so far all legislation is focused on the public sector. However, evidence still shows that female emancipation; particularly in the African context, is still an issue that deserves research attention. The findings in this study lead to the following recommendations for practice:

(1) That practitioners need to understand that the empowerment of women does not only lie in the public sphere but in fact begins in the family setting. Given that

this setting is extremely difficult to penetrate for most practitioners, awareness at all intervention levels is crucial.

(2) Further understanding is needed of the impact of cultural and religious beliefs at household level, as these aspects underpin the empowerment of women.

6.4 Concluding Comment

This research explored factors that mediate the household level emancipation processes of women within the context of South Africa. The relevance of this endeavour lies in the fact that, despite political and legislative transformation in the favour of women, the emancipation of South African women at family level has lagged behind and remains very poor. Against this background, this study explored women's current experiences of gender power relations and examined the circumstances underpinning their sense of power or powerlessness within their families, despite progressive gender sensitive laws and positive political will in South Africa.

The point pursued in this study is that, if gender imbalances are to be eradicated within the household, it is crucial to understand the prevailing gender dynamics within it. The research interest shown in household conditions, with emphasis on partner relationships, can help address the otherwise "invisible" fundamental issues that are currently destroying South African social fabrics, such as domestic violence and other gender-based problems.

Despite a wide range of research on gender, most researchers have often bypassed issues surrounding the female condition at household level, because of its invisibility as an

issue, or it seen as less relevant for researchers. The key question pursued in this study is that income and/or economic participation would contribute to the improvement of power negotiations in the family. Overall, the findings in this study agree with previous research that income and economic participation can serve as a tool for women to negotiate issues affecting their lives with relatively equal gender powers with their partners. However, the research also demonstrates that, indeed, income or paid employment was not sufficient as tool for equal gender power relations at household level. Whilst some women felt relatively empowered to make decisions and make choices for themselves and their families even though having neither income nor job, a number of professional women still felt powerless in their homes despite relatively high incomes. According to Warren (2007), Kan (2008) and Evaringham et al (2007) the nature of the partnership, the characteristics of the male partner and the upbringing of the women, all affect the conditions of the household in various and complex ways. One can therefore conclude by stating that economic participation does not necessarily translate into power at the household level.

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Appendix A

RESEARCH TOOL

RESEARCH TOOL

A Gendered Analysis of Economic and Power Relations in the Family: The Position of Working Women Who have been Abused

Section A

Demography

1. Age (Please tick relevant block)

21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46+

2. Ethnic group (Please tick relevant block)

Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other (Specify)

3. Family arrangement (Please tick relevant block)

Single	Married	Live in Partner	Divorced

4. Highest Level of Education

_____

Section B

Employment History and Conditions

1. What kind of work are you currently engaged in?

_____

2. What kind of sector are you currently working in?

Health	Education	Social Services	Entertainment	Other, specify

3. How long have you been in this type of work?

_____

4. Current Position: _____

5. Income range per month (please tick the relevant block)

Below R1500	R1500-R3499	R3500-R5499	R5500-R8499	Above R8500

6. How happy are you in your current work place?

Very Unhappy	Unhappy	Neither Happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very Happy

Please give details explaining your answer

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. If you had a choice would you change from your current job (please give details)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section C

Work and Family Issues

1. Describe briefly your family composition structure

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Do you have any children? (biological, fostered or adopted)

Yes
No

3. If so, please list their ages, gender and school grades

Age	**Gender**	**School Grade/Tertiary Level**

4. Who lives in the household?

_____

_____

_____

5. If you have children, what is your experience of being a working woman and still having to care for the family?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section D

Economic roles and Power Relations (gender equity issues)

NB: Please give detailed information to this section

1. Do you feel that your income is justifiable given the nature of your work? (please give details)

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Do you know the income of your partner? Please indicate if it is more or less than yours

_____

3. Would you say that at your workplace, you are allowed to make contributions towards important decision? (please give details)

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Having the opportunity to contribute in the household, do you feel that you have more control over resources?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. How are tasks distributed in your family?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. In terms of your culture, who is regarded as the head of your family?

_____

__

7. Who makes decisions in your family regarding child-rearing?

Husband/Partner	Myself	Both husband/Partner and I	Grandparents/Others

8. Has paid employment given you power to negotiate decisions in your household with regard to spending of income? If yes, in what way? If no, please explain

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Do you consider yourself independent and free to make important decisions affecting your life in your family?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. How does your husband/partner feel about you working and earning an income?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. In general would you consider paid employment as key to women's empowerment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section E

Supportive Elements

1. What support if any, do you receive from your family as a working woman?

_____

_____

_____

2. In which areas do you feel NOT supported in your family?

_____

_____

_____

3. What support structures if any, does you workplace provide for you as a woman?

_____

_____

_____

4. In which areas do you feel NOT supported in your workplace?

_____

_____

_____

5. List any other support structures available to you

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B

STUDY CONSENT DOCUMENTATION

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Division of the Deputy Registrar (Research)

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49/1 Dlamini

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H070816**
PROJECT	A Gendered Analysis of Economic and Power Relations in the Family: The position of working class women
INVESTIGATORS	Ms PT Dlamini
DEPARTMENT	School of Human and Community Development/Social Work
DATE CONSIDERED	07.08.17
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE*	Approved Unconditionally

NOTE:

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE 07.11.22 pp **CHAIRPERSON** .....
(Professor M Vorster)

cc: Supervisor : Mrs K Ditlhake
School of Human and Community Development

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to a completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature

This ethical clearance is valid for two years from date of approval.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

nisaa
Institute for Women's Development

Nisaa offers abused women and their children emergency shelter; counselling and support; training courses and workshops; advocacy work and public awareness programmes.

27 July 2007

To whom it may concern

This serves as confirmation that the Nisaa Institute for Women's Development grants Thandekile Dlamini permission to conduct her research on "gender issues in the family concerning the interplay between economy and power relations from the perspective of working class women" at our organization. We would be delighted to have her and expect that a copy of the findings will be given to the organization at the end of research.

Should you require any further information or clarity on any matter, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours in community service

Pontsho K Segwai
Outreach Manager

Nisaa Lenasia: 19 Link St, Ext 1, Lenasia 1827, Johannesburg, South Africa. PO Box 1057, Lenasia 1820. Tel: (011) 854-5804/5. a/h: 231-5050 code BA224. Fax: (011) 854-5718. e-mail: nisaa@sangonet.org.za **Nisaa Soweto:** Room No 80, Protea Magistrates Court corner Ndaba Drive & Kunene St, Protea South, Soweto. PO Box 1057, Lenasia 1820. Tel: 011 980-6236. Fax: 011 980-6236
Nisaa Orange Farm: Bristol Cone Clinic, Plot 123, Golden Highway, Orange Farm. PO Box 1057, Lenasia 1820. Tel: 083 303-1291
Fundraising No. 011081270007

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Hello

My name is Thandekile Dlamini. I am currently studying towards my Master's Degree in Social Work. As part of my studies I am doing a study on gender issues in the family concerning the interplay between economy and power relations from the perspective of working class women who have been abused.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Once you have read the letter you can decide whether you want to take part or not. Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer a set of questions that I will conduct with you in private. The interview schedule will take approximately one hour and will be broken down into five sections. The sections will consist of biographical details such as age, employment history, work and family issues, income power relations and supportive elements. I will appreciate it if you can write down your responses for me.

Provision for counseling or debriefing will be in place, should the need for such services arise due to nature of the research subject. I intend to protect the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your data by me. In any publication emerging from this research, you will be referred to by a pseudonym; i.e. a make up name.

Once the research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be available to you and a copy of the research document will be given to the organisation. It is also possible that findings will be presented at academic conferences and published in an academic journal.

Please be advised that your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. Your decision to participate or not, or to withdraw, will be completely independent of your dealings with the organisation or University of the Witwatersrand.

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it to me.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me – my telephone numbers are as follows: Office number - 011 683 7200 and Cell Phone – 072 1745 087

Thandekile Dlamini
MA Social Work Student

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION

I _____ have read and understood the content of the information letter. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and may refuse to answer any questions that I feel uncomfortable with answering. I now give informed consent to participate in the study. The information letter has been given to me to keep for future reference.

……..
……..
Signature of participant Date

……..
……..
Signature of researcher Date