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CHALLENGES FACING RURAL WOMEN IN HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Public and Development Management.

September, 2006

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Public and Development Management in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Sibongile Radebe

September, 2006

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ABSTRACT

This research project employed case study methodology to explore challenges encountered by rural women in housing construction within the Nkangala region in Mpumalanga Province. Women's involvement in housing delivery can positively impact upon poverty alleviation and issues of governance. Imbalances in access to social and economic resources require long term strategies for women's empowerment in the drive for poverty alleviation. Participation in housing and human settlement development can act as an entry point for rural women to gain greater control over access to such resources. The study investigates current developmental interventions by the South African government such as Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), the People's Housing Process (PHP) to try and insert a firm agenda for the empowering and socio-economic advancement of women in the public provision of housing.

ACRONYMS

AGC	**Association of General Contractors**
ANC	**African National Congress**
BBBEE	**Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment**
BCC	**Black Construction Council**
BEE	**Black Economic Empowerment**
BPFA	**The Beijing Platform For Action**
CBO	**Community Based Organisation**
CGE	**Commission on Gender Equality**
CETA	**Construction Education and Training Authority**
DFA	**Development Facilitation Act**
EPWP	**Expanded Public Works Programme**
FEDSAW	**Federation of South African Women**
FET	**Further Education and Training**
MRTT	**Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust**
NDH	**National Department of Housing**
NHBRC	**National Home Builder Registration Council**
PHP	**Peoples Housing Process**
PHPT	**People's Housing Partnership Trust**
RDP	**Reconstruction and Development Programme**
SAFCEC	**South African Federation of Civil Engineers**
SAWIC	**South African Women In Construction**
SMME	**Small Medium and Micro Enterprise**
SO	**Support Organisation**
UNCHS	**United Nations Centre for Human settlement**
UNDP	**United Nations Development Programme**
WEDO	**Women's Environment Development Organization**
WFH	**Women for Housing**
WHO	**World Health Organization**
WNC	**Women's National Coalition**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY 1

1.2 GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING POVERTY 2

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 2

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH 4

1.5 METHODOLOGY 6

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 7

1.7 TERMINOLOGY 7

1.8 SEQUENCE OF THE STUDY 9

1.9 CONCLUSION 10

CHAPTER 2 12

MAINSTREAMING GENDER FOR DEVELOPMENT 12

2.1 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL GENDER DISCRIMINATION 13

2.2 STRUGGLE AGAINST EXCLUSION 16

2.3 THE HOUSING PROBLEM 17

2.3 ADDRESSING THE IMBALANCES OF THE PAST 20

2.4 CONCLUSION 24

CHAPTER 3 25

RURAL WOMEN AND THE HOUSING PROCESS 25

3.1 PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN HOUSING DELIVERY 25

3.1.1 WOMEN IN THE FORMAL CONSTRUCTION SECTOR 27

3.1.2 PEOPLE'S HOUSING PROCESS 28

3.2 SELECTED INTERNATIONAL CASES 30

3.3 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT 32

3.4 INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION 37

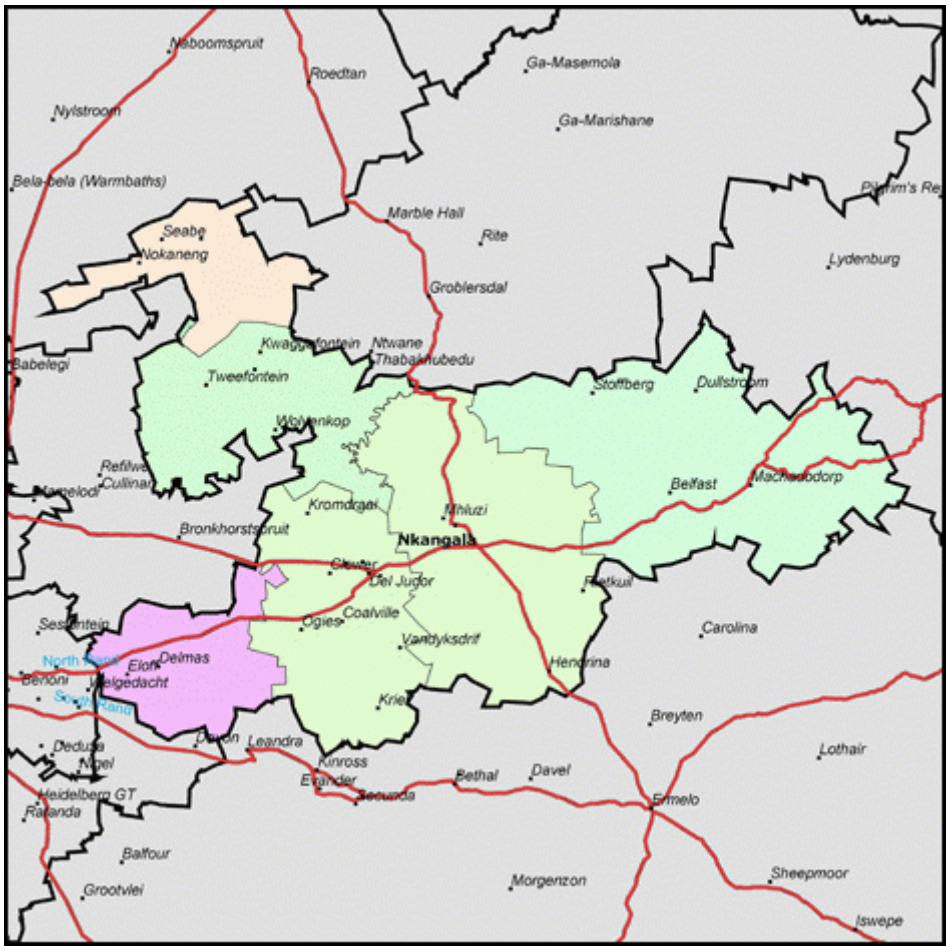
3.5 RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES 39

3.6 CONCLUSION 43

CHAPTER 4 45

CASE STUDY OF KWAGGAFONTEIN 45

4.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT 45
4.2 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA 48
4.3 HOUSING PROJECTS WITHIN THE SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES .. 50
4.4 CONCLUSION 54
CHAPTER 5 55
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 55
5.1 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS 55
5.1.1 WORK CATEGORIZATION 56
5.1.2 LEVELS OF EDUCATION 56
5.1.3 REMUNERATION 57
5.1.4 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES 58
5.1.5 ACCESS TO FINANCE 59
5.1.6 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT 60
5.1.7 ATTITUDES 61
5.1.8 LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION 62
5.1.9 THE LEVEL OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION 62
5.1.10 DOUBTS ABOUT SUCCESS 63
5.1.11 POOR INFRASTRUCTURE 64
5.1.12 MATERIAL PROCUREMENT AND TENDERING 64
5.2 CONCLUSION 65
CHAPTER 6 68
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION 68
6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS 68
6.2 CONCLUSION 72
ANNEXURES 74
REFERENCES 79



Map of Nkangala District Municipality. Retrieved from: http://www.nkangaladm.org.za/nkangala_map.gif

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This chapter gives a brief introduction to the study. It covers the background to challenges encountered by women in general, the problem statement, the research problems encountered, data collection and research methods. Specific key concepts used in the text are briefly explained.

The majority of African women live in rural areas, while most white women are located in urban areas. African women in rural areas, especially those in the former homelands, or Bantustan areas, constitute the most disadvantaged group in the country. A high proportion of African households are headed by women. They constitute 75% of workers in the informal sector (Moser 1989). According to Budlender (1997), 82% of them are involved in elementary activities such as street vending, domestic work and micro-enterprises in the informal sector or in rural areas. They have to meet the accompanying challenges without access to infrastructure, resources, skills, or markets. Empowering rural women is the key challenge in the context of government's strategy to ensure Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) through promoting equity ownership and entrepreneurship.

In South Africa, traditional values, sexism, poverty and racism continue to hinder the educational development of women, the elderly and the disabled and negatively affect their chances of participating in the mainstream economy. Rural women have been the most disadvantaged group and have the highest illiteracy rate. This factor means that most of them are excluded from ownership, control and management of productive assets and access to skills training and political and economic participation. The situation is not only unjust, but also inhibits

South Africa's ability to achieve its full economic potential (Commission on Gender Equality CGE, 2004).

1.2 GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING POVERTY

The government has been explicit about its objective of creating jobs as a key way of redressing poverty and empowering the previously disadvantaged (Braam 2001). According to Balshaw and Goldberg (2005), BBBEE has been the government's initiative to promote economic transformation in order to allow meaningful participation in the economy by black people. The implementation of equal opportunity policies should demonstrate a commitment to good and fair dealings.

Housing construction can provide an entry point for women's empowerment. The housing sector connects women to a range of opportunities, which are not limited to construction work and maintenance, but also involve disciplines such as environmental planning and landscaping. Involvement in housing construction can positively impact upon poverty reduction, involvement in governance, and decision-making. Given opportunities, women could acquire new skills and develop their own businesses.

The industry does not cater only for skilled workers such as bricklayers but also for unskilled labour. Brick making and digging of trenches, for instance, can be done by unskilled labour. Moreover, women have traditionally been involved in the construction of their own houses and this was done through drawing on family and neighbourly networks.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem studied in this research concerns emerging female contractors with inadequate access to opportunities. The environment for rural women in the

Nkangala region in Mpumalanga province is still very unfavourable. Their participation in socio-economic activities is minimal. Street vending, food security programmes and poultry farming are economic activities in which some are involved. The tourism industry is still predominantly white-owned. Unemployment is a major factor that contributes to the vulnerability of women to poverty.

This case study focuses on challenges of rural women in housing construction in Mpumalanga and the impact of economic strategies such as BBBEE on rural women in housing delivery within the Mpumalanga province. The unemployment rate for females in Mpumalanga province is 52%, compared to 32% for males (Population Unit, 2004). Owing to the greater vulnerability of females, the poverty rate is high in Nkangala region, especially in the former KwaNdebele area, although housing construction is taking place. The number of female developers is still very low compared to that of males. Women are still engaged in **menial** activities such as cleaning of windows and removal of rubble during construction. Capacity programmes are a requirement if people are to be empowered with skills and training, as they should be, in order to participate meaningfully in local community projects. The Peoples Housing Process (PHP) requires that the People's Housing Partnership Trust (PHPT) facilitates six workshops, to share information with potential beneficiaries regarding available subsidies and processes of housing delivery through PHP.

Although the PHP policy encourages the participation of rural women, in certain instances the functions of the support organization (SO) are still performed by men. The housing delivery industry can assist towards poverty alleviation through bringing more women on board, since it is labour intensive and can also accommodate professionals and young people, as expected in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The Mpumalanga Department of Local Government and Housing is expected to support rural women by giving them access to resources, since heavy demands

are placed on them to maintain the domestic economy and contribute to the production of goods and services. Housing also represents the most significant investment that most families make and is often their only provision for long term security. Housing in low income areas should provide shelter and contribute towards economic empowerment instead of being a dead asset. The housing process plays a fundamental role in local economies, contributing towards job creation and localised investment.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The situation today is that more men than women are employed in government. Unequal sharing of power leads to an unequal sharing of resources. Gender equality in government is necessary to ensure that women have equal economic, social and political opportunities. Meena (1992) argues that gender equality is a situation where all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities to make choices without the limitations set by restricted relationships and roles ascribed by society. Gender gaps surface as a result of the inability and/or unwillingness of some institutions to address the gender differentiation inherent in all cultural, institutional, attitudinal and historically based gender discrimination.

Economic empowerment is an integral part of South Africa's transformation process, encouraging the redistribution of wealth and opportunities to the previously disadvantaged communities and individuals. Though Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment emphasizes the empowerment of all black people, including women, workers and the youth, as well as people living with disability and in rural areas, poverty amongst women in rural areas has not been adequately alleviated. Affirmative action, the promotion of SMMEs and the EPWP are also strategies put in place by the government to assist women to gain access to opportunities. Targets for EPWP are single- and female-headed households, 60% women, 20% youth and 2% disabled (Balshaw and Goldberg 2005)

This study assumes that the housing construction industry represents one of the key economic activities that can drive the development agenda of the government. A further justification of this study lies in the view currently gaining acceptance in this country amongst politicians and business leaders: that the unemployment problem can be significantly alleviated by the expansion of the informal sector; particularly through the encouragement of the development of small business (Louw,City Press Business, 26 August 2005: 2).

Despite the implementation of transformation policies, unemployment and poverty levels remain high in South Africa (Department of Labour, 2002). The private sector has also not adequately addressed BEE imperatives; generally implementing limited aspects in response to government tender requirements. Different bodies have subjectively interpreted the preferential procurement policy and this has led to increased levels of legal uncertainty in companies.

Women's involvement in housing construction and planning could provide an entry point for their greater involvement in governance. Their participation in human settlement planning and delivery could, moreover, provide them with a platform for greater involvement in decision-making with family, relatives and community and political organizations. The UNDP (1997) maintains that empowerment of women, especially of rural women, will lead to their increased self confidence, recognition of inequality and demands for equality and to changes in the division of responsibilities within the household community, leading to reduction in the domestic burden of women.

It is against this background that the research was undertaken to explore possibilities for empowering women economically, politically and socially within the Nkangala region in the Mpumalanga province, with a specific focus on women's involvement in the low income housing delivery. In this regard, the research posed the following question:

How can the participation of women in low income housing delivery process be enhanced in order to substantially alter their socio-economic status in the quest for development generally?

1.5 METHODOLOGY

A Qualitative research method was used. Face-to-face interviews were conducted. These focused on professional as well as less informed women. In-depth interviews were held with professionals, who were asked to answer specific questions. To solicit information and draw specific themes, discussions were held with less informed women, who were asked to answer general (open ended) questions. Face to face interviews allowed the researcher to extract sensitive information, especially on tendering procedures and procurement matters. The extraction of such information that is largely unpublished could be obtained only through personal interaction with stakeholders.

The researcher attended meetings where, in forums such as Women for Housing and South African Women in Construction (SAWIC), women's issues on housing and construction were discussed. The intention was to gain additional insight into housing-related matters and challenges facing women in construction. Questionnaires used in data collection contained open-ended questions. Reports, records and other documentation obtained from the Department of Local Government and Housing provided secondary data.

Newspaper articles and government publications were also used in highlighting important issues in this research. Policy documents and other legislative documents provided a major contribution. Reports and records which were perceived to be useful, were requested from the Department of Local Government and Housing, the Department of Labour, the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC), the Homeless People Federation,

Women For Housing (WFH) reports and South African Women In Construction (SAWIC) records. These informed the research on the number of units allocated to female and male contractors, the year and the type of subsidy.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Establishing rapport in order to gain trust so that information could be easily obtained from participants was a constraint since employees were protective of their departments. Arranging meetings with senior officials was difficult, since they are usually engaged in strategic activities of their organizations. Municipal managers also received little attention due to time constraints, but documented material was provided for more information. Contractors, being business people, have schedules that are always hectic. Women employees on site did not have enough time to discuss the challenges whilst working and were sceptical about divulging information.

Information on the number of people who had received training in bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing was not available from the Department of Labour's database. The NHBRC had a separate record of male and female registered contractors. Gender statistics would have highlighted the deprivation of and discrimination against women attempting to access economic opportunities. The information would assist policy makers and programme managers to monitor gender differences.

1.7 TERMINOLOGY

Various terms which frequently appear in the study and that relate to economic development and social advancement will be explained below.

Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment is described as an investment that is a matter of survival for South Africa and the economy. It is aimed at

effecting a more equitable distribution of economic wealth and has been branded as the essential second wave of transformation after democratisation and the political miracle. It is aimed at the economic empowerment of all black people, including women, workers, the unemployed, the youth, the aged, people with disabilities and people living in rural areas (Balshaw and Goldberg, 2005).

Construction in this context is used interchangeably with delivery. Construction is viewed as a specific stage in the project cycle. As a sector of the economy it is linked to allied sectors and industries in material production and distribution. It is also viewed as a broad process for the realization of human settlements (Dept of Housing , 2003).

Participation means taking part with others in an exercise (van der Westhuizen, 2005)

Empowerment implies the acquirement by people of an understanding of and control over social and political forces, in order to improve their position in society, relaxing external constraints that shape their lives at the level of family, community, society and culture (Stern, Jacques, Dether & Rodgers, 2005).

Gender refers to socially constructed differences between men and women, in contrast to the physical and biological distinction between them **(Commission on Gender Equality CGE 2004).**

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for men and women, of any planned action, including legislation policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels (Meena, 1992).

Opportunity refers to a circumstance beyond the control of an individual, nevertheless significantly affecting the results of intended objective (Stern et al, 2005).

Procurement is the process of acquiring needed products, services or results from outside the project team to perform the work (Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 05 of 2000 and regulations).

Preferential Procurement refers to specific procurement policies, which target procurement of commercial goods and services from enterprises owned by persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination on the basis of race, gender or disability (Preferential Procurement Framework Act, 05 of 2000 and regulations).

SMME: The term refers to small businesses or enterprises. Small businesses can be classified as micro, very small, small, or medium enterprises, depending on whether they satisfy various criteria of the National Small Business Act of 1996.

1.8 SEQUENCE OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into 5 sections briefly discussed below.

Chapter 1

This chapter discusses issues relating to poor access to opportunities of previously disadvantaged groups, especially women. It seeks to show that economic empowerment can lead to the betterment of life in rural areas. The chapter also states the aims and objectives of the research problem, the purpose of the research and briefly describes the data collection methodology used, the background and limitations of the study. Some terminology and the necessity of economic empowerment for women in rural areas are explained.

Chapter 2

This chapter discusses an overview of South African gender relations during the apartheid regime. The background to South African housing is discussed. The importance of community participation and consultation in activities that affect

their livelihoods is also discussed. The role played by women in housing construction in different countries is also briefly surveyed. Finally, existing legislation aimed at the betterment of women's condition is discussed.

Chapter 3

In this chapter, South African and international experiences regarding housing delivery are outlined. The situation of South African women post 1994 is discussed and it is shown that women who live in urban areas are more advantaged than those in rural areas. The chapter also considers how different spheres of government should incorporate gender issues in housing delivery policies. Different development approaches to women are discussed.

Chapter 4

This is an introduction to the case study and discussions on skills and economic strategies in the rural areas of Mpumalanga province specifically Nkangala region (former KwaNdebele, Kwaggafontein village),

Chapter 5

The analysis of the case study is done here and conclusions reached on whether the economic strategies introduced by the government had a positive impact on poverty alleviation amongst rural women.

Chapter 6

This is the last chapter of the discourse, which serves as the conclusion. The chapter provides recommendations that could enhance the economic position of rural women in housing construction.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given the sequence of the study. It has also highlighted the suffering endured by women in South Africa as a result of certain stereotyping

prior to 1994. The economic reality makes equal opportunities for men and women in construction a relevant issue. The most challenging task is to change attitudes and culture, in order to encourage and sustain the structural changes needed to attract and retain more women in the construction industry. The government has shown support and commitment to redressing the imbalances of the past through the introduction of poverty alleviation strategies such as the BBBEE, Preferential Procurement and Affirmative Action.

The historical background regarding women's exclusion from economic opportunities and the importance of community participation in housing construction will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2
MAINSTREAMING GENDER FOR DEVELOPMENT

This chapter provides an historical background to black women's exclusion from opportunities in all spheres of life. This exclusion meant that rural women could not participate in development matters that affected them. Under the new democratic government, housing policy can help to alleviate poverty. This chapter also highlights the importance of community participation in undertaking development projects. Social exclusion is an important issue in this chapter. Women were traditionally often excluded from certain jobs or receiving benefits such as education.

In South Africa, traditional values, sexism, poverty and racism have continued to hinder the educational development of black women. Rural women have formed the most disadvantaged group and have the highest illiteracy rate. As a result most of them are excluded from ownership, control and management of productive assets such as land, housing and access to opportunities and a skewed sexual division of labour, especially in areas such as housing construction has developed. This is not only unjust, but it also inhibits South Africa's ability to achieve its full economic potential, which can be achieved through women's participation in all spheres of development, including construction (Commission on Gender Equality CGE, 2004).

The National Housing Code (2000) states that housing delivery is a set of individual or group actions which result in the planning, designing, construction of urban and rural environments which occur over a period. The emphasis in this statement is on development of low-income groups (mostly women in rural areas) through housing delivery. The aim is also to bridge the fragmented development of apartheid. Under this system traditional leaders were co-opted into the colonial government and codified system of customary law. This locked Black women into a position of formal inferiority to men (CGE, 2004). White,

Indian and Coloured women were not affected by this system, but were governed by the western legal system, except for Muslim women who were regulated by the operation of the Islamic personal law and through Islamic marriage.

2.1 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL GENDER DISCRIMINATION

In most rural areas of South Africa, such as former KwaNdebele, KaNgwane, Zululand, Lebowa (Northern Province), Gazankulu, Bizana (Eastern Cape), traditional values dominated. The issue of land ownership was crucial to women. Single rural women rarely owned land. Baloyi, (2003) argues that limitations of property ownership by rural women was largely due to exclusive male ownership of property under the customary legal system of South Africa, which has served to establish and maintain male domination historically (and still does so today). When a divorced/widowed house permit holder dies, male relatives are the more likely to inherit these permits. Women suffer because of their state of poverty and lack of formal education. As a result, they are less likely to have access to information and legal material.

Gender oppression is rooted in the material base and is expressed in socio-cultural traditions and attitudes. In Botswana, women who are engaged in business as entrepreneurs also serve as domestic servants for their families and society. Their labour is divided between business and domestic chores and this has had a negative impact on their business performance, partly because women in the informal sector have not benefited from available training opportunities.

In order to develop rural women, it is important to recognize their role in society by moving away from the culture of discriminating against them in all spheres of life. Challenges involved in minimising unequal gender relations between men and women, skewed sexual division of labour and limited access to job opportunities need to be addressed. Meena (1992) argues that from a gender perspective, development implies improvement in the quality of life and well-

being of individuals living in the previously colonized country Income should not be the only yardstick for measuring development. The classic economic measure of development, which is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), has negative implications because it does not take into account women's labour and their subsistence productivity. Their unpaid labour is critical to the functioning of the economy and social system. Lack of recognition of women's labour implies deprivation in the quality of life and well being of rural women.

Economic deprivation was evident during apartheid within the agricultural sector. As a result of an absence of laws governing this industry, women working in this industry were paid as little as R180 per annum and some even paid in kind, with a bag of mealie meal. Strategies introduced by the government in the 1980s, such as betterment planning, worsened the conditions of rural women. Too much livestock was cited as a reason for environmental degradation. Rural people were forced to reduce their livestock. In many instances, a lot of rural women were left with no fertile land as a result of land expropriation by local authorities (Thabana, 1999).

Measures used to discriminate against blacks had profound implications for black rural women, who were often treated as minors. The state restructured the homestead economy to serve the migrant labour system, and women lost their economic centrality and social status. According to Ginwala et al (1990), high migration of black males from rural areas increased women's reproductive and productive work responsibilities and frequently led to partial or complete abandonment of rural households by male migrants. Only white women could own property.

The introduction of the migrant labour system ensured that black men were forced to work in the urban areas. Kuzwayo (2004) contends that the assumption was that labour would leave the traditional rural sector and move to the urban sector. Although this would initially result in greater spatial inequality, such

inequality would be absorbed into the modern sector. Development will also flow gradually to rural areas. Growth and input in the modern sector would eventually have a positive spin-off and eradicate poverty in the whole economy (the trickle down theory). This practice did not include indigenous culture and values. Todaro (1983) argues that the implication of "trickle down effect" is that millions will continue to live and die in abject poverty. Economic imperialism during the 1950's resulted in underdevelopment and dependency of African countries on European countries. Strategies to diffuse the inequalities failed.

In urban areas, black women who lost their spouses found themselves homeless and forced to live in informal settlements. According to Kuzwayo (2004), legal restrictions on the movement of women into the cities and exclusion of Blacks from a range of jobs resulted in a high proportion of women being located in informal sector activities such as hawking and beer brewing. These women were faced with hard and cruel conditions such as kidnapping and robbery whilst fending for themselves.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997), rural women are at higher risk of poverty than men. They experience poverty differently than men and have a more difficult time in surviving and overcoming poverty because of social practices, including their being responsible for the care of children and extended family members. Consequently, the UNDP (1997) suggests that long-term strategies for women's empowerment are essential for poverty elimination. Participation in housing and human settlement development can act as an entry point for women to gain control over access to such resources.

During the apartheid period, black women in South Africa were not only excluded from economic opportunities but also denied political participation. Black women were denied the right to vote. Women's political identity and choice were

informed by their location and experience. The struggle against apartheid became the first step towards liberation (Mhone and Edigheji 2003).

2.2 STRUGGLE AGAINST EXCLUSION

Economic and political oppression of black women and men resulted in two types of responses by women. First was the development of survivalist strategies to increase household income and to create networks of social support. Second was during the 1950s the formation of political organizations, both independently and alongside men, by the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL). The League began to establish branch structures in the townships and to participate actively in the ANC's campaigns, such as transport and education boycotts.

Women could not tolerate class, race and gender discrimination. This became evident when women such as Helen Joseph, Lillian Ngoyi and others formed The Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) in 1954. This sought to secure full equality for all women regardless of race, colour and creed and to work for the protection of the women and children of South Africa (Van der Westhuizen, 2005).

When the government planned the new law forcing black women to carry passbooks, FEDSAW decided to fight it and the protest march took place on 9 August 1956, to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. However, as the level of repression increased and major liberation movements were banned in the 1960's organized women's politics declined (CGE, 2004). Nevertheless, the impact of these movements on social organizations was impressive. The mid 1970s saw the formation of black trade unions. Black female employees fought alongside their male counterparts about issues such as maternity leave.

Another response was seen during the 1980s, through the emergence of a range of non-governmental organizations (NGO's), such as the Rural Women's

movement, which directly and indirectly addressed women's needs. These were affiliated to the United Democratic Front and other bodies. In 1990, Women in exile and other social movements met in Amsterdam in the Malibongwe conference to praise women who fought against all forms of oppression for the first time.

In 1992, the Women's National Coalition (WNC) was formed. This was charged with the single purpose of drafting a Women's Charter of Effective Equality, based on the demands of women at the grassroots level and of women's organizations (CGE, 2004). All these were efforts made by women to liberate not only themselves but the whole country; hence, a democratic South Africa exists today, which is not supposed to discriminate against women but to give equal opportunities to all.

2.3 THE HOUSING PROBLEM

With regard to women's participation, or lack thereof, in development processes, concern has been growing. The South African Housing Policy and other social policies emphasise the need and urgency to include women in decision-making and delivery processes. This was on the grounds that for years, men have been determining policies. Baloyi (2003) argues that problems encountered by women are related to the gender division of labour and this also impacts on their lack of access to land and housing.

Housing has been guaranteed in the new South African Constitution (1996) as a basic human right. It is therefore wrong to exclude or prejudice any adult person on the basis of race, class gender or any other perceived difference. This moral principle has informed housing delivery. The state needs to ensure that within its available resources, this right is realized. In both urban and rural areas women, like their male counterparts, have to deal with their lack of access to housing as a result of their employment status.

According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, (UNCHS 1997), throughout the world, over 1 billion people live in inadequate housing, with over 100 million people being homeless. Access to clean drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities directly associated with housing. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) figures, 1.2 billion people living in developing countries are without water and 1.8 billion lack adequate sanitation. These figures indicate the enormous scale of the global struggle to address the right to adequate housing (Duncker, 1999).

Reasons for inadequate housing range from homelessness and landlessness to forced eviction, redevelopment and urban renewal. Women, owing to their disadvantaged social and economic status, are often overlooked in policy and programme agendas aimed at alleviating these problems. Baloyi (2003) argues that to fulfil this obligation, especially in relation to women, measures need to be taken which will encompass educational financial, social, and administrative issues. In South Africa, a lot still needs to be done, since the country is still recovering from the oppressive apartheid regime.

According to Mohlamme (1998), government intervention is an indispensable necessity. Since the average income per person in less developed countries is less than R10 000 *per annum*, people do not have much disposable income especially for buying a house. This is a result of the huge gap between the cost of shelter and income. An ordinary labourer earning less that R2 500 per month, would be able to afford a house costing R25 000 – R40 000 if the principal interest were low enough but the official housing agencies employed to deal with the problem cannot produce housing costing less than R40 000. Bond (2001) points out that a market-driven approach in housing delivery has always placed intended beneficiaries at a disadvantage, since they are passive recipients.

The basic needs theory argues that the government should provide basic necessities to the poor. The poor should also have the right to satisfy their needs and make decisions on how these should be met. Although the government has been responsible for the provision of the basic necessities to the poor, most of the programmes for improvement of the poor had a top –down approach (Gen, and Grown,1998).

A new "participatory" approach was adopted during the 1980's.This was an attempt to make development more appropriate to the needs of the local people. Local communities put the emphasis on community participation and control of resources. In housing, the notion of self- help emerged. This kind of development (from the bottom up) was premised on the assumption that by being empowered to participate and thus control development, beneficiaries of development programmes would be more successful than through the previous "top- down" approach (Pannell, 1998).

Duncker (1999) defines participation as a process of empowerment that helps strengthen the confidence of all members of the group to impact positively in the process in which they are involved. Participation involves raising awareness and sharing of common problems and needs. Community participation is very crucial since it leads to commitment and, therefore, it should also be regarded as a right. The government should not impose, but consult, on matters affecting communities.

According to Bond (1996), a top down non-participatory housing delivery approach increases inequality and joblessness and perpetuates the housing crisis. People's involvement should be in all aspects of planning, and should be on-going. Experience has shown that absence of local participation in favour of a more bureaucratic approach is not only undemocratic and inequitable, but also highly inefficient.

During the apartheid era, political and economic measures were implemented to prevent blacks, including women, from having access to the means of production and repressed their entrepreneurial spirit. These policies controlled black peoples' movements and ownership and prescribed the work that blacks could do. Black women suffered most because of these barriers (Harlambos and Holborn 1995).

2.3 ADDRESSING THE IMBALANCES OF THE PAST

The Freedom Charter was signed in Kilptown in 1955. It provided a framework for transformation, calling for all people to participate and share in South Africa's wealth which included land and opportunities. Access to housing was regarded as a requirement of the people. The Freedom Charter recognized basic conditions on which an equitable society would be built. Provision of one million houses was the cornerstone of the new government's election platform. This promise was contained in the African National Congress (ANC) Reconstruction and Development (RDP) manifesto of 1994. It was repeated in the White Paper on Housing released in 1994 (Bond, 2000).

Decent housing, from women's perspective, improves family health and hygiene, provides privacy and a chance to raise children and provides the psychological security that comes from the tenure. From the capitalist's perspective, housing represents a different set of costs and benefits. Awarding construction contracts for houses to private sector companies meant depriving the local emerging contractors an opportunity to grow and keeping job opportunities from local communities, since the private sector's tendency was to use its own labour. This state of affairs was in violation of the objectives of the Extended Public works Programme (EPWP).

The use of a labour-based approach towards construction, particularly for provision of infrastructure, is an important element in the alleviation of

unemployment in the country. This calls for planning to promote a labour- based approach, which involves beneficiaries. Through the site and service scheme and labour intensive programmes in informal settlements, local communities could be employed. Employment would be created and services improved (Mokhesi, 1996).

The Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) has adopted that strategy. The intention is to reduce unemployment by creating productive jobs and opportunities for local contractors, using labour intensive construction methods. Deprived communities are targeted. Funds are allocated for functions such as upgrading of access roads, upgrading of potable water and sanitation systems and building and renovation of schools and community facilities. Through involvement in the programme, communities are economically empowered and local government and community participation strengthened.

The RDP highlighted the need for women and the youth to become central beneficiaries of the Public Works Programme. Further, according to the RDP, the issue in relation to housing delivery was not simply about numbers, but fundamentally about who had access to housing and how to take housing where it was most needed. These issues could not be addressed by the market, but by a public housing programme integrated into the overall land and urban planning strategy (de Villiers 2003).

Bond (2000) states that some developers and contractors took advantage of the lack of monitoring from the Department of Housing and built substandard houses instead of providing adequate living space for families. Most communities were disempowered in the course of project planning. It is also against this background that the Department aiming at protecting the integrity of the housing product introduced the Housing Act of 1997. This gives evidence that the government cannot walk down the housing road with the private sector only. Local communities need to participate in issues that affect them.

The Development Facilitation Act (DFA), Act 67 of 1995, stresses the need for participation of previously disadvantaged groups in land development. This implies that local communities and rural women should participate in the delivery of low -cost housing, as this programme directly affects them. Community participation should involve, and have direct impact on the planning, controlling and decision making processes of development projects.

According to de Villiers (2002), South Africa managed to deliver a total of 359 252 subsidized houses by 2002. This was against its set target of one million. South Africa has set an international precedent. The housing programme has led to the delivery of more houses in a shorter period than in any other country. The government has tackled issues of housing finance, social housing and consumer protection. Though these developments are significant achievements quality has been compromised.

Despite all this, the mood is low and the moderate-income housing sector is depressed. The geographic location of these houses is far from social amenities such as schools, clinics and shopping facilities and therefore, does not offer many job opportunities for the local communities. Dissatisfied beneficiaries have refused to move into these houses (De Villiers, 2002). In view of the poor planning, the RDP also mandated the provision of technical and infrastructural services for rural settlements to address the problem of scarcity of water supplies and basic sanitation in these areas.

Until the government administration is efficient, needs of the communities cannot be satisfied. A responsive government is expected to cater for the needs of the poor people. This means that communities should play a role in planning for their development. Communities must take an initiative in developing projects by distributing resources, equitably disseminating information to the people and

facilitating projects. This will enable rural women to participate in matters that affect them

High costs in housing delivery have resulted in the private sector's withdrawal from low-cost housing delivery. As a result, in 2002, a separate policy shift was introduced by Minister Mthembi – Mahanyele, acknowledging that self-building has proved to be one of the most effective strategies in producing quality housing. De Villiers (2003) argues that though this approach is good (self-building approach) it nevertheless slows down delivery. He sees it also as a reflection of government's dependence on local communities to meet their housing delivery expectations because no one else to do it.

However, local communities were not fully participating in the issues surrounding construction, simply because of their poor access to information and opportunities. Housing should not be regarded as a product, but as a process. As such, it should include administrative, socio-economic, technical, psychological and cultural aspects. The cooperation of different stakeholders such as the public sector, community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), parastatals, planners and beneficiaries is also imperative.

The housing backlog in South Africa indicates the necessity to initiate some type of alternative of housing delivery method. Attention has been given to self-help housing as the means of addressing this backlog. Among other reasons for opting for the self-help approach is that it may provide for physical and welfare needs that would otherwise not have been addressed.

The self-help approach like other approaches, has received criticism from authors examining housing dynamics. Their criticism is based on the examination of gender dynamics and the nature of households and how these impact on the success or failure of housing programmes. Their studies suggest that self-help programmes constrain and fail to empower women-headed households.

According to these authors, housing programmes must include an examination of the role of women and of gender issues (Moser, 1993).

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the background to the status of women in South Africa during the apartheid regime. Stereotype cultural, traditional and societal views that prevented women, especially rural women from gaining access to economic and political opportunities have been highlighted. Previous policies did not accommodate strategic gender needs of women. Manana, cited in Meena (1992), sees strategic gender needs as needs that women identify because of their subordinate position to men. They relate to gender division of labour, power control, domestic violence and violation of legal rights.

Community participation in housing delivery is seen as a strategy that can assist poverty alleviation among women in rural areas. The democratic government has introduced legislation that attempt to address the imbalances of the past through community participation and empowerment. The housing delivery process has been recognised as one involving aspects such as planning, decision making and community participation that need to be acknowledged. Empowering people, by ensuring that they can participate in the economy and society is central to an effective development strategy. Empowerment increases poor people's willingness and ability to take risks. It helps to give them access to information, assets, security networks and legal standing. The institutions and governance that promote inclusion and empowerment are important for growth.

Legislation and the role of institutions should be viewed not only for efficiency, but also for equity. The next chapter will therefore focus on legislative matters, housing experiences from selected international cases and the roles and responsibilities of the different spheres of government, and approaches to housing delivery.

CHAPTER 3
RURAL WOMEN AND THE HOUSING PROCESS

Stereotypes still exist about women and houses. In many cultures, women's role is still considered to be that of a child bearer and homemaker yet, in traditional and modern building practices, women actively participate. This is clearly shown in the cases of Mexico, Ghana, India and South Africa that have been selected here to propound on the main arguments of this study. Women empowerment legislation that have been put in place by government need to be implemented and monitored by the relevant institutions.

Available literature related to community participation internationally and locally is discussed in this chapter. Institutions that promote inclusion are discussed. Strides made by the government to ensure economic transformation and women's empowerment are also discussed. Reports of case studies on women from various countries involved in housing construction have been used to demonstrate how they participated in economic, political and social issues which affected their lives. International experience related to housing is significant because it provides some useful lessons to the emerging South African housing sector.

3.1 PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN HOUSING DELIVERY

The process of BEE should result in an increase in the ownership and control of the economy by black rural women. Women should reflect participation through decision making at various levels of housing delivery. In this manner, passive ownership of an enterprise that could lead to fronting could be avoided. According to Meena (1992), participation is a tool in planning and development for empowering the poor. It involves a number of people in situations, which enhance their well-being, income security, and self-esteem among other things.

Participation as a means, aims at improving project effectiveness by employing local people. In this manner it is an input, which increases self-reliance. On the other hand, Moser (1989) argues that participation as an end allows for substantive empowerment to occur. As an empowering tool, it ensures that economic and social conditions of the participants are improved. Therefore, providing infrastructure to people is like granting full rights for utilising economic and social services. Given these arguments, participation should be regarded as a right.

Empowerment in South Africa has become a buzzword. The biggest challenge is the empowerment of the previously disadvantaged millions of people who are unemployed and live in abject poverty. Empowerment for the poor therefore means giving them an opportunity to participate in the economy. This means creating jobs for the unemployed. Though housing is a tool for job creation, the number of previously disadvantaged rural women participating in the housing delivery industry is very low (Mokgeobo, 2001).

Rural women need to be educated, protected and empowered on the basics of property value and other industry regulatory body practices. These include buying houses, home ownership maintenance and a multitude of other important aspects in the housing process. This is necessary to provide the women involved in the public provisioning of housing with skills development opportunities.

Women empowerment should not be viewed in isolation from the perspective of ownership. It has to be seen as one prong in a holistic strategy to achieve Black Economic Empowerment and thus implemented alongside employment equity, skills development and other human resource development initiatives. Affirmative procurement and government policies both favour women, but they need to be empowered to take full advantage **of the opportunity**.

3.1.1 WOMEN IN THE FORMAL CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Ensuring economic transformation means an increase in the level of employment and participation in the economy and sharing of benefits more equitably. Creating opportunities of access to all forms of social services, institutions and infrastructure is an important tool for BEE.

South African academic institutions should create an environment that will enable women to study courses such as civil engineering. According to Telford (1996), women studying for construction related profession place less importance on money and status in their careers, but rather more on helping other people and creating a healthy environment. In support of women's efforts, in 2001, the then Minister of Housing Bridget Mabandla called on the provinces to allocate 10% of their capital subsidy budget to housing delivery projects undertaken by women (De Villiers2002).

The Gauteng Housing Department set targets for women - driven projects to the value of R40 million in 2001 and R50 million . Organizations such as Women For Housing (WFH) and South African Women In Construction (SAWIC), with the support of the government, have been formed to address challenges faced by women in the construction industry, especially around housing delivery. (Gauteng Department of Housing 2002). The goals of the group are to:

- Provide training and capacity building for women.
- Provide access to income generating activities.
- Create innovative mechanisms for housing finance for women.
- Promote participation of women in housing projects from design to implementation stage.
- Build a network with other women worldwide.
- Ensure women participation in decision-making with regard to housing process policy and implementation (Department of Housing, 1997).

In preparing to allocate projects to women, some provinces have opted to put capacity building programmes in place to train women in the role of developer or contractor. The Housing White Paper 1994 addresses challenges faced by the poor to access to housing through the People Housing Process (PHP). Through this process, individual families or groups take the initiative to organize the planning, design and actual building of their own houses.

3.1.2 PEOPLE'S HOUSING PROCESS

This is a critical programme in the implementation of the Housing Policy in South Africa. It is based on the premise of people as key resources and decision makers in the delivery of housing. The programme has also highlighted the role of women in housing. Through PHP, it is perceived that when women take control over a housing project, they are not just building houses but also initiate a process that assists in building families and communities (PHPT 2000). Through PHP, beneficiaries are also involved in land identification.

Key principles behind the policy are partnerships, people-driven process, skills transfer and community empowerment. The role of communities is based on the understanding that low-income communities have an ability to look after their own housing needs. The communities are therefore given an opportunity, institutional support, and financial assistance from government to improve on their efforts even further (Bay research and consultancy services, 2003).

The PHP should be people driven, but in some instances, different approaches have been adopted. These include the developer driven approach. With the developer driven approach, labour is used for building top structures and labour is remunerated. This approach is usually profit driven and usually results in small houses being built. The element of social compact is normally compromised. The developers and beneficiaries seldom come together to discuss issues relating to

project implementation. This is contrary to our earlier assertion that communities should have an input in development affecting their lives. Through community participation, integrated and sustainable housing delivery can be achieved (Cohen and Upphoff, 1977).

In the people driven approach, beneficiaries can be involved in supplying materials. This leads to savings in construction costs and building of bigger houses (PHPT, nd). Another approach involves the Support Organization (SO), which is usually elected by beneficiaries. With this approach, beneficiaries participate during the construction of their houses, i.e. from the planning phase until the completion of the house. This approach is non-profit making. Cost sharing in PHP is through contribution towards the subsidy and the "sweat equity" aspect. According to the South African Housing Literature (1999-2003), while the PHP is good in theory, an important support mechanism for the implementation of these capacity building programmes has not been demonstrated in practice.

Supporting the PHP approach is the South African Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF). 70% of SAHPF active members are women (Ndina, 2001). The organization has membership throughout the country that is drawn together by common development approaches whereby members pool their savings. Throughout the country, members of the organizations struggle together towards security of tenure and affordable housing. Self-reliance and autonomy are hallmarks of the Federation groups, power and decision making are decentralized with individual organization responsible for their own development destiny.

The PHP and the federation approach in housing delivery show that participation by people on the ground is important, since they understand their own needs and can plan better. It shows that there should be minimum intervention from the government. They strongly disregard the notion that planners, policy-makers and

development experts have a better understanding of the social and economic situation of poor communities (DAG, 2001). The next section presents selected international cases on the experience of women in similar housing undertakings.

3.2 SELECTED INTERNATIONAL CASES

In countries such as Mexico, the issue of women's participation in public provisioning of housing has been taking place at a very slow pace. According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS, 1997) report, the position of women have assumed in relation to shelter issues and services have radically changed in the past 20 years.

In urban Mexico, women from lower income sectors, who were historically marginalized from decision-making, education and employment opportunities, have slowly, in recent years, had to review their home and family restrictions. Reacting to the harsh realities of poverty and overall recurrent economic crises, high levels of unemployment, lowering of living standards, fast and irregular urbanizing patterns and lack of services and growing number of women heads of households, the UNCHS has undertaken to empower women.

Community organisations have given women the opportunity to enter previously economic no-go areas. Through these popular social collective organizations, most often responding to political and economic situations such as reconstruction needs after the earthquake and other disasters, women have been learning how to apportion space for themselves. The UNCHS (1997) argues that these processes have been instrumental in the acquisition of skill, participatory advocacy and leadership roles for women.

Though women participated to a large extent in the reconstruction efforts after the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, basically by demanding housing rights and services and in self-help construction, this type of building experience did not lead either to learning proper skills or penetrating the construction industry. The

same can be said in relation to new settlements and progressive self-help housing and community services and even in self-help projects.

As in South Africa, women's participation is still mostly subjected to lighter or minor tasks (water and local materials provision, wall finishing and feeding of male workers) in Mexico. Meena (1992) argues that gender stereotypes result in gender stratification which classifies men's and women's roles into hierarchy. Men end up occupying the top portion of the hierarchy. However, all is not lost, in recent years, especially in self-help projects; women are increasingly being employed in the planning and designing stages as well as in the administration of resources.

Most societies in Africa are perceived to be developing whilst at the same time, culture and customs are deeply rooted in patriarchy. In Ghana, women have traditionally been considered more suited to the arts, humanities and social sciences, but where they have tried to cross the gender boundaries, they have often faced harassment and hostility from colleagues (Telford, 1996). For instance, the construction sector has been socially and culturally regarded as the preserve of men. This idea has pervaded the home environment where girls are made to accept certain female values of raising families and engaging in particular trades.

In Ghana, training institutions had no facilities for girls, even to participate as day students. At the tertiary level, statistics show a low percentage of women who have trained in the construction related professions. It is against this background that Women in Human Settlement Development Programme (WHSDP), commissioned a study into the construction sector, to investigate the impact on women not participating in construction (UNCHS, 1997). One way women are empowering themselves is through grassroots self-help groups often formed by poor peasant women whose needs are so frequently being neglected by government. These groups provide vital economic assistance, such as credit for

farming or business ventures or other forms of mutual assistance for members (Gordon &Gordon, 2001:284).

In India, women tend to be employed in the construction industry only when there is shortage of male labour often due to migration. Their salary is less than that of their male counterparts. According to UNCHS Habitat (1997), India portrays most forms of gender discrimination. The construction industry is the lowest paying industry as compared to weaving and other industries. Hence the issue of training women in construction is often considered a futile exercise because of the lack of incentives.

These cases show that women's oppression is a global phenomenon. Meena, (1992) argues that women in the informal sector share some important characteristics. These characteristics include fewer and poor opportunities to work, greater impact of unemployment, under-employment, greater vulnerability because of lack of skills and education, lesser mobility, heavy responsibilities and lack of access to better technologies, tools and productive assets. She shows that in India, work is never assigned to women only because of their physical capabilities as compared to men, but also purely on gender discrimination.

Gender roles need to be deconstructed. Equal opportunities should be accorded to all to suit development trends. In this way, it would be easy to redress cultural and traditional practices, as well as customary laws which tend to discriminate against women. A conscious effort must be made to transform land property issues as well as inheritance and ownership rights of rural women in many developing countries. Women should be involved in all aspects of housing, given their traditional role in housing construction and maintenance. They are also instrumental in providing a safe and healthy environment for their families.

3.3 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Women, men and children's needs differ regarding housing and human settlements. Duncker (1999) argues that, in order to understand gender, the activities of women and men need to be addressed in terms of the reproductive, productive and community roles women play in the society. Productive work is associated with the production of goods and services for consumption and trade, though it involves both men and women, their responsibilities will differ. Women's productive work is less visible and less valued as opposed to men's (Baloyi 2003). Walker (1990) supports this argument in his exploration of the international trends towards increasing involvement of women in the labour market and further states that this impacts on changes in society at family, job market and broader societal level.

Walker(1990) argues that one factor leading to women's increased participation in the labour market is the growing consciousness among women towards autonomy and self-determination. On the other hand, Sen (1998) contends that women's entry into the labour market can be contradictory and does not either lead to empowerment or free women from the invisible labour that they perform at home. Employment opportunities therefore present one side of an empowerment strategy and in isolation cannot change women's position in society (see also Braam, 2001).

Meena (1992) criticises the macro-economic strategy for its biased view on the macro-economy that focuses on monetary value only and loses sight of the human resource aggregates of the reproductive economy. She sees a need to restructure the market relationships through political action. Reproductive work involves taking care of households including the bearing of children. It is generally associated with women and girls. The reproductive role of women is important but also problematic in that it perpetuates and puts emphasis to the fact that women should stay at home and take care of children (Moser, 1989). As a result, women cannot join the labour force and get involved in the public domain. This reasoning needs to be challenged.

Community work is about collective efforts taken by both women and men in improving life in the community. The role that women undertake as community managers causes women to suffer due to its comprehensive nature. This role involves the provision and maintenance of scarce resources such as water, healthcare, housing, education and other social facilities. These are challenges that women encounter in housing practice in relation to their other roles. It is important therefore, to be gender sensitive when allocating projects, since gender awareness projects create an ideal situation in which men and women can participate on equal terms.

Poor planning and small house design leave women with no choice but to settle in environments that do not satisfy their needs. It is imperative that women are consulted during planning so that their needs can be understood and encompassed. Human settlement planning is associated with the right to tenure, which is normally given to men. This practice leaves rural woman economically disempowered because often they cannot gain access to credit due to lack of collateral (Baloyi, 2003).

Ensuring gender equality is one of the functions of the South African democratic government. As a cross cutting issue, gender must be addressed in all spheres because equality between men and women is just, fair and right. The economic role of women should not only be seen in the area of reproduction. The principle of equity and equality should be employed to bring about social justice. The equality approach further stipulates that women should be treated more or less the same as men (Damana, 2002). However, in response to criticism of this approach, the Women In Development (WID) approach was coined. Other development approaches that promoted the economic development of women will be discussed below.

The modernization and welfare approach would seem to have been founded on the theory that women are solely passive recipients of development benefits because their major roles are reproductive ones (motherhood and child rearing), whereas men's work is identified as productive. The approach follows the western social welfare model and was common in the colonial times. In the 1970s, it was an aspect of the basic needs activities. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has consistently and effectively employed the welfare approach, as has the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

Kuzwayo (2004) argues that this approach lacks a developmental perspective. First, it fails to consider women's productive activities and their economic responsibilities. Second, the term "welfare" tends to foster dependency rather than self-reliance. Rural women have never been dependents, in a sense that the husband provides for the family and the wife does only child rearing work. They have always tilled the land. They are indeed working women or farmers who support their families economically together with their husbands. However, giving land rights only to husbands, indeed forces wives into a position of dependency.

In recognition of the damaging effect of modernization, and countering the imposition of the capitalist development models on the Third World economies, a number of alternative approaches to women and development emerged such as the human resource, anti poverty and equity models. The human resource development approach leads to profound and lasting changes for women by recognizing not just their reproductive roles but also their productive roles. This approach includes their active participation in the economy (Meena, 1992).

The human resource development approach underscores the point that development at the highest level cannot be achieved without women (Snyder, 1995). Relying on the fact that women comprise more than half of the productive human resource of the country, the approach sets conditions for their full

participation in development. These include ways to lessen women's burdens and to increase their productivity by providing access to resources such as education, technology and income often through women's own solidarity groups. An important condition calls for women's active participation in planning and policy setting.

On the other hand, the anti-poverty approach focuses on women in income generation thorough better access to productive resources, such as land and credit (Mvdudu, 2002). The shift to an anti poverty approach to women and development corresponds with the basic needs and absolute poverty theories of the 1970s that were promulgated by International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank respectively.

Women became the central focus in the strategies to overcome the hunger and malnutrition that accompanies poverty because they and their dependant children dominated the poorest groups. Organizations such as the World Bank targeted women from the perspective of population control, which was key to their anti poverty mechanism. Among the anti poverty activities put in place by women and development programmes, were income-generating and entrepreneurship projects (Snyder, 1995).

The efficiency approach came into being during the decline of the world economy from the 1970's onwards. This approach shifts the emphasis away from women towards economic growth. The assumption is that increased participation of Third World women in economic advancement and development facilitates increased equity. The approach operates at two levels, first, at the micro level where it requires the involvement of women. Traditionally, in their engendered roles as wives and mothers, women are perceived to be more efficient, reliable and more committed than men. This strategy rests on the misconception of the elasticity of women's time and ignores constraints women face balancing their multiple roles (Hargreaves, 1994).

It is necessary for government to ensure that institutions assist women in accessing economic opportunities. Good governance is participatory, equitable and promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities aimed at creating of enabling environment for development, reach the poor and previously disadvantaged communities, especially rural women.

3.4 INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

South African institutions should create an environment that will enable women to study courses such as civil engineering. According to Telford (1996), women studying for construction related profession place less importance on money and status in their careers, but more on helping other people and creating a healthy environment. In support of women efforts, the Minister of Housing Bridget Mabandla called on the provinces to allocate 10% of their capital subsidy budget to housing delivery project undertaken by women (Institute for housing, 2001). Unless women's representation and allocation of resources reaches their equitable share, women's impact on shaping the future and moving and defying poverty barriers will remain marginal and their needs not met. This means that governments must focus attention on effective means to overcoming challenges of gender disparities.

The South African constitution provides for socio-economic rights in quite a forthright manner. To fulfil this mandate, The Gauteng Housing Department set targets for women driven projects to the value of R40 million in 2001 and R50 million in 2002 (Mashabela, 2005). Organizations such as Women for Housing (WFH) and South African Women in Construction (SAWIC), with the support of the government have been formed to address challenges faced by women in the construction industry, especially around housing delivery and consumption (Department of Housing, 1997). The goals of the group are to:

- Provide training and capacity building for women.
- Provide access to income generating activities.
- Create innovative mechanism for housing finance for women.
- Promote participation of women in housing projects from design to implementation stage.
- Build a network with other women worldwide.
- Ensure women participation in decision-making with regard to housing process policy and implementation (Department of Housing, 1997 p 25).

In preparing to allocate projects to women, some provinces have opted to put capacity building programmes in place to train women in the role of developer or contractor. The Housing White Paper addresses challenges faced by the poor regarding housing delivery. Through this process, individual families or groups take the initiative to organize the planning, design and actual building of their own houses.

The birth of democracy has slightly opened new doors for South African women. They now enter the formal economy through the availability of various business opportunities. This has altered the economic tide where they now feature as a valid subject in the national economic agenda. They are constantly seeking and finding opportunities that will gain them and their enterprises acknowledgement and recognition as equal partners in the economy.

Through democracy, the following has been achieved: of the 26 portfolio committees in the South African Parliament, women, including the more “masculine” portfolios of Safety and Security and Constitutional Development chair seven. A Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women (JCIQLSW) with 33 members of which 6 are males has been established to look into issues of gender mainstreaming and domestic violence against women.

- The Minister of Housing is a woman
- The White Paper on Housing creates an enabling environment for the poor and homeless, particularly women, to access housing opportunities.
- The Housing Act of 1997 promotes active participation of women in housing and creates opportunities for women to participate in the industry by granting them bridging finance.
- The Housing Matters Amendment Bill phases out housing subsidies that would have rendered beneficiaries, most of them women, destitute.
- 50% of the subsidies approved to date have been allocated to female headed- households.
- Subsidies have been announced to cater for special needs of disabled people, many of whom are women.

3.5 RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The President of South announced that by 2020, the country should be freed from poverty. President Mbeki advocated for full productive employment that enriches the lives of rural people. He also reiterated that a more diverse commercial sector needs to be established. Much greater access by rural people to government support and information to commercial services is required. Close links of local government with organs of civil society and business should be formed, through which needs and priorities of rural people are expressed. Looking at this stance, one needs to examine whether the implementation of economic strategies by local government is geared towards fulfilling this dream.

As discussed in chapter 2, the objective of the RDP was to de-racialise business ownership and empower previously disadvantaged groups. This was to be done through the BBBEE strategy that catered for women, disabled, the youth and rural communities. Although this strategy experienced some challenges, the following has been achieved:

- 58 construction projects worth R128 million for the exclusive execution by women owned businesses nationally were identified on Women's Day 2001.
- By June 2001, about 20 projects totalling almost R30million in value, had already been awarded to women-owned businesses
- In December 2001, the Department of Public Works awarded a R19million project to a woman contractor, Lindiwe Stephina Moloko to repair and maintain the Leeuwkop Prison on behalf of Correctional Services (www.info.gov.za/speeches 2002/02120309461009.htm)

In 1995 a national strategy for development and promotion of small business in South Africa was tabled in Parliament. The creation of new black-owned and new black-controlled enterprises was seen as a key component of the strategy. An environment for SMME's was created and this resulted in institutions such as Khula and Ntsika to assist black owned businesses. Although progress has been made to overcome the impact of apartheid, SMME's are still faced with challenges in relation to growth. These include, regulatory issues such as laws concerning inheritance under traditional customs, unequal access to education opportunities and biases in the education system.

Housing is a concurrent national and provincial competence and the local government has a role to play. This is the power allocated by the constitution amongst different spheres emphasizing their obligation to co-operate with one another in carrying out the constitutional task. This requires a co-coordinated housing programme drawn by all spheres of government in consultation with each other. The programme should address the short, medium and long-term housing needs of the community. This implies that women should be catered for in every aspect.

The National Housing Act 1997, mandates all the spheres of government to give priority to the needs of the poor in respect of housing development and consult meaningfully with individuals. National, Provincial and Local government should facilitate active participation of all stakeholders in housing development. Skills development and technical assistance should drive the process.

The provincial government is responsible for developing provincial housing policy and legislation and to coordinate all housing development related issues in the province. There is also need to urgently support and strengthen municipality capacity. The provincial government should take necessary steps to support and strengthen the capacity of the municipalities.

Rural development was a provincial competence in the transitional Constitution. Infrastructure development and social services upgrading is one of the main RDP objectives in the attack on poverty. Successful rural development lies in the participation of both the local government and national government. In order to participate meaningfully, rural people will need to have access to information, as well as develop the requisite capacity to monitor and evaluate support.

Local government should assist rural communities set their priorities for development as well as support their access to government funding by promoting Local Economic Development (LED). LED must result in the equal sharing of resources such as land through security of tenure restitution, land reform programmes and farmer support to all producers. Mobilise financial services for production inputs, infrastructure development and access to land through extension of services, management through training and capacity building and promotion of SMME's must be pursued with utmost vigour.

It is the responsibility of Local Government to ensure that gender issues are integrated in housing and human settlements. The point of departure in addressing gender issues is to distinguish between practical and strategic needs

of women. Practical gender needs arise from stereotypes in the division of labour. They are short term in nature and justice related.

Moser (1989) suggests that meeting women's practical gender needs and enabling them to fulfil their traditional gender roles more effectively may reinforce and mitigate attempts to challenge the sexual division of labour. Strategic gender needs arise from unequal relationships that curtail access to control over resources. Addressing strategic needs enables women to unlock their potential and to achieve greater equality that leads to transformation (Dept of Housing 2003).

Local government should educate communities about its functions. In the case of gender, local government needs to address gender inequality. Health, security and service delivery issues are to be addressed by the local government by amongst other things:

- Promoting the interests of women and women's rights.
- Working for the elimination of discrimination against women in policies and practices.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of women's groups and organizations.
- Opening up the decision-making structures to women in the community and make them more accountable to the community. This sphere is also responsible for conflict resolution in respect of the housing process.

The Housing Act makes it obligatory for municipalities to take all reasonable steps to ensure provision of adequate housing and services to residents of its jurisdiction. In principle, this new approach is advanced but what it does not take into account is that municipalities are poorly resourced. Many municipalities lack capacity to deliver adequate housing. It is imperative that municipalities carry out their mandate and address women's needs. This could also be done through gender mainstreaming.

Gender approaches recognize and acknowledge the differences in the way men and women use and benefit from housing. Women's participation can bring attention to these needs and experiences and highlight the need for planning and delivery to include a gendered approach. Government should move away from the narrow focus on women and adopt an approach that will take into consideration the impact of men's roles and women's relation in development and planning. To achieve this, it is important that senior government officials participate in gender mainstreaming discussions, taking into account the fact that that the ministries remain unaware of gender relevance in development.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The construction sector is regarded as the sole domain of men. Further education and Training (FET) colleges should provide facilities for women and be increased in number. These institutions should encourage women to start their own businesses. Training should involve financial management, capital and loan acquisition, business registration and marketing. Government policies should be implemented and monitored. Networking and forming consortiums should be encouraged. Government should support existing local economic developments.

Despite a progressive political framework such as the Bill of Rights, which guarantees the right to equality and protection from unfair discrimination, in the work place and in society, rural women still receive scant recognition for their multiple roles as mothers, entrepreneurs, employees and care givers. They meet these challenges in the absence of access to infrastructure, resources skills and markets.

Patriarchy still plays an important role in determining the division of labour and gender roles. The ideology of gender relations prevailing in society regards men as the provider and protector of the family. This discounts the value of female

labour power. Women remain in jobs that involve low skills, low wages and little stability. This leads to distortion in the job hierarchy not only in terms of economic status but also gender.

Customary laws still deny women land ownership. Amongst the problems that the Reconstruction and Development Programme seeks to address is to satisfy and meet the basic needs of the formerly marginalized masses through the provision and allocation of land, housing, jobs, basic infrastructure health care and social security.

Black women are still primarily engaged in the survivalist, micro enterprises in the informal sector or rural areas. They meet these challenges in the absence of access to infrastructure, resources, skills and markets. Empowering women is a key challenge in the context of government strategy promoting equity, ownership, entrepreneurship and employment equity.

This chapter has explored legislation and strategies implemented by the government to reduce poverty. Poverty should be understood not only as a lack of financial resources though they are important but also as a lack of capabilities across a range of dimensions. Development is about enhancing opportunity, building assets and reducing constraints. The next chapter will look at the case of rural women of Nkangala in Mpumalanga in order to document their experiences in the public provisioning of housing vis-à-vis official objectives.

CHAPTER 4
CASE STUDY OF KWAGGAFONTEIN

This chapter offers a detailed description of the study site. The study was conducted at Nkangala in the Mpumalanga Province. The study was motivated by the assumption that rural women's participation in low cost housing delivery can substantially alter their socio-economic conditions for the better. The *u*nemployment rate in this region is high given the Population unit (2004) definition that considers unemployment as being without paid work while readily available for employment. The unemployment rate is often used as the indicator of poverty, because the inability of a person to find work is directly related to his /her inability to acquire the means of support. Poverty in these areas has been the outcome of previous government's policies. The National Party's government advocated a master planning approach with regard to rural areas. The state was the sole determinant of Bantustan boundaries. The approach undermined the development potential of the area, hence a number of problems such as constrained economic development, poor infrastructure and poor services emerged.

4.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

According to the municipal demarcations, the following municipalities recorded the highest unemployment rates in the 2001 Census.

Figure 1: Unemployment Rates

Municipality	**Unemployment Rate**
Dr. J. S. Moroka	61%
Albert Luthuli	52%
Thembisile	51%
Seme	51%
Greater Groblersdal	51%

This study focuses on women participating in low cost housing delivery i.e. delivery through People's Housing Process, Project linked subsidy, Individual subsidy and rural housing subsidy. A large proportion of households (41, 7%) in Mpumalanga Province had monthly incomes of less than R800 in 1999. The percentage of households with a household income of R10 000 or more was estimated at 4, 5 %(Population unit, 2004). Certain areas in the province (in the Nkangala region and Gert Sibande) were declared Bantustans by the apartheid government and these were the former KaNgwane and Kwa Ndebele. These areas were and are still under Tribal Authorities.

Water scarcity is still a challenge in these rural areas. Villages may have access to boreholes, but water supply is frequently disrupted due to malfunctioning, drought and paucity of underground water sources. Inadequate water supply forces women to travel long distances to fetch daily water supply required for the household. Men rarely assist with water collection except when the family has a wheelbarrow. Unemployment is a major factor that contributes to the vulnerability of women to poverty.

Women with better educational qualification, have better opportunities to be employed and earn better income. According to Population unit (2004), 30% of women aged 20 and older in Mpumalanga have received no schooling compared to 24% of men in this age group. Usually, an individual or a household engages in several or many livelihoods activities. Two of the most recognized are cultivating field crops and keeping livestock both for self-provisioning and for barter and cash income. Additional sources of food, income, income support and means of survival include: Processing, hawking, vending and marketing and preparation and sale of food, beer, liquor vegetables, transporting goods by animal drawn carriages and taxi services. There are a number of "buy and braai" businesses located along busy roads such as Moloto road and shopping centres. These are mostly run by male youth. A common sight would be the Vodacom, Telkom and Cell C containers dispersed across the area. At the taxi rank in

Kwaggafontein, and KwaMhlanga, tripe, intestines and sheep heads are main business activities. There are also kiosks set up for small enterprises that sell around taxi ranks. Business here ranges from clothes, herbal herbs, cell phone repairs, and TV and radio repairs.

The former Kwa Ndebele area within the Nkangala region, unlike Nelspruit, has never been autonomously part of the global capitalist economy. Apartheid planning deliberately curtailed any prospects of economic growth. These conditions led to a dependency status for the areas of KwaMhlanga, Siyabuswa and Dennilton on Pretoria. Their isolation is obvious and a large proportion of KwaMhlanga and Siyabuswa residents commute daily to and from work in Pretoria.

The predominance of informal business activities in these rural areas militates against their improvement and development. It reduces the sources of revenue that the local authorities are able to levy. Even though the informal sector has become a major employment generator, it often characterised by unfair labour practices, especially in farming and the taxi industry (Mabaso, 1998). Insufficient access to credit and requisite inputs and the lack of viable markets impinge upon the success of these income-generating activities.

Declining local demand and competition in the international market has progressively undermined women's dominant position in the manufacture of consumption goods for the internal market and traditional craftwork. Furthermore, the escalating trend towards subcontracting in the production of export handicrafts, and traditional crafts, has meant that women are increasingly subject to excessively exploitative conditions of work and wages.

The apartheid government used various repressive strategies, including the famous one-man-one-business policy, whereby black traders were limited only to

one business and were prevented from forming companies and partnerships, to control their resources. As a result, a number of businesses share a common characteristic (Rogerson, 1992).

Tourism has been identified as one of the activities that can promote Local Economic Development (LED) and job creation. The Nkangala region includes plenty of game reserves and beautiful natural places, but these are still in the hands of a minority group. The challenge is to encourage previously disadvantaged groups to venture into the tourism industry.

Government has introduced into the rural areas, development projects amongst which are food security programmes, farming and agriculture. Rural women are still venturing into poultry farming, knitting, baking and home-based care. Income generating projects, however, such as the renovation of community facilities, are still dominated by males.

The poor socio-economic conditions which characterize these rural areas and inadequate water and sanitation delivery are accompanied by inadequate and inaccessible healthcare services. Thus, health problems associated with poverty are common, especially among women and children.

4.2 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the new democracy, the LED initiative is perceived to provide a rational approach for resolving the widespread problems of poverty, unemployment and economic decline. LED is concerned with addressing socio-economic objectives of large and small-scale projects in specific areas and linking them with government's developmental and economic objectives. As a new entrant into the global economy, South Africa needs to make her cities, towns and rural areas attractive to investors while strengthening existing business. For this strategy to be a success, all stakeholders: business, labour, communities, NGO's, rural

women and local authorities, need to come on board and join forces in tackling problems of major concern, such as economic development and job creation.

Local government is expected to drive the process of job creation and uplifting the local economy. It has to invest in the basics by providing good cost-effective quality, effective and efficient service delivery and make the local area a place conducive to residence and work. The municipalities need to ensure the growth of black business and ensure the participation of local communities, especially the women, in business matters. With regard to procurement procedures, preference needs to be given to local suppliers and small enterprises, particularly those in the informal sector. Women need to be given opportunities to enter previously male dominated sectors, such as housing delivery (LED Policy Proposal, 2002).

Other than the fact that there are fewer women in construction and that construction has been perceived as 'the man's job', existing problems in this industry as shown by previous research, indicate that some problems in construction affect both men and women and these range from access to finance to access to technology, access to skills and general economic conditions.

The vision of an economy that meets the needs of the people in a more equitable manner was outlined in the mandate of the Freedom Charter of 1955. It was further refined in the RDP (1994). The need to redress inequities of the past is also embodied in the current constitution. More than just an economic imperative, the de-racialisation and expansion of the economy are a moral requirement. Progress has been made but very slowly and the extent to which all have shared in this economic success is still very limited. Women in rural areas have not yet sufficiently benefited. As a result, the economy continues to perform below its full potential; hence, the time has come for implementing a focused strategy for inclusive progress shared by all.

The construction industry has the potential to enhance economic sustainability through its structure, conduct and performance. Telford (1996) argues that in almost every country in the world, the built environment constitutes more than half of total national capital investment and construction represents as much as 10% of the Growth National Product (GNP). The sector is also crucial in the creation of SMMEs. The contribution of small and informal contractors to the economy should not be underestimated. Most cement and paint is sold to smaller consumers. Small companies are responsible for using a large proportion of the building materials manufactured.

With such a large population and people still struggling to have access to opportunities, the research endeavoured to establish the extent to which empowerment strategies, as envisaged by the government, can assist poverty alleviation, and community perceptions of the labour-intensive and public works programmes introduced by the government to alleviate poverty in rural areas in the process of housing delivery.

4.3 HOUSING PROJECTS WITHIN THE SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES

Table 1 below shows contractors by gender in the municipalities investigated. These projects have been implemented through different delivery instruments. These include PHP, project linked and Contractor Based Individuals Subsidy. The Allocation is discussed below. Ekungwini Municipality is a cross-border area, but projects mentioned above were allocated within the Nkangala region in Mpumalanga. Women in this area were interviewed, since female contractors and developers were not available within the Thembisile municipality area.

Table 1 Contractor Gender in Rural Construction Projects

Municipality	Project	Contractor	Units	Gender
Dr. J S Moroka	Ga- Maria	Mabhena M J	47	Male
	Ga- Maria	Thenjiwe construction	11	Male
	Vaalbank	Somtholo	25	Male
	PHP	Tebcon	300	Male
Municipality	**Project**	**Contractor**	**Units**	**Gender**
	Vaalbank	Gazuka	25	Male
	Vaalbank	Vukuzame	19	Female
	Kammeel Rivier	Ithabo	50	Male
	Ramokgeletsane	WholeNation	50	Male
	Bakgatla ba mocha	Larabo Construction	51	Male
	De Beerspruit	Malusomuhle Constr.	20	Male
	Mammetlake	Tsano	20	Male
	Mmmmetlaje	MRTT (PHP)	162	MRTT
	Magana gobuswa	JJN Corporation	30	Female
	Thabana	Dlungwana	30	Female
	Thabana	Vuka Tsoga	30	Female
	Pankop	Spirit of Africa	500	Male
	Pan kop	Naledi Joint Venture	150	Male
Thembisile	Verena	Retsogile	500	Male
	Kwagga, Thembalethu, Tweefontein, Gemsbok Tweefontein and Uitvlughte	Tebcon	300	Male
	Kwagga	Botle bolethabo	38	Male
	Thokoza	Sizakhele	50	Male
	Tweefontein J	Taulame	25	Male
	Sun city Mandela	Mareleng	42	Male
	Langkloof	Sambulo	25	Male
	KwaggafonteinA	Bakukeng	32	Male
	Machipe	Whole nation	32	Male
	Vlaklaagte	Montero Dev	38	Male
	Vlaklaagte	Brickwill	38	Male
	Machipe	Sekunjalo	18	Male
Kungwini				
	Ekangala F	Thembeni	569	Male
	Ekangala F	Simunye	659	Male
	Ekangala F	Nkosazana	10	Female
	Ekangala F	Lady JTJ	10	Female
	Ekangala F	United	10	Female
	Ekangala F	Env enterprise	10	Female
	Ekangala F	Mawelele	40	Female

Figures obtained from Technical Section: Department of Housing, KwaMhlanga

In examining the dynamics of change for poor women in rural areas, the study placed emphasis on the role and impact of local economic developments, SMMEs and the Expanded Public Works Programme in housing delivery. Enterprises such as SMMEs are important determinants of empowerment in terms of actions available to poor rural women. For many rural households, off-farm SMMEs do provide an initial escape route from poverty. The National Strategy for the development and Promotion of small business (1995), recognizes that support strategies should primarily help survivalists, of whom a large percentage is women. According to Stern et al (2005), this happened in China where the development of township enterprises resulted in remarkable poverty reduction as rural labourers moved towards the non-farming economy. In India, off-farm employment has played a smaller role in poverty reduction; nevertheless, village households' incomes are derived from a number of sectors, including commerce, manufacturing and self-employment

The housing projects in Mpumalanga have been initiated by the government in various rural and urban areas as a strategy intended to empower rural women and restore the dignity of the previously disadvantaged communities through the provision of decent housing and creation of jobs. Within Thembisile municipality housing delivery projects are implemented to redress the imbalances of the past. Of these, the PHP project was examined with the intention of establishing the impact of BBEEE, SMMEs, on EPWP and women developers within the Kwa Ndebele area.

The project studied here was initiated in Thembisile during 2002. The intention was to build sustainable communities and habitable settlements and restore the dignity of the poor through housing provision. Three hundred units were allocated to Thembisile Municipality by the provincial Department of Housing. These were to be built through the PHP delivery programme and shared amongst 6 villages, each being allocated 50 units.

The need for training in various skills relevant to housing delivery was identified within the community of Thembisile, specifically for women. Training would include bricklaying, plumbing, carpentry and business management. It was envisaged that the project would enable women to create jobs for themselves and later employ other community members.

The project was expected to contribute to economic development, not only through its structure, but also through investment and economic opportunities created by the construction proposed in the expanded public works programme. Though it was recognised that the project could contribute to economic development, the exclusion of traditional leaders from development projects could render them unsuccessful. Traditional leaders are still perceived to be overseers of development in their areas. They get enormous support from villagers and, together with councillors, should be involved in development projects.

The process of delivery represents the process of building houses at project level. It depends upon the stages that contractors/ developers need to follow to get subsidies from the Department of Housing in order to build houses. The process involves:

- A land availability agreement;
- A Social compact;
- Planning of the layout and services;
- Submission of the business plan to the Department of Housing;
- Approval of the construction project;
- Handing the projects over to owners.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Given the demographics and survival strategies of the area, it is evident that the implementation and monitoring of government economic empowerment policies is cannot be ignored. Strategies applied by rural women such as street vending, as stated above do not lead to economic empowerment; they are merely for survival. Housing projects have been implemented in order to alleviate poverty amongst rural people. Men dominate the industry numerically, though according to allocation table, a few women were given the opportunity of building units that uplift their economic status.

In Chapter 5 the findings of the research are analyzed with regard to challenges faced by women in accessing opportunities and the impact of economic strategies proposed by government are evaluated.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The outcomes of the fieldwork conducted in Kwaggafontein (Thembisile municipality) amongst labourers in PHP construction projects and women developers in housing construction in the area are given in this chapter. The approaches discussed in the previous chapter were used to analyse these and arrive at appropriate recommendations. The research was conducted in Thembisile, where female labourers and contractors/developers involved in the PHP projects and women working in the PHP project and developer driven projects were surveyed. Of the 26 women interviewed, 3 were developers.

5.1 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The information received from the NHBRC indicated that 350 women were awarded Home Builders Certificates in Mpumalanga Province during 2005. In contrast, in the Thembisile and Dr JS Moroka areas, records received from the provincial Department of Housing indicated that only five women developers had been awarded tenders. This finding supports the view that the construction industry is still male-dominated. No intervention is equal when the players do not start as equals. Gender awareness starts with recognition that a project will always affect men and women differently. Where this is ignored, the government objectives of pursuing empowerment through increasing the extent to which black rural women own and manage existing and new businesses through increasing their access to economic opportunities, infrastructure and skills training are thwarted. In the following sections of this chapter, a detailed analysis of the findings is presented.

5.1.1 WORK CATEGORIZATION

Employees interviewed for this research were categorized as follows:
2 developers
1 project manager
1 bookkeeper
2 people manufacturing window frames
19 labourers mixing mortar and excavating foundations

The work categorization given above indicates that those planning the housing delivery in this area neglected to include a number of important elements such as brick making and plumbing. As a result, women who could have been employed were denied opportunities for learning these skills. Financially, lack of skills, experience, knowledge, and confidence limit women's ability to borrow and use finance as they would wish.

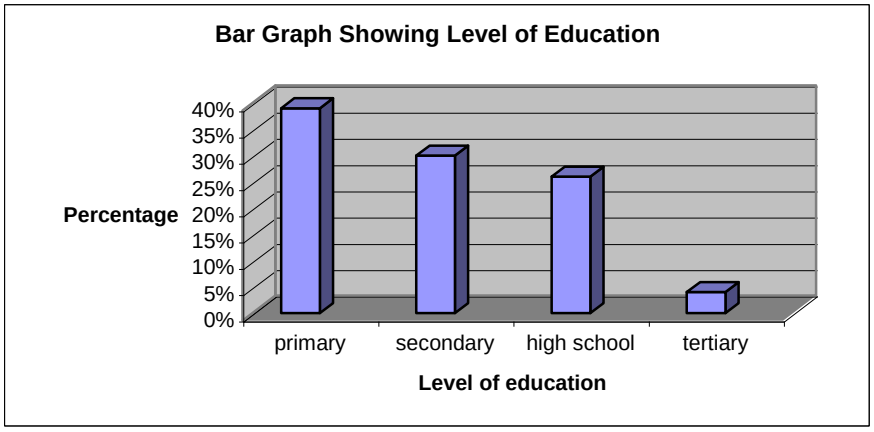
5.1.2 LEVELS OF EDUCATION

The information contained in Figure 2 confirms that illiteracy rate is very high and this results into poverty. The project manager was the only worker with tertiary education. Lack of access to education can be attributed to poverty and low levels of education can contribute to poverty as they influence the ability to find employment and the type of employment attainable. Poverty is not experienced on individual level, but by households and entire communities. Children become the most vulnerable because they depend on adults.

Levels of education are generally low in the area and education is crucial for enhancing business and career opportunities. Possible reasons for the high dropout rates could be a lack of funds due to high unemployment rates and difficulties involved in gaining access to technical institutions in the area. As a result the skills level is low. Education is not only an individual's right: it is an

important tool for any development. While it cannot guarantee people economic and social well being, it can mould their attitudes, skills and knowledge. Access to education and training is one of the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform of Action (BPFA). A key action required to accelerate the implementation of the BPFA is government institution of programmes to ensure the retention of women and girls in schools.

Figure 2: Bar Graph Showing Level of Education



5.1.3 REMUNERATION

The 2 highest paid people earned between R500 and R750 per month. These are skilled bricklayers. The remainder earned between R100 and R500. Five participants were beneficiaries who volunteered and contributed with sweat equity towards enhancement of their subsidies. Poor remuneration contributes to poor participation in housing delivery. Though the PHP support policy has good intentions, it is difficult to survive and support a family with these earnings. PHP policy does not sufficiently meet with the government's objective in pursuing Broad Based Black Economic empowerment through:

- Promoting economic transformation in order to enable meaningful participation of black people in the economy;

- Empowering rural and local communities by enabling them to gain access to economic activities, land infrastructure, ownership and skills (Balshaw and Goldberg, 2005).

Low earnings account for instability in the house-building sector. Of the respondents, 21 stated that they had worked for less that a year in this industry. Only two labourers had worked for 2 years. It is necessary for government to introduce projects that will encourage broad-based economic empowerment and lead to prosperity and sustainable development. According to EPWP, all short–term job creation programmes must ensure adequate incomes and labour standards linked to local, regional or national development programmes and promote education, training, community capacity and empowerment.

5.1.4 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Employment opportunities around KwaMhlanga, Ekangala, Kwaggafontein, Dennilton and Siyabuswa are limited. Respondents described how difficult it was to leave and look for work in Pretoria, Witbank, Marble Hall and Middleburg. Some women mentioned that they were motivated by the need to earn a salary, rather than roaming around in the village.

> I find that I don't have money to look for a job elsewhere, this thing of wasting money travelling everyday looking for a job is not working, and hence I have resorted to construction even if there isn't much.

As a result of the high rate of unemployment, beneficiaries augmented their incomes through informal trading. According to van Ryneveld (1995), this does not alleviate poverty, as the monthly income of the majority of people in the housing sector is below the minimum level for living of about R709 per month per household.

5.1.5 ACCESS TO FINANCE

While rural women have made great strides in housing delivery, access to finance was still a challenge despite all policies and the legal framework guaranteeing women equal treatment to men. Gender bias regarding creditworthiness could be attributed to the fact that majority of rural women do not have property and are therefore perceived to be incapable of repaying a loan. Owing to lack of access to finance, they are not very likely to improve their survivalist activities. Changes on the ground lag behind policy changes and the financial institutions make their own decisions about taking risks on financing rural women, while women need to fast track their acquisition of skills in project management and financial management. The indication is that without capital assistance the growth of a business is achieved with considerable difficulty.

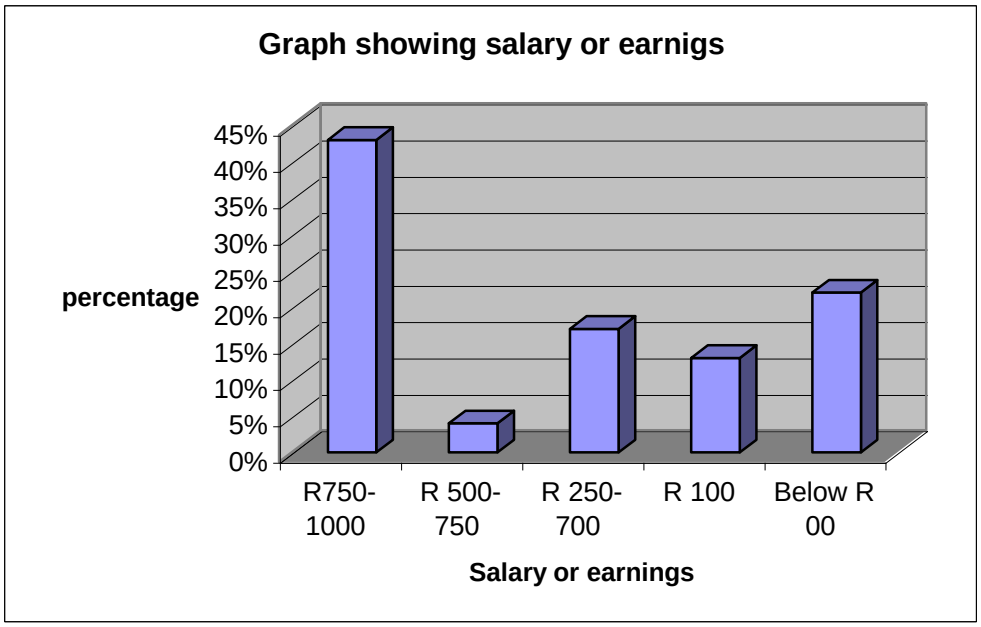
This problem was experienced both by labourers who intended starting their own construction companies and by existing developers. Rural women had difficulty in obtaining bridging finance. When approaching financial institutions for assistance in starting or developing a business, they faced problems posed by their lack of collateral and the stringent financial policies of these institutions and the micro-lenders. Those who succeeded in securing finances still encountered problems, since interest rates charged by moneylenders are high. Construction projects need resources such as land, equipment, labour of various types and skills levels, building material and supplies.

Contractors and developers of housing projects obtain finance for their operations through investment and working capital. It is an accepted tradition that contractors are paid instalments on the basis of work completed. A portion of payment due to a contractor is usually withheld by the owner as a guarantee against poor workmanship and latent defects. Small contractors have to contend with more challenges than large contractors face: suppliers normally extend

short-term credit for big contractors, but the small contractors have to pay for supplies on delivery or in advance.

The National Strategy for Development and Promotion of Small Businesses(1995) has been formulated to address the needs and development potential of the whole small enterprise sector, focusing upon and supporting black entrepreneurs. The objective is that women should not be excluded from participating in economic activities. The Financial, construction and Property Sector Transformation Charter's initiatives to increase investment and lending in under-resourced areas must be accessed to benefit these communities.

Figure 4: Graph Showing Earnings



5.1.6 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Respondents, mostly young women, confirmed that they wanted to start their own businesses, even if these were not in construction industry, but they did not have skills.

> My problem is that I don't know how to start a business; I have not received any training in handling bookkeeping.

Different skills are required for different functions and these might be obtained through education. There were few such facilities, and the available ones, for instance the computer training centres, were charging exorbitant fees. This, combined with the high illiteracy rate in this area militated against the acquisition of skills and access to information. Moser (1993) argues that lives of most low-income women are dominated by the necessity to generate income and the need to acquire skills. It is therefore important to develop skills for these women so that they can have access to economic opportunities.

The challenge related to skills development is also encountered by contractors and developers. Labour constitutes 20% - 30% of the total value of their output. South Africa has a high percentage of unskilled labour; but the meagre supply of adequately skilled labour causes difficulty for many firms. The means of skill acquisition is generally through informal training on site. Well-trained labourers normally leave their employment in rural areas because of poor remuneration. As a result, construction companies are not willing to invest in training programmes.

5.1.7 ATTITUDES

Previously trained beneficiaries of the Department of Labour did not receive employment when a project was implemented because foreign developers working in the area tended to use their own labour. No follow up was made by the Department of Labour on the impact of training. Funds for transporting beneficiaries to training sites were sometimes pocketed by service providers and there is still no evident monitoring of such activities by the Department of Labour.

5.1.8 LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Interviewees felt that officials disseminating information to the beneficiaries were not doing it in the correct way:

> These things are only known by councillors and few people here working with councillors, if you are not known, you will be left behind.

Another respondent felt that they were sent from pillar to post when seeking information:

> If you approach A he will send you to B and C and back to A, you won't get what you need at the end of the day. These people from Khula Ntsika and Umsobomvu never visit rural areas.

Beneficiaries felt that project managers and planners should share information with them in order to facilitate collective action. The exercise would enable the beneficiaries to understand and perform their tasks better. Lack of support centres seems to be a problem. For instance, no office for Umsobomvu is available in these areas although there are offices in Witbank and Nelspruit. It is expected that institutions such as Umsobomvu and Ntsika will institute less stringent interventions which will benefit rural people. Sharing information would enable beneficiaries to understand and perform their tasks better.

5.1.9 THE LEVEL OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The level of participation in housing delivery in Kwaggafontein is very low. Beneficiaries are willing to participate due to a number of issues mentioned impact negatively on the project. Lack of knowledge about how to access information and finance limited their participation.

Another factor contributing to poor community participation could be the vagueness and contradictory nature of the PHP Support Policy in defining and defending the space for beneficiary participation, choice and empowerment. The function of Support Organisation which should be performed by beneficiaries or

any legal persons within the community is normally performed by the municipality. This creates an opportunity for provincial and municipal governments to interpret the PHP support Policy in ways that contradict its stated goals.

According to Balshaw (2005) the BBBEE strategy and Act recognizes that SMMEs are a major lever for BBBEE, providing opportunities to increase meaningful black participation in economic activities; especially that of black women, cooperatives and designated groups. It is therefore crucial that rural women be given an opportunity to participate in housing, as it is widely recognized that access to social infrastructures such as housing, education and health provides a foundation on which to participate more meaningfully in economic activities.

5.1.10 DOUBTS ABOUT SUCCESS

Women felt that while the unemployment rate was too high, manufacturing bricks, doorframes or window frames was too demanding for them. They also felt that matters related to tools, transport and sites were already male dominated, so their chances for success in those business areas were seen to be too minimal. Remarks such as these were common:

> Since the unemployment rate is too high, who is going to buy my bricks?
> People around this place use mortar instead of cement bricks.
>
> If one wants to do glazing, windows break easily; one may end up working at a loss.

What seemed unknown by the respondents was that opportunities to expand their production businesses were possible. Networking with groups such as Kopano brickworks would have made it possible for rural women in brick construction to succeed in their businesses. The lack of access to information

and communication with organizations such as the Women for Housing hindered these rural women in housing delivery from benefiting from available economic opportunities.

Companies such as Lafarge Roofing had announced the formation of Marulelo Roofing solutions, a new BEE company geared towards providing roofing solutions in the low-cost housing sector. Transfer of skills is the main aim of this company. This is done through training local communities on site. Owing to poor access to information, rural women are deprived of the chance of taking advantage of such opportunities. The above factors impacted on the viability and profitability of their businesses.

5.1.11 POOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Rural women in construction are faced with the challenge of drawing water from the dams. Transport is scarce and it is very expensive to hire vans. Donkey carts cannot carry enough water for construction. The role of the local municipality is to provide access to basic necessities such as water to local communities. According to contractors, the municipality was not keen in assisting to alleviate this problem.

Policies such as water privatisation undermine women's ability to own, use, and conserve these resources and provide for themselves (Van der Westhuizen, 2005). Water is a natural resource and should be made available in a sustainable manner to all South Africans. The fundamental principle of our water resources policy is the right of access to clean water.

5.1.12 MATERIAL PROCUREMENT AND TENDERING

All women contractors and developers interviewed showed concern that building material had to be procured in Groblersdal, Witbank, Marble Hall and

Bronkhospruit, areas remote from the construction sites. Transport charges impact on business profit. The result of the low value - weight ratio of most building materials is that the cost of transporting certain materials can turn out to be higher than that of producing them. This means a single centralized supplier will find it more economical to service a small but concentrated urban area like Witbank and Middleburg than a once-off demand in rural areas such as Kwaggafontein and KwaMhlanga. Materials accessible to local small-scale contractors are often overpriced or of inferior quality. The irony is that the poor have to pay more and at the same time have less of a choice in material procurement.

Added to location-related challenges is the high cost of construction equipment. Equipment purchases and repairs tend to be expensive, especially when a part is to be imported. Renting of similar equipment would ideally reduce the requirement for investment capital but renting equipment can prove too costly if the objective is profit making. The objectives of Procurement Act remain a dream without removing all barriers.

For small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to flourish and promote economic transformation in SA, preferential procurement and enterprise development hold the key. Section 217 of the Constitution and Section 76 (4 c) of the Public Finance Management Act prescribe that the public sector procurement system must be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective. The objective of the Act is to ensure that women are not discriminated against. Equity implies addressing the inequalities of the past.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The Majority of the respondents felt that it was unnecessary for government to involve them in the project because their views were neither taken seriously, nor was their decision–making recognized. An example given was that of an L

shaped house which was not of their choice but imposed on them by a Supporting Organization. The importance of community involvement in matters that concern their development needs to be given more impetus. These concerns clearly indicate how government officials neglected to recognise the local communities input and participation.

Because women are also caregivers, they felt that too much time was spent on-site, for very little money, leaving their families neglected. They indicated that the welfare of their families was their first priority. This not only shows that women are eager to satisfy their strategic needs, but also that the contractors/developers need to realize the importance of enabling women to maintain a balance between domestic responsibilities and income-generating activities. Long working hours in poor conditions for poor reward have created an impression which will be difficult to dispel. Rural women and those who influence their career choices will rarely consider construction an appealing career given the current scenario.

In the present South African Housing Programme, legislation covers people participating in all stages of housing delivery. However, it was clear that the poor people were not consulted on most decisions taken. This situation dis-empowers poor rural women and limits their influence on and economic participation in the process of housing delivery.

As mentioned earlier, women working as labourers and as developers both experienced disadvantage in the above programmes. Irene, one of the developers, mentioned that the department had not given her any units to construct from foundation level. Instead, she had been offered an opportunity to complete 10 units left incomplete by an expelled male contractor at Sun City Village. Nomathemba and Joyce from Ekangala were fortunate at one stage to get a tender from Gauteng for renovating a taxi rank at Ekangala. This was a once-off opportunity. According to EPWP, contractors are supposed to be assisted for three years in succession until their businesses become successful.

These cases indicate clearly the shortage of skills from policy implementers and the poor monitoring. The improvement of strategic needs for rural women largely depends on the type of skills that are provided and their ability to allow women to generate sufficient income. The type of skill such as excavating foundations do not challenge the subordination of women in society, they constantly perpetuate the gender division of labour. The indication on the ground is that SMMEs, LEDs and the EPWP have not yet had much impact on rural women. Although women have been offered incredible opportunities by the democratic government, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the situation in which rural women find themselves needs more attention from the government and related stakeholders.

Furthermore, the reputation of the construction sector is one of greed, corruption and unfair labour practices. Fronting is the major challenge for the industry and an insult to black-owned companies. It is therefore important that legal and fair procedures are adhered to by all stakeholders.

The next chapter will offer recommendations .

CHAPTER 6
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.1 Business related training

A number of participants indicated that they needed general training in construction, business skills, bookkeeping and, more specifically, on tendering. This reflected the real challenges encountered by women in the industry. Systems which will allow rural women to access opportunities need to be put in place. The demand is in line with EPWP principles.

Involvement of the construction industry in school programmes, especially through mentoring schemes for school children and undergraduates, should be increased. This would help identify mismatches between the educational process, training needs and the expectations of potential employers and employees.

6.1.2 Benefits of community participation

Community participation has been an issue amongst participants. As indicated in previous chapters, there is minimal participation of communities in housing matters. It is important for communities to be involved in all stages of the projects, especially in decision–making, implementation, financing and management. As empowerment and access to economic opportunities is the objective of such initiatives as the BBBEE, community participation should start at the decision-making level. It is important that all stakeholders support this idea.

Community participation is an important aspect in empowering marginalized groups such as women, the uneducated, the disabled and the youth. The national government must be committed to the process of devolving power to the lower spheres of government in order to ensure effective facilitation of

development on the ground and equal distribution of resources. Moreover, community participation depends on the commitment of the planner. Planners should not only pay attention to the purpose of the plan, but also to the meaning of the plan as perceived by communities (Mokhesi, 1996). When carefully planned and properly implemented, housing projects can be effective in alleviating poverty, providing assets, capacity building and skills development for the community. However, if public works projects are not properly planned and implemented, they will always lack impact.

Community participation should be aimed at empowering people by ensuring that skills are developed and employment opportunities created. To overcome these problems, Labour intensive programmes would be appropriate, as they would address the illiteracy problem by offering training on skills development.

6.1.3 Transactive planning.

This model was developed by Friedman in 1973. It emphasizes the importance of integrating knowledge and action. A planner and a beneficiary learn from each other and the process is mutual. Transactive planning improves communication lines between planners and clients. A transactive planner facilitates community participation as he gains knowledge of community needs. This model is based on communication in which personal and verbal transaction bridges the gap between the planner and the community.

6.1.4 Early payments

To alleviate unnecessary cash flow pressure experienced by contractors, the Department of Housing should, upon receipt of all relevant documentation, pay SMME suppliers as soon as practicable.

6.1.5 Women's involvement

As mentioned in previous chapters, women's involvement in housing delivery was found to be very poor, especially in decision-making. It is therefore

suggested that women be consulted in any development that will affect their lives. Cultural perceptions have often subordinated rural women. A need remains to re examine the barriers that make it impossible to interrogate harmful traditional and customary law practices. The allocation of units as indicated in table1, Chapter 4, clearly indicates that women's access to and participation in economic issues is still very limited. This practice could be attributed to cultural stereotypes, which need to be addressed.

To ensure that women's voices are heard, it is important that they form consortiums and empower themselves. Through consortiums, women would be in a position to communicate directly with local authorities. Women's organizations should form part of management teams so that they can reach agreement with the government on policies to be implemented. A key focus throughout the RDP is on ensuring a full and equal role for women in every aspect of our economy and society. Women's indigenous knowledge relevant to housing construction should not be discarded during the implementation phases.

6.1.6 Gender mainstreaming as a solution

Gender mainstreaming was adopted as a strategy at the Beijing Conference to transform the unequal power relations between women and men. Central to the strategy is the realization that inequalities between women and men remain a major obstacle to sustainable development and attainment of social justice. A gender sensitive approach should be adopted when planning. This will benefit both men and women equally.

Project implementers should provide support for women's organizations and key female decision-makers. All policies and programmes should ensure equal and fair allocation of resources. Ensure also that a gender perspective is maintained and encourage men to participate in actions favouring gender equality. A comprehensive and effective communication strategy should be developed to communicate policy at all levels so that it can be successfully implemented.

During monitoring and evaluation, gender equity results should be measured and reported. Participatory approaches, (discussed in Chapter 3) drawing on the participation of women and men, should be used in developing monitoring and evaluation procedures.

6.1.7 Basic needs strategy

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Basic needs strategy deals directly with communities and their needs. For instance, having access to housing is a right guaranteed in the constitution. Having employment is also a basic human right, and it restores the dignity of individuals, especially the previously disadvantaged. Because it encourages community participation, decentralization of administration and delegation of decision-making in local community projects, the strategy should be considered.

6.1.8 Meeting strategic gender needs

Sustainability is crucial in any development project. In order to achieve it, project implementers need to look beyond practical needs. Address strategic constraints as well. Strategic needs are related to the long-term struggle against oppressive laws. Mechanisms for satisfying these needs differ according to the socio-political context within which they are found. Skills development for rural women is imperative if their needs are to be met by improving their ability to generate income. The need to remove and abolish institutionalised gender division in terms of labour, resources, land rights, property rights and access to credit, and to establish political and economic equality is of utmost importance here (Meena, 1992).

6.1.9 Critical role of stakeholders at the local level

Stakeholders at the local level are expected to drive the housing process especially during implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. Local municipalities as mandated by the constitution should lead all community development programmes. Followed by traditional authorities, councillors, community leaders, local business and potential entrepreneurs. The local municipality should offer resources and opportunities to local communities. In all spheres of government, local municipalities have the ability to create small business environments successfully, as it is their role to promote social and economic development. While the influence of traditional authorities on communities cannot be underestimated, the municipality's administrative infrastructure should allow them to explore and utilize local talent.

6.1.10 Tender accessibility

Opportunities must be made accessible to suppliers through the media in local languages. Access to information is enshrined in the constitution as well as the Batho Pele Principles. Procurement documents should be couched in simple language. Tender specifications should be sufficiently explanatory to allow suppliers to participate. Technical specifications should be reviewed to ensure that they are for functional requirements and not presented in a way that might result in exclusion of previously disadvantaged groups.

6.2 CONCLUSION

This study has emphasized that skills development, community participation, empowerment and access to opportunities for rural women would play an important role in poverty alleviation through the public provisioning of housing as envisaged by the numerous legislations with similar objectives. Project implementers should ensure that policies regarding community development are fairly implemented and monitored in order to achieve intended results. Rural women should be given an opportunity to participate in all spheres and stages of

the projects in order to be empowered. Gender mainstreaming is crucial and, considering women's practical and strategic gender needs, is an important requirement. Outsiders are less likely to have influence in local communities, hence projects fail, poor construction standards become the norm and corruption becomes rife. The current practice militates against community development. When beneficiaries participate in own projects, a sense of ownership is attached to the project and dignity is restored.

Good governance should be committed to a democratic process. Good governance involves devolution of power to the lower tiers of government. Co-ordination and facilitation of development initiatives should be promoted to local level. This would allow people on the ground access to information. Moreover, equitable distribution of resources to various communities in order to empower them is crucial to their economic, physical and political empowerment. Transparency, as advocated in Batho Pele principles, is also crucial since communities need to have access to information on the basis of which to make their decisions and choices.

ANNEXURES

Annexure A

Questionnaire for women working as labourers in housing construction

Tick the relevant answer

1. **How old are you?**

---- **>25**

---- **25-30**

---- **30 – 35**

----- **<35**

2. **What is your role in construction**

Labourer------- **Carpenter---------** **Bricklayer -------**

Other (specify)----------

3.How long have you been working in construction?

Less than a year ---------

1—2 years

2---5 years

5 years +

5. What is your educational background?

Primary education ----------

Secondary education----------

Tertiary education ----------

Other (specify)

6. What motivated you to enter this industry?

_____

_____

7. Do you get support from your family to do this job?

8. Have you encountered any challenges in this job?

Yes or No

If yes, what were your challenges and how did you address them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9 . What are your future aspirations?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Are you getting any support from the government_____

11. What support would you need from the government to meet your future aspiration?

_____

12. Do you know how to access information in order to meet your future aspirations

_____

_____

_____

13. Do you think women's needs are addressed in this job, How?_____

_____

_____

_____

14. How do you think this job can be improved to accommodate more women?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Do you think by being employed here poverty has been alleviated?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Annexure B

Questionnaire for women contractors

Demographics:

Name and surname:----------

Position: ----------

Company name: ----------

1. **How old is you company?**

   ----

2. **What is the gender composition of you company?**

   ----

3. **How has you company empowered individuals? And how many**

   ----

4. **Do you participate in tendering processes? If yes how, if no why**

   ----

5. **How many projects have you won to date and the value?**

   ----

6. **How do you get information on new tenders?----------**

7. **Do you think the procurement policy supports women? How?**

   ----

8. **Have you received any business training? (Tendering, pricing, costing, etc)**

9. **----------**

if yes where? ----------

if no what prevented from getting training----------

Do you belong to any construction organisation or group ___yes No

If yes How has it assisted you----------

If no, How do you get assistance with regard to housing matters ----------

----

----

10. **What do you think are the common barriers to entry into business?**
    - **(a) Lack of financial support**
    - **(b) Lack of skills and poor training**
    - **(c) Corruption and nepotism**
    - **(d) Big business not giving women a chance**
    - **(e) Lack of initiative and poor networking**

What do you think should be done to overcome any barriers ----------

----

11. **What opportunities do you want the government to consider that will assist women?----------**

    ----

12. **Any other comments / suggestions----------**

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