

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO  
EMPOWER POVERTY STRICKEN FAMILIES  
IN RURAL AREAS**

**E TLHOJANE**

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## **SUMMARY**

Almost half of the South African population lives in poverty. The circumstances of particularly the poor in the rural areas are worse in absolute and relative terms because of a legacy of unequal access, control and distribution of resources.

The aim of this research study was to examine the nature and the effect of poverty on families in a rural area and to provide guidelines for the empowerment of poverty stricken families. From the research study it was clear that the inhabitants of Modimola village were very poor, taking into account their low level of education, high rate of illiteracy, small income and unsatisfactory living conditions. They even experienced a shortage of basic needs such as water, electricity and transport. Several factors contribute to their poverty, such as lack of job opportunities, lack of skills and lack of support from the government and additionally, due to improper infrastructure. It was evident that poverty had a negative effect on the families, and that problems such as malnutrition, illiteracy, ill health, marital problems, unemployment and violence were rife in the community. The people were unable to help themselves and felt hopeless and useless. They need to be empowered. The social worker has an important role to play in this regard. She can play the parts of social broker, enabler, teacher, mediator and advocate so as to help the people alleviate their poverty.













































































