

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUMMARY, REALIZATION OF THE OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This mini- dissertation seeks to find answers to the question of the role of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in promoting sustainable livelihoods at Evaton in Emfuleni municipality. The primary objective of this chapter is to give a summary of the main findings resulting from the analysis and interpretation of data in the preceding chapters. In so doing previous four chapters will also be reviewed within the context of the results of this study including other related studies. Also included in this chapter will be a restatement of the problem, aims and objectives of this study. Recommendation and conclusion are also part of this chapter.

5.2 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Summary and findings of this study can be outlined as follows:

In chapter 1, it was submitted that social service sector NGOs form a large percentage of the overall NPOs in South Africa .Their lack of approaches, models and framework present challenges for them to play a role in promoting sustainable livelihoods. This is in contrast to the predominant application of sustainable livelihood approach by the Gauteng provincial Department of Social Development as the main and often sole funding institution for NGOs. The result of dependency on welfare system as opposed to promotion of self reliance for a sustainable livelihood through developmental services was also highlighted.

Challenges of linking social grants beneficiaries to poverty alleviation and economic activities were highlighted on the basis of their lack of exit strategies for beneficiaries, other than a change in their living circumstances and income levels.

Thus urban poverty, HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, lack of municipality infrastructure and basic services (in a form of tarred roads, housing) that remain challenges experienced by communities within Evaton were also indicated.

In chapter 2, the focus was upon the theoretical exposition of development and sustainable livelihood. There was elaboration on the definition of development, sustainable development; sustainable livelihoods and Nongovernmental organizations. It was also indicated that South Africa as one of the former colonized countries in the Sub Saharan region has been subjected to oppression by European colonist under the pretext of development.

It was highlighted that the latter is a highly contested concept in terms of its meaning, form and implications, with more fundamental questions being raised about the extent to which it is occurring and its nature. Furthermore, it was discussed that development was superimposed upon African countries by western countries so that they model their imperials through great influence on current developmental trends and school of thoughts in the region.

The importance of adoption of new paradigms for development as a basis for sustainable development and poverty reduction was emphasized given the available empirical evidence and strong arguments to suggest that the time has now come to put to rest certain old ideas which have clearly not worked in the area of development. A dissatisfaction with the previously conventional approaches to development are said to have increasingly began because of their prioritization of economic growth, production and industrialization thus placing human needs second.

Throughout chapter 3, the history of social services NGOs which dates back to ancient period was discussed. The promulgation of legislations (amongst which is the NPO Act) aimed at the regulation of NGOs as their prevalence gained momentum was highlighted.

The emphasis on the regulation of legitimate operations of NGOs thereby making provisions for the criteria of their registration and matters related thereto in the NPO Act was indicated.

Outstanding provisions in this Act are that institutions need to be voluntary and publicly owned in order to be recognized as NGOs and in essence this implies that property and assets of NGOs both in monetary terms and material wise are not distributable to their members. Finance can be paid to members only as a form of compensation for the service that has been rendered.

It was also apparent that social services NGOs have always been welfarist in nature thereby providing welfare services in a form of material, psychosocial assistance and lobbying to individuals and families in distress. Most importantly, it was noted that such services were rendered along racial lines whereby whites got the most privilege on the basis of the so called white problem resulting from the effects of colonial rule.

Poverty reduction became a central focus of any service delivery initiative with social security gaining more prominence amongst other governmental programmes as multitudes of people became beneficiaries. This progress did not unfold without obstacles. It promoted dependency of people on welfare as opposed to self reliance as one of the goals of sustainable livelihood. The resultant counteractive state of affairs against developmental efforts was brought upon by lack of exit plan or strategies of social security programme. However the government's encouragement of a collaborative effort to link social security beneficiaries with economic activities as a means to reverse this problem was also acknowledged.

5.3 FINDINGS

It was noted that there were serious gaps in implementing SLA .

The gaps were:

- A fragmented approach towards sustainable livelihood;

- The problem was conceptualization (It is clear from the interviews with different NGOs that sustainable livelihood approach was not known as one of the strategies of community development since all the respondents were not even aware of SLA concept .Yet, some of its principles were applied as discussed in line with the findings illustrated by table 4.1)
- Although the majority of Evaton NGOs claim to be applying SLA, this claimed application took a unique route. The efforts of Evaton NGOs were noted as a positive move in the right direction given the observed realization of the need for developmental and as opposed to welfarist services, and
- While the NGOs feel it has won popular mandate to its social development, there is a big room for constantly refining its precise goals in order for them to be able to promote SLA, adjusting modes of delivery to local circumstances, introducing a more customized touch that would allow local needs and concerns to drive the approach forward
- All NGOs participants render poverty alleviation services mainly through food garden and only few through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial activity among men is much higher than among women since men were new firm entrepreneurs. The promotion of this entrepreneurship opportunity was partly about expanding economic opportunities for poor people through the process of economic growth, and partly about expanding the asset base of poor people and increasing the return on those assets;
- A question of extent to which depletion of natural resources was avoided in effort to counter act food insecurity through food gardening remained unanswered. This raises a concern given the aim of SLA is to reverse the adverse effects of the previously development endeavors (discussed in chapter 2) at the expenses of nature conservation.
- Challenges of implementation of world wide development recommendations (MDGs) were also acknowledged.

The nature of services rendered by NGOs participants also reflected support of the views that NGOs are not necessarily evolutionary in nature but rather their programmes mainly are.

5.4 REALIZATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The first objective of the study was to provide both theoretical and practical explanation of sustainable livelihood approach. To meet this objective the exposition of the concept development, sustainable development and social development was provided in chapter two.

The second objective was to investigate the role played by NGOs at Evaton in promoting sustainable livelihoods of communities in Emfuleni Municipality. The definition of the concept NGO; the process of establishing an NGO was discussed with bias to the South African context, and brief historical overview of South African NGOs and their roles in the development fraternity was also outlined with a special emphasis on social service NGOs. An analysis of other institutions involved in developmental services was conducted in chapter 3 in order to highlight the need for an integrated service delivery approach since holism is the core principle of sustainable livelihood approach.

The third objective aimed at conducting a research into the constraints and benefits of NGOs in promoting sustainable livelihoods of communities at Evaton. The outcomes of the research were outlined in chapter four.

5.5 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS

The aim of this study was to test the central statement made in chapter one that:

- NGOs play a very important role in promoting community development through provision of services to the communities in Evaton, their service delivery approaches seem trapped in the previous historical evolution of developmental efforts marked by provision of relief as opposed to sustainable livelihood services.

The findings from the literature review supported the stated central statement while the empirical research conducted nullified it. Evaton NGOs promote developmental welfare services which have similar principles of sustainable livelihood approach. The latter remains an ideal yet difficult mode of intervention considering the lack of capacity regarding this approach.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

This mini-dissertation relies heavily on the assumption that Evaton NGOs have to promote sustainable livelihood in order to comply with the global mandate i.e. MDGs of fighting poverty .In view of the findings of this research, it is deemed appropriate to make the following recommendations:

- Evaton NGOs will have to adapt themselves to their environment in order to address the new demands that develop out of its environment thereby embracing SLA as another method of community development;
- Their programs must be adaptable in order for these NGOS to survive;
- Policy and institutions need to strengthen the capacity of the NGO sector and local government jointly to design and implement more poverty focused programmes using SLA since it provides a framework for understanding the nature of poverty and how interventions can be better tailored to enhance livelihoods;
- The application of SLA needs to be at stages in the planning cycle and applied to projects, programmes and sectors;
- Application of SLA needs identification of partners, and cross -sectoral work, requires holistic, people centered perspectives (recognition that civil culture and social capital are inextricably linked and are inseparable when dealing with issues of effective resources utilization and its influence on sustainable development) as a basis for understanding the complexity and diversity characterizing the livelihood strategies of the poor and considerable time and skill are needed to use SLA perspective in this way;

- A clear definition of envisaged role of each partner must be established, through negotiations between the NGOs and the state, rather than through imposition by one –the state – on the others.
- The model of partnership chosen should reflect the specific features , needs and concerns of each field, rather than provide a universal model valid for all circumstances;
- SLA should not be used in isolation; it is essentially an integrating device and thus should not replace other approaches but build on them, and
- Further study on the subject with regard to the integration of SLA with other approaches that are already applied in service delivery by NGOs at Evaton in Emfuleni Municipality is hereby recommended in order to contextualize its application rather than as a universal model for all circumstances.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The abovementioned findings imply that the Evaton NGOs play a significant role in the provision of developmental social services which meets the needs of their beneficiaries. Although this approach is a step in the right direction for Evaton NGOs, they still lack behind in terms of the promotion of sustainable livelihood. Therefore, they need to be capacitated in order to achieve this goal.