A conceptual policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province

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DECLARATION OF ORINALITY

I, Ms Caroline Rankotsane Motjuwadi (Student number 10829229) hereby declare that the dissertation entitled:

A conceptual policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the PHD of Public Management and governance at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University, is entirely my own work, in my own words and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. All the sources used in researching is duly acknowledged and quotations properly identified.

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This was a difficult journey that was further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic that deepened the already existing challenges. The support rendered by different people made the difficult journey easy to traverse and to reach the ultimate destination.

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the poverty alleviation of women and, coincidentally, the empowerment of women. Women in developing countries carry the burden of poverty to a greater extent than those in developed nations with most residing in rural areas. The North West Province is the locus of this study and, more specifically, the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality, both located in rural areas and regarded as some of the poorest municipalities in the North West Province.

The following research problem was investigated: Despite an array of international, continental, regional and national attempts made towards the alleviation of poverty among women; the myriad of legislation and policies formulated for the empowerment of women; and several mechanisms and programmes developed for this purpose, women in the rural areas of the North West Province continue to experience grave poverty.

The study is embedded in a theoretical framework of Feminist theories, *viz*. Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory. The Feminist theories explicate the oppression, inequality, patriarchy, socio-cultural barriers, and intersectional challenges experienced by women and how these relate to poverty among women. In addition, the theoretical framework guiding the study includes Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; and Individualistic Theory. These three theories respectively clarify social barriers, systemic impediments and individual deficiencies that intensify poverty. In addition, a statutory and regulatory framework of international, continental, regional and national legislation and policies, aimed at poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women were reviewed. Furthermore, socio-economic factors and causes that contribute to the poverty levels of women in the North West Province were considered, including, but not limited to challenges such as unpaid domestic responsibilities, household income, educational opportunities, poor healthcare services, housing variables, inadequate access to basic amenities, economic opportunities, and spatial challenges unique to rural areas.

The study adopted a constructivist ontology, an interpretivist epistemology and a qualitative research approach. For the empirical investigation, semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with the Senior Management Service (SMS) members form the following provincial departments: Social Development; Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development; and Local Government and Human Settlements.

The results revealed that socio-economic factors influence women by exposing them to a multi-dimensionality of poverty. It was further discovered that the most significant factors that restrict the empowerment of women and sustain poverty among women are the lack of education, illiteracy and a lack of skills; unemployment; lack of opportunities; household responsibilities; gender discrimination; lack of financial power; the spatial segregation of rural areas; substance abuse; and a high rate of childbearing. Education emerged as a key factor to poverty among women, particularly to women in rural areas whose living conditions exacerbate challenges to educational opportunities. Moreover, the empirical investigation revealed that, despite considerable legislation, policies, mechanisms and programmes, aimed at poverty alleviation among women and the empowerment of women, the lack of a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province further compounds the problem. Subsequently, this study developed a conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province to facilitate the implementation of the legislation and policies pertaining to poverty alleviation. The policy implementation framework advocates for the involvement of women living in poverty in the implementation of poverty alleviation efforts. The policy implementation framework identifies barriers and provides solutions to the effective and efficient implementation of policy alleviation programmes for women in the North West Province, particularly for those in the RLM and the GTLM.

KEY WORDS: Empowerment; feminism; North West Province; policy implementation framework; poverty; poverty alleviation; rural areas; socio-economic; women.

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LIST OF ACRONYMNS

ACT	Agriculture, Culture & Tourism
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
BBBEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CNDC	Community Nutrition and Development/Distribution Centres
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DSD	Department of Social Development
DR RSMD	Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District
ECD	Early Childhood Development Centres
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
EU	European Union
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GED	Gender and Development
GTLM	Greater Taung Local Municipality
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MDG	Millennium Developmental Goals
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NASASA	National Stokvel Association of South Africa
NASREC	National Recreation Centre
NCA	National Credit Act

NDA	National Development Agency
NDP	National Development Plan
NIDA	National Institute of Drug Abuse
NMMD	Ngaka Modiri Moleme District
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NSTF	National Science and Technology Forum
NWP	North West Province
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PEPUDA	Promotion of Equality and discrimination Act
PAJA	Promotion of Administrative Justice Act
RDP	The Reconstruction and Development Programme
READ	Rural, Environment and Agriculture Development
RHR	Reconciliation, Healing and Renewal
RLM	Ratlou Local Municipality
RRR	Rebranding, Repositioning and Renewing
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASSA	South African Social Security
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAHR	South African Human Rights Commission
SAWIC	South African Women in Construction
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	Senior Management Service
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SRD	Social Relief of Distress
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNRIC	*United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe*
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency International Development
VTSD	Village, Township and Small Dorpie

WARD	Women in Agriculture Rural Development
WID	Women in Development
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

Images of poverty captured by journalists mostly bear the face of a woman in emotional and physical distress, portraying anguish and hurt. It depicts the under-resourced caregivers of a household who care for the wellbeing and upbringing of their children, irrespective of social and economic circumstances as the face of poverty.

Poverty is a global phenomenon that affects everyone but thrives mostly in areas that are disadvantaged and is characterised by socio-economic deprivation (SAHRC and UNICEF, 2014:37; Midgley, 2021:9). Moreover, research has revealed that women experience poverty more acutely than men (Bennett & Daly, 2014:9; Mbano-Mweso, 2014:3; United Nations, 2015:2; Chant, 2016:59; O'Donnell, Buvinić, Bourgault & Webster, 2021:8; United Nations Women, 2018:2; United Nations Women, 2022), but especially women in developing countries carry the burden of poverty to a greater extent than those in developed nations (London Poverty Research Centre, 2016:1; Mhlanga, 2021:5; Ranasinghe & Herath, 2021:2).

The majority of poor people in the world reside in rural areas that are characterised by a lack of basic amenities (Munoz Boudet, Buitrago, Leroy De La Briere, Newhouse, Rubiano Matulevich, Scott & Suarez-Becerra, 2018:10; Kosec & Wantchekon, 2020:1), with 32% of South African citizens living in rural areas according to the World Bank (2020), and the majority of the poor residing in the rural areas (Meyer, 2016:140; Stats SA, 2016a[1]; Bila & Biyase, 2022:3). The rural areas in South Africa are predominantly populated by black people due to several rural areas formerly being part of the homelands (Hajdu, Neves & Granlund, 2020:744).

[1] On 26 March 2020 the President pronounced a country-wide lockdown that was necessitated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, Statistics South Africa was derailed from their five-year schedule of collecting and publicising the country's official and reliable statistics. Thus, Living Conditions of Households in South Africa, 2014/2015 (published in 2016) is the most recently released statistics by Statistics South Africa and was utilised for this study.

The North West Province, the locus of this study, exhibits the third highest rate of poverty in the country with a subjective poverty level of 41.5% (Stats SA, 2018a:22). Although the North West Province experienced a decrease in poverty levels from 9.2% in 2011 to 8.8% in 2016, the poverty in the province remains high compared to other provinces (Stats SA, 2016a:14). For example, in Gauteng, the poverty rate is 4.6% and in the Western Cape 2.7 % (Stats SA, 2016b:2; 6). The Northern Cape Province, the second poorest province in the country, has a poverty rate of 7.7% (Stats SA, 2016b:6). It is therefore evident that the poverty rate in the North West Province is comparatively high.

The reality regarding poverty, especially poverty among women, necessitates continuous research, legislation and policies that are geared towards poverty alleviation. Several studies focused on the socio-economic factors that exacerbate the poverty experienced by women (Sekhambu, 2012; Flatø, Mattarak & Pelser, 2017; Nyathi, 2018: 16; Boyi, 2019:155; Melo, 2019:73; Sharaunga & Mudhara, 2020; Nyawo, 2022). Although this study also focuses on these factors, it is not limited to the relation between socio-economic factors and poverty among women. Viewed from a feministic perspective, the phenomenon of poverty concerns a focus of identifying and confirming the factors that perpetuate gendered poverty. Therefore, this study considers socio-economic factors and poverty among women in the context of: (1) Feminist theories, emphasising the practices of traditional stereotyping and patriarchy that reduce women into the owners of domestic duties at the expense of forgoing personal development, self-realisation and educational or empowerment opportunities; (2) the existing international, continental, regional, and national statutory and regulatory framework; and (3) the experiences of women who live in poverty in the rural areas of the North West Province, as articulated by the Senior Management Service (SMS) members that are involved in poverty alleviation endeavours in the North West Province and who participated in the study.

The study is embedded in a theoretical framework of Feminist theories, *viz*. Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory. In addition, the theoretical framework guiding the study includes Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; and Individualistic Theory. The Feminist theories explicate the oppression, inequality, patriarchy, socio-cultural barriers, and

intersectional challenges experienced by women and how these relate to poverty among women (Effiong & Inyang, s.a:12-13; Jackson & Jones, 1998:12; Davis & Brown, 2017:3; Enyew & Mihrete, 2018:60; Ellehleh, 2019:2817; Armstrong, 2020:4-5; Brewer, 2020:92). Social Exclusion Theory focuses on social barriers that marginalise people, often resulting in poverty (Figueroa, 2018:10); Structural Theory clarifies the system that denies opportunities for some to move out of poverty (Brady, 2006:154); and Individualistic Theory acknowledges that poverty is caused by individual deficiencies and the lack of a concerted effort to overcome poverty (Kura *et al.*, 2020:49). The theories provided a rationale to the phenomenon of poverty, especially as experienced by women.

No study within the ambit of the discipline and practice of P(p)ublic A(a)dministration can be conducted without consideration of the statutory and regulatory framework that guides the South African society. It is, however, also necessary to observe international statutory and regulatory frameworks of organisations to which South Africa is a signatory. In this respect, South Africa, as a member state of international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), continental organisations, for instance the African Union (AU), and regional organisations, for example, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has a duty to implement the legislation and policies of these organisations to achieve its objectives, including poverty alleviation, particularly for women. Although member states of these organisations are compelled to comply with the legislation and policies of these organisations, the international, continental, and regional statutory and regulatory frameworks do not exonerate member states from establishing their own legislation and policies to alleviate poverty. At the national level South Africa utilises the binding directives of the UN, the AU and the SADC to formulate its own legislation and policies to address poverty and empower women. South Africa thereby demonstrates its commitment to the UN's legislation and policies by aligning the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision for 2030 (RSA, 2011), hereafter referred to as the NDP (RSA, 2011) with the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs), 2015 (RSA, 2019:24; African Union, 2020:120).

At the national level, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution, 1996) is the supreme law of the country. Several sections in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996) enshrine human

rights relevant to women and factors that affect the poverty alleviation of women (RSA, 1996:12-16):

- Section 9 – Equality: no citizen may be discriminated against based on gender. It is argued that equality is not obtained if poverty is more intensely experienced by women than by men.
- Section 10 – Human dignity: all citizens have their dignity and the right to their dignity respected and protected. It is argued that poverty deprive people of their dignity.
- Section 24 – Environment: all citizens have the right to an environment that is not harmful to their wellbeing. It is argued that the socio-economic circumstances and environment of poor citizens in rural areas do not provide for their wellbeing.
- Section 25 (5) – Property: the state is mandated to implement systems to ensure fair access to land. It is against this backdrop that no women should be deprived of property.
- Section 26 – Housing: all citizens have the right to have access to adequate housing, including women.
- Section 27 (b) – Healthcare, food, water, and social security: water and food are basic needs that citizens must have access to. The high poverty level among women, and the subsequent lack of access to basic amenities, revealed the difficulty the government is facing to deliver on this mandate as specified in the Constitution, 1996.
- Section 29 – Education: all citizens have the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, including women, especially women residing in rural areas who are often deprived of this opportunity due to, for instance, household responsibilities.

Failure to realise the human rights relate to the typical challenges faced by women in rural areas. For instance, inequality; inadequate access to health; limited opportunities to education; and unemployment are globally experienced by women residing in rural areas (Burger & Von Fintel, 2014:36; SAHRC and UNICEF, 2014:37; Darin-Mattsson, Fors & Kåreholt*.,* 2017:2; Niessen, Mohan, Akuoku, Mirelman, Ahmed, Koehlmoos, Trujillo, Khan & Peters 2018:1; RSA, 2021d:13).

In addition to the Constitution, 1996, ancillary legislation and policies aimed at poverty alleviation have been promulgated by the South African government, for instance, the NDP (RSA, 2011); Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000; Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000; Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act 46 of 2013; and Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013. The most notable of these policies is the NDP (RSA, 2011), the government's leading socio-economic policy. The NDP (RSA, 2011) highlights the need for significant economic growth (approximately 6%) to reduce poverty (RSA, 2011:14). Furthermore, the NDP (RSA, 2011) acknowledges that poverty levels are still ubiquitous, and that measly progress has been made in terms of inequality since 1994 (RSA, 2011:1). In the 2018 and 2022 State of the Nation Addresses the President confirmed the existence of gender and race related poverty that entrenches inequality (Ramaphosa, 2018a:4; Ramaphosa, 2022:2). Further to this, the relation between poverty and unemployment is also recognised in the NDP (RSA, 2011:1).

Based on the above context, the study focuses on the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, particularly women who reside in the rural areas. The locus of the study is further localised to the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality, both categorised as B4 municipalities and located in rural areas and regarded as some of the poorest municipalities in the North West Province.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon affecting the social, economic, cultural and psychological aspects of people (Danaan, 2018:28; Gunartha & Utama, 2020:334; Laparra, Mutilva & Lautre, 2021:639; UNICEF, 2021:20). Thus, poverty alleviation for women needs a multi-pronged approach that should be implemented simultaneously, addressing for instance, financial challenges that are systematically coupled with, for example, education and skills development (Durrani, Halai, Kadiwal, Rajput, Novelli, & Sayed, 2017:14; Watson, Whelan, Maître and Williams, 2017:386; Khandker & Samad, 2017:27; Kolawole, 2021:162 ;Wei, Sarker, Żukiewicz-Sobczak, Roy, Alam, Rabbany, Hossain & Aziz, 2021:14). The significance of education is emphasised in

this thesis since access to education is among the universal poverty alleviation tools that could empower women socially and economically (Doroba, 2018; Munoz *et al.,* 2018:33; Tagar, Abro, ChandaniKhoso & Sohoo*,* 2019:96; Zhang, 2020:1; Wei *et al.,* 2021:14). The lack of access to education is further compounded by the lack of political and economic participation of women (Ai & Liu, 2019:216). Furthermore, women are generally not part of the decision-making processes to address poverty; thereby, further establishing them as a marginalised section of the population (Women for Women, 2020:6).

Sections of the North West Province formed part of Bophuthatswana, one of the former TBVC states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei) (Maditsi, 2018:26), established under the Black Homeland Citizen Act 26 of 1970 by the former apartheid government (Maditsi, 2018:26). The homelands lacked basic amenities (Becker, 2017:30; Alexander, 2018:4) and sustained negative socio-economic factors (Sewell & Desai, 2016:17). Thus, it is not surprising to find that poverty continue to be exacerbated by socio-economic factors in the North West Province. According to Quarter 1 of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (RSA, 2021d:13), the North West Province's unemployment rate amounts to 32.2 %, and the South African poverty trends reveal that 64.3% of citizens in the North West Province live below the poverty line (Stats SA, 2017a:64).

Socially, women are expected to maintain cultures and traditions that have been ancient practises and, in the process, lose numerous economic opportunities to meet their basic needs (Segalo, 2015:75; Raselekoane, Morwe & Mulaudzi, 2017:10514). Furthermore, some of the challenges faced by women are preserved by gender-based discrimination, for instance, the collection of water from far afield as their responsibility; failure to access schools and health facilities that are distant from their residences and living without electricity (Women, UN, 2018:2-4). These basic needs (e.g., water and electricity) constitute part of the local municipalities' service delivery mandates (Mkhatshwa-Ngwenya & Khumalo, 2020:268), while failure to deliver these services promotes poverty (Stats SA, 2011a:191).

In addition to the aforementioned socio-economic challenges, a total of 229 544 households in the North West Province live in informal dwellings (Stats SA, 2016d:42).

Public health facilities located in rural areas receive allowances and incentives to attract doctors to deliver the needed health services in the poverty-stricken rural areas that lack proper infrastructure (Stats SA, 2016d:42). The allowances paid to doctors are, however, not effective since most of these facilities remain under-staffed and under-resourced (Stats SA, 2016d:42). Furthermore, the North West Province operates below the national average of household income (R138 168 per annum) and has the second lowest household income nationally with an average of R64 177 per annum. With additional income (e.g., social grants), the average household income amounts to R89 926 (Stats SA 2016a:16), still significantly below the national average. Moreover, certain households depend on social security grants as their sole household income that benefits the recipients and the entire family (Mathebula, Molokomme, Jonas & Nhemachena, 2017:9; Chipfupa & Wale, 2020:10). Additionally, the unemployment rate among women in South Africa is 28.8% compared to 25.1% for men. The unemployment rate of black women specifically comprises 32.6% of the entire national unemployment rate, the highest of any group in the country (Stats SA, 2018c: 25).

The NDP (RSA, 2011) is one of the strategies utilised by the government to address poverty presented by socio-economic circumstances such as those revealed above. Regrettably, the NDP's efforts do not match the results, since the majority of the South African citizenry lives in poverty (Stats SA, 2017a:14). As articulated in Section 1.1, women experience poverty more acutely than men (Bennett & Daly, 2014:9; Mbano-Mweso, 2014:3; United Nations, 2015:2; Chant, 2016:59; O'Donnell *et al.*, 2021:8; United Nations Women, 2018:2; United Nations Women, 2022). The intensity of poverty among women is especially the case in developing countries and more so in rural areas (Mhlanga, 2021:5).

In consideration of the aforementioned, the problem that this study investigates is: Despite an array of international, continental, regional and national attempts made towards the alleviation of poverty among women; the myriad of legislation and policies formulated for the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women; and several mechanisms and programmes developed for this purpose, women in the rural areas of the North West Province continue to experience grave poverty. This study therefore develops a conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of

women in the North West Province to give effect to the legislation, policies, mechanisms, and programmes drafted for this purpose.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1.3.1. General research question

In consideration of the primary focus of the study and to investigate the research problem, the following general research question is guiding the study:

- What should a conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province constitute?

1.3.2. Specific research questions

To answer the general research question, the following specific research questions are guiding the study:

- What is the theoretical framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women?
- What are the international, continental, regional and national statutory and regulatory frameworks that promote poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women?
- What are the socio-economic factors and causes that contribute to the poverty levels of women in the North West Province?
- Which recommendations can be made for the implementation of a policy framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province?

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1.4.1. General research objective

In consideration of the primary focus of the study, to investigate the research problem, and to answer the research questions, the following general research objective is guiding the study:

- To develop a conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

1.4.2. Specific research objectives

To achieve the general research objective, the following specific research objectives are guiding the study:

- to establish the theoretical framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women;
- to establish the international, continental, regional, and national statutory and regulatory frameworks that promote poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women;
- to determine the socio-economic factors and causes that contribute to the poverty levels of women in the North West Province; and
- to make recommendations for the implementation of a policy framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

1.5. CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS

The following theoretical arguments guide the study:

- **Poverty and socio-economic circumstances**

Inequality and the lack of material and non-material resources contribute to poverty (Rodgers, 2022:1). Furthermore, according to Rodgers (2021:1), “poverty is often understood in absolute terms, but is better viewed as failure to reach some minimum standard of living”. Teshome and Nana (2014:118); and Wijekoon, Sabri and Paim

(2021:5) state that poverty is multi-dimensional and should therefore not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all concept. Instead, the definition of poverty should be at the individual level of the community, but also at the national level (Teshome and Nana, 2014:118). The confusion about the definition of poverty is related to questioning who has the rightful claim over the definition – whether the definition resides with the experts or people living and experiencing poverty (Richmond, 2007:28; Addae-Korankye, 2014:149). Osinski (2021:22) argues that the true experts in defining poverty are the poor. Thus, the different perspectives used when considering poverty preclude a universally accepted definition (Ashaver, 2013:33). Mangayi (2014:215); and Arifuzzaman, Rafee and Islam (2021:10) perceive poverty as a complex phenomenon. Additionally, Khumalo (2013:5644); Mautjana and Makombe (2018:21); and Mhlanga (2021:4) posit that poverty comprises various facets. Poverty means different things to different people (Ajuruchukwu & Sanelise, 2016:522). As Lister (2004:12) puts it, "there is no single 'correct' definition" and must be understood in context. This notion is supported by Prastyanti, Subejo and Sulhan (2018:125). Therefore, different definitions give the concept context as and when a need arises (Mubangizi, 2021:241).

In the context of poverty's multi-dimensional nature, people experience various forms of deprivation at the same time (Aguilar & Sumner, 2020:2). Therefore, not only one, but two perspectives should be used to analyse poverty: firstly, poverty can be analysed at the national level; and secondly, at the individual level with the community playing a central role (Teshome & Nana, 2014:118). According to Kehler (2001:41), the measurement of poverty can be viewed twofold, namely subjectively and objectively. The latter bases its measurement on income levels, consumption levels, and housing standards, whilst the first considers attitudes, needs and the perception of social conditions (Baldini, Gallo & Torricelli, 2017:10; Ilkkaracan, Kim, Masterson, Memiş & Zacharias, 2021:10)

It might be that the definition of poverty is relative since both the experts and those exposed to it define acceptable standards of living according to their understanding. However, it can be agreed that informal settlement environments depict a true reflection of poverty with poor housing and a lack of basic services (Frankenhuis & Nettle 2019:17). Triegaardt (2006:2); and Folarin (2021:3) agree that poverty is characterised by the sight of shacks, poor infrastructure, unemployment, and a lack of

basic services such as water. Furthermore, Triegaardt (2006:2) divides poverty into three categories: (1) absolute poverty, where people fail to meet the basic needs of life such as a home; (2) moderate poverty, referring to cases where people meet basic needs but with a struggle; and lastly, (3) relative poverty that is described as earning an income below the average national income (RSA, 2011:4). Further to this, Triegaardt (2006:2) refers to relative poverty as subjective poverty due to the belief that people maintain what constitute poverty. In addition, Grgurić (2019:4) refer to poverty as social construct outcomes that can be alleviated by ensuring a fair distribution of resources.

For this study, the definition of Mansur, Bagul, Yusof, Liew-Tsonis, Husin, Mail and Ramlan (2017:43) on poverty is accepted, stating that poverty is an adverse monetary and non-monetary situation or experience that undermines people's human rights by denying them access to economic and social activities to experience a normal standard of living. Poverty deprives citizens of their constitutional and socio-economic rights to quality food, water, healthcare, education, housing, and an environment that is not harmful to their health and wellbeing (RSA, 1996:1245-1257). Evidence shows that poverty thrives in an area that is characterised by socio-economic deprivation (SAHRC and UNICEF, 2014:37; Majumdar & Chatterjee, 2020:10). According to Cheteni, Khamfula and Mah (2019:17), women are classified as a vulnerable or disadvantaged group and therefore often prevented from accessing socio-economic benefits that relieve people from the hardship of poverty. In practise, women typically have their primary focus on the suffering of their children who are dependent on them for their livelihood and places the secondary focus on their own suffering (UN, 2015:2; Chant, 2016:59).

Independent research conducted by Goldblatt (2003:446); Bowers and Du Toit (2016:1); and Boateng (2020:80) found that, due to the status of the marginalised groups (such as women), they find it difficult to benefit from legal rights or enforce them. Therefore, marginalised groups suffer the most in a situation that has a high level of inequality (Chakrabarty & Bass, 2014:533; Mubangizi, 2021:245). Particularly black women in rural areas experience poverty more severely due to the lack of resources and prospects of a better life (Kehler, 2001:41; Cornwell, 2004:53; Khumalo, 2013:5646; Mukaila, Falola, Akanbi, Aboaba & Obetta, 2022:35). Societal

expectations further complicate their level of poverty since they are expected to conduct household chores that are unremunerated and which take precedence over their preferences (RSA, 2015:10; Singh & Pattanaik, 2020:3; Chauhan, 2021:396; Mussida & Patimo, 2021;389; Huls, Sajjad, Kanters, Hakkaart-van Roijen, Brouwer & Van Exel, 2022 :87). However, if given the opportunity to be active participants in the economic space by removing the challenges that hold them back from playing an active role, women would contribute to their own and their country's economic growth (Zvarevashe & Sandada, 2016:10; Olga, Potluri, Gulfiya & Aizhan, 2020:20).

- **The empowerment of women**

Various international, continental, regional, and national legislation, policies and mechanisms have been established to support the empowerment of women. However, implementing legislation poses a complex challenge to states that have committed to putting the legislation into practice (Beneria & Permanyer, 2010:375; UN, 2010:6; Musetsho, Isac & Dobrin, 2021:71; Stiftung, 2022:31). Empowerment forms one of the three pillars of poverty reduction (Ukeje, Ogbulu & Amaefula, 2020:1; Rui & Nie, 2021:1096; Wei *et al.*, 2021:14), with the other two pillars being opportunity and security (Poverty,2000:131). Okoji and Ladeji (2014:6017); and Gunartha and Utama (2020:337) refer to the empowerment of women as the ability of women to manage their own lives. Additionally, Subaiya (2016:3); Apriliani (2019:41); and Rabbani, Zeeshan and Saleem (2015:773) describe the empowerment of women as the process that gives women the ability to make beneficial decisions for their own betterment. It can be argued that without the systematic empowerment of women, they will remain in poverty. Al-Qahtani, Alkhateeb, Mahmood, Abdalla and Qaralleh (2020:11) are of the opinion that the empowerment of women ought to be balanced since attempts to empower women in leadership and decision-making becomes futile if they are disempowered on the effective and efficient utilisation of their income and incapacitated in the knowledge of acquiring productive capital.

Economic justice is founded on three principles: firstly, equal participation without any form of discrimination in the economy; secondly, wages and profit that are fairly distributed; and thirdly, addressing restraints to opportunities to ensure that it does not afford some citizens an unfair advantage that deprives others of opportunities (Kaloga,

2021:6). In this respect, the Constitution, 1996, dictates that all citizens are equal (RSA, 1996:7).

The majority of the government's projects are gender-neutral, such as cash transfers that are instituted to alleviate poverty where both men and women of the same age receive the same amount of grant money (Pienaar, Johnson & Du Plessis, 2018:11; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020:1; DPME, 2021:21). It is argued that the use of gender-neutral language in developing, empowering, and promoting women should be avoided since it is contrary to the empowerment of women, as well as the need for a heightened focus on their poverty alleviation. It is further argued that the government should develop effective programmes to alleviate poverty amongst women and reports must be analysed according to gender to ensure that women are afforded opportunities that would place them on par with their male counterparts to realise equality.

- **Theory and approaches to the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women**

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks explain the relationship between variables and draw conclusions by using prior knowledge from other studies, either by deducing from existing theories or inducing/developing theories from the current knowledge (Ngulube, Mathipa, & Gumbo, 2015:5). Furthermore, a theoretical framework integrates the concepts from relevant theories in support of the study (Varpio, Paradis, Uijtdehaage & Young, 2020:7) and assists researchers to accomplish the objectives of the study (Green, 2014:35; Sabatier, 2019:294). As an illustration, Grant and Osanloo (2014:14 – 15) liken a theoretical framework to a blueprint of a house that present a design according to the architect's specifications: what is needed to build the exterior of the house and how it will look like, and considering that houses have different shapes, but irrespective of their shape, they all provide shelter. The same applies to a framework in research, allowing for a shape to form from various theories, for instance, Feminist theories.

The study adopted a Feminist framework to explain the influence of poverty on women. A thorough understanding of the variables that promotes the poverty among women

forms a fundamental construct in implementing the process of poverty alleviation. The thesis reviews several theories and approaches for the development and empowerment of women:

- ***Social Exclusion Theory*** posits that established barriers marginalise and exclude people from social activities that other people enjoy (Figueroa, 2018:10). It is regarded as the best theory to explain poverty since it covers poverty in its totality and explains its forms, causes and effects (Sameti, Esfahani & Haghighi, 2012:46).
- ***Structural Theory*** predicts that there is a correlation between the life of people who struggle and the system that denies them the opportunity to escape poverty and to take charge of their lives (Brady, 2006:154).
- ***Individualistic Theory*** acknowledges that poverty is caused by individual deficiencies and the lack of a concerted effort to overcome poverty (Kura, Viswanathan & Ishak, 2020:49).
- ***Feminist Theory*** is grounded in the liberation of women from oppression, dominated by patriarchy and characterised by gender, race and class (Ellehleh, 2019:2817). *Radical Feminist Theory* as a branch of Feminism is defined by its focus to discard oppressive behaviour experienced by women and allow them to enjoy justice in all their social dealings without an intent to destroy men (Effiong & Inyang, s.a:12-13). *Liberal Feminist Theory* primarily focuses on gender equality and the gratification of equal rights such as education and employment benefits, irrespective of biological differences (Enyew & Mihrete, 2018:60). *Social Feminist Theory* uses a social lens to identify the lack of equality between men and women in social and economic reproduction (Jackson & Jones, 1998:12; Armstrong, 2020:4-5), while *Black Feminist Theory* aims to understand the nature of the inequality of Black women's intersectional challenges and focus on gender inequality, such as other Feminist theories, but is further compounded by race (Davis & Brown, 2017:3; Brewer, 2020:92).

The theories are reviewed in detail in Chapter 2. Through the review of the Feminist theories presented above, this study demonstrates the relationship between poverty and women. The theories in which the study is embedded are premised on injustices and inequalities experienced by women, with a view to find solutions to enhance the

poverty alleviation of women, specifically those residing in the rural areas of the North West Province.

- ***Policy and a policy implementation framework***

Policy as a statement of request is preceded by the identification of problems experienced by citizens who have an interest in, and influence on development through change (John, 2013:11; RSA, 2020d:9). Since public policies are developed to address the identified problems that hamper progress or the improvement of the community, they are goal oriented (Sanchawa, 2015:17; Hoeyi & Makgari, 2021:1). Thus, policy is an encompassing statement that directs how to achieve the set goals, as well as the inspiration encapsulated in the statement (RSA, 2020:8). Policy decisions are not stagnant, but ever-changing (Gilliat, 1984:345; Patrick & Julia, 2017:28) and it can therefore be argued that set goals have targets and once achieved, the policy should be revisited for relevancy.

Policy can also be explained as a course of action, used to achieve the anticipated objective for the masses of the citizenry (Tummers, 2019:925). Abas (2019:1) and FitzGerald, O'Malley and Broin (2019:3) posit that policy is giving direction to what is expected to be done; and consequently, initiated and authorised by the government. Furthermore, policy directs resource allocation for the activities that have been identified as priorities through the political and ideological decision-makers who are the primary actors of policy development that should ensure the inclusion of interest groups affected by the matter (FitzGerald, O'Malley & Broin, 2019:7; RSA, 2020d:9).

It is important to regard policies as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself with inclusivity pivoting on its development and implementation (Masango & Mfene, 2015:626). The best course of action in policymaking is to encapsulate relevant challenges (Ajulor, 2018:1513) and attempt to find a common ground between the economic and social issues, whilst working within the framework of continuous human development (Gumede, 2008:20). Ferretti, Pluchinotta and Tsoukiàs (2019:4) state that a policy is a process directed to a purpose of addressing an identified problem or an opportunity. Sanchawa (2015:7) outlines the policy elements as follows:

- intentions and purpose of the government's action;
- government goals;
- plans or proposals as means for achieving goals;
- programmes as authorised means the pursuance of goals;
- decisions or choices to set goals, develop plans, and implement and evaluate programmes; and
- the effect that programmes have on society whether intended or unintended.

In consideration of the policy implementation framework to alleviate the poverty of women in the North West Province, developed in this study, it is necessary to clarify the meaning and intention of a policy implementation framework. A framework is a path towards realising the outcome (UN, 2017:51; McKillop, Shaw, Sheridan, Gray, Carswell, Wodchis and Kenealy, 2017:7). Grant and Osanloo (2014:12); and Mehta (2014:5) perceive a framework as a guide that is people-centred and based on tested constructs intending to address the identified set of objectives.

According to the definition provided by Dictionaries (2018:1), implementation is putting a plan in motion to achieve set objectives. The framework as explained in the above-mentioned paragraph is a guide towards achieving the outcome. Consequently, the implementation framework goal is to realise both the set objective and the outcome. Hirsch (2017:1) claims that an implementation framework seeks to initiate a systematic change to a problem that has been identified. Meyers, Durlak and Wandersman (2012:4); and Albers, Mildon, Lyon and Shlonsky (2017:100) explain that the implementation framework process constitutes a direction that explains the processes, procedures, responsibilities, and resources for implementing a designed plan to realise desired results intended to address the concerns of the end users. Additionally, implementation takes into cognisance the relevant construct that forms part of the framework coupled with both the relevant internal and external factors in the process (Moullin, Sabater-Hernández, Fernandez-Llimos & Benrimoj, 2015:9; Sidney, 2017:51). It is important to have comprehensive knowledge and an understanding of the contributors to the phenomenon prior to the development of the implementation framework (Nilsen, 2015:5).

In view of the framework explanation above and the explanation by Birkland (2015:8), that policy is a consulted and agreed-upon direction between the government and its citizens designed to address an identified problem, Ward, Bagley, Lumby, Hamilton, Woods and Roberts (2016:43) maintain that policy consist of a dual responsibility namely that of solving problems and attracting external stakeholders to form part of the process and identify with the same believes. Therefore, according to a definition provided by Black's Law Dictionary (2022:1), a policy framework is “the set of guidelines, as well as long-term goals which are taken into account when policies are being made”. Policy formulation is a precursor to policy implementation since the initial reasons that necessitated the policy formulation must be satisfied through the implementation process (Masango & Mfene, 2015:626; Sidney, 2017:43; Hutahaean, Manalu & Pasaribu, 2020:396).

In addition to a focus on the implementation of the goals set in a particular policy (as explained above), a conceptual policy framework is also utilised to demonstrate the relationship between numerous aspects identified in the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed to validate the study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016:8). In the case of this study, the results obtained through the empirical investigation was also considered in the development of the conceptual policy implementation framework.

The conceptual policy implementation framework developed in this study is focused on the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, and indirectly, the empowerment of women. The study argues that women should play a critical role in their poverty alleviation and a central role in the empowerment of fellow women. It is further argued that an active role by women in all the policy processes, including its implementation, will give the direction needed to realise the collective benefit of the policy. For policy to be effectively implemented, it needs a cooperative effort from its inception, with everyone affected taking part in its design and agreeing on its implementation (Gumede, 2017:4; Holmes, 2021:11).The inclusion of citizens in the policy-making processes supports a government in realising their responsibilities towards its people since government responsibility is not directed towards doing things for the community **(**Mothepu, Van Jaarsveldt and Lekonyane, 2015:903; Lendel, 2019:32; Lember, Randma-Liiv & Vooglaid, 2022:1), but partnering with them to allow

them the opportunity of getting involved in addressing their own challenges, as stipulated in the NDP (RSA, 2011).

Notably, to ensure that proper financial management is not the sole responsibility of the government officials, and also to uphold and maintain the effective and efficient implementation of government programmes (RSA,1999:1; Phago, 2015:712), the policy implementation framework should guide both the government officials and target audience (women residing in the rural areas of the North West Province) to ensure the effective implementation of poverty alleviation programmes for women as designed from relevant policies.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a strategy that a researcher uses to ensure the success of a study through identifying the challenges and problems as issues that need proper attention to avoid derailing the study (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015:3; Bulmer, 2017:27). Al-Ababneh (2020:90) clarifies the difference between research *methodology* and research *methods* by explaining that *research methods* are tools that a researcher use to collect data for the study, such as a questionnaire or interview. *Research methodology* refers to the scientific decision to use, for instance, quantitative or qualitative methods and procedures to systematically resolve a research problem to achieve the set objectives (Shirish, 2013:6; Al-Ababneh, 2020:90;). The definition of research methodology is confirmed by Firdausm, Zulfadilla and Caniago (2021:1), stating that research methodology consists of combined methods and appropriate approaches to achieve the envisaged objectives of a study. All research methodologies have their advantages and disadvantages; however, a researcher should decide on the methodology that would best serve the study's objectives (Dawson, 2002:15; Bulmer, 2017: 29; Nayak & Singh, 2021:1).

1.6.1. Research approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is focused on studying *how* a set of laws and policies are implemented as opposed to quantitative research that focuses on outcome measures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:582; Harvey,

2021:7). Orcher (2014:56); and Tracy (2019:133) emphasise that qualitative research is based on an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and therefore not restricted to a standardised approach. In qualitative research, the collection of data could be used to address new and anticipated problems, whilst with quantitative research the data collected from the sample of the population is used for generalisation (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015:3; Ahmad, Wasim, Irfan, Gogoi, Srivastava & Farheen, 2019:4; Fushimi, 2021:5).

Qualitative research also places emphasis on *why* a phenomenon occurs and studies the related components such as the process, causes, and social relationships associated with a phenomenon (Dworkin, 2012:1319; Williams & Moser, 2019:45; Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020:1). Not only one aspect influences qualitative research, but several issues are of concern, for instance, each individual researcher holds a particular view of reality, clarifying the purpose of the world and their specific role in the world, known as their ontological perspective, the nature of the knowledge and its access thereof (epistemology), and the participants' diversity, beliefs, experiences, and knowledge (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014:2; Mohajan, 2018:7). In contemplating the social reality, this study adopted a constructivist ontology. Constructivism subscribes to the supposition that research focuses on the construction of meanings, emerging from people's interaction with the world (Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016:2). Constructivists reject the notion of the world as an objective reality by ascribing value to the perceptions and actions of social role-players to create social phenomena (Adom *et al*., 2016:3). Thus, as opposed to believing in absolute truths as the only way to obtain knowledge, constructivists hold the view that meanings do not exist before a mind engages them.

Bearing in mind the constructivist approach adopted in this study, the research, through a rigorous theoretical analysis, explored the multi-dimensional nature of poverty as social reality. It is argued that poverty cannot be objectively viewed from a single perspective. Thus, value was be placed on the differing views on poverty held by social role-players (individuals, communities and policy makers). These views were analysed and interpreted to construct meaning to poverty in the context of the broader South African society and in particular, the North West Province.

Since constructivism aligns with an interpretivist epistemology, the objectivist view that knowledge emerges from the senses alone (Adom *et al*., 2016:3) was rejected. Interpretivism is a philosophical approach that explains the social activities of the world through the knowledge submitted by the people daily experiencing certain occurrences (Bush, Singh & Kooienga, 2019:4). In support of this view, Thanh and Thanh (2014:24); and Frechette, Bitzas, Aubry, Kilpatrick and Lavoie-Tremblay (2020:11) state that conclusions in interpretivist research are based on the information gathered from the participants, explaining their background and own experiences; thus, giving credence that the researcher's views of the world is through the participants' eyes. Furthermore, the interpretive approach allows the researcher to present their own interpretations as well (Reiners, 2012:2; Collins & Stockton, 2018:9).

Interpretive research is therefore subjective since it reflects on "soft" data such as experiences, perceptions, opinions, values, meanings, and beliefs"; things that are not directly accessible or sometimes not even evident on the surface (Richards & Morse, 2013:42). Thus, Reiners (2012:2); and Qutoshi (2018:215) denote that interpretivism seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon. Interpretive research uses the common human experience as its base and concerns itself with the individuals' separate experiences of the same occurrence (Thorne, 2008:74; Pulla & Carter, 2018;13). As alluded to in Section 1.4 above, poverty is multi-dimensional (Wijekoon*, et al*., 2021:5*)* and is differently experienced by people. The different views on the same phenomenon, as well as the various definitions found on poverty (due to varying experiences and perspectives), makes interpretive research appropriate to this study. The study interpreted and integrated the personal perspectives, opinions, attitudes, insights and experiences of the role-players in the social environment in the quest to ascribe meaning to *poverty* as phenomenon in the North West Province.

Qualitative research is descriptive in nature (Tomaszewski, Zarestky & Gonzalez, 2020:4). The participants' description of experiences and views are solicited through, for example, interviews (Tomaszewski *et al*., 2020:4). Through a qualitative research approach, the participants in this study shared their experiences, views, and knowledge on poverty of women in the North West Province; their potential poverty alleviation; the socio-economic challenges experienced by women, especially those residing in rural areas; the related legislation and policies and the implementation

thereof; and the potential empowerment of women. The data collected from the participants benefitted the study in understanding how poverty affects women. The collected data also assisted in the development of a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

In addition to the results obtained through the empirical investigation, the researcher also considered the theories, legislation and policies pertaining to poverty, poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women in the development of the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. These were also interpreted by the researcher. Since interpretive research is subjective, the researcher explored and analysed the participant's experiences, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs on poverty and the poverty alleviation of women. Allowing the participants to express their views freely and comfortably may allowed for insights that may not have emerged otherwise.

Based on the qualitative research approach followed in the study, the phenomenon of poverty was investigated in-depth and considered *why* and *how* poverty occurs; how it materialises in the lives of women; and which socio-economic challenges are experienced by women and how these contribute to their poverty.

1.6.2. Literature review

Any research must start with an analysis of available relevant scholarly literature (Parajuli, 2020:100). Mouton (2008:86); and Mertens (2010:90) identify a literature study as the first stage of any research endeavour. According to Prastyanti *et al.* (2018:125); Xiao and Watson (2019:93), the process of reviewing existing literature ensures that important information on the subject under investigation is retrieved, analysed, and described in a scientific manner. The researcher should review the existing scholarly literature to obtain the most recent reliable sources of information on which to build new research (Mouton, 2008:86; Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016:18; Quan-Hoang, Anh-Vinh, Viet-Phuong, Phuong-Hanh & Manh-Toan, 2020:7). The researcher establishes general knowledge and an understanding of fundamental concepts regarding their own study through the literature review (Snyder, 2019:339). Reviewing scholarly literature requires the ability to undertake

multiple tasks, from finding and evaluating relevant material to synthesising information from various sources and to analyse the information that has been gathered (Brendel, Trang, Marrone, Lichtenberg & Kolbe, 2020:2).

After the analysis of the information gathered during a literature study, the findings should be interpreted to attach significance and meaning to it (Popenoe, Langius-Eklöf, Stenwall & Jervaeus 2021:175). This gives a researcher a general sense of what the sources produced and explains the phenomenon under discussion (Van der Waldt, 2020:1). The process entails the identification of repeating ideas expressed by different authors and interpreting these ideas to report it to a specific audience (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004:1). When themes and categories have been identified and data have been analysed in a rich and exhaustive manner in a scientific dissertation or thesis, it should include the findings, address the results, and make recommendations to address the research problem (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004:1; Snyder, 2019:333). A literature review could be taken as a precursor to the theoretical framework to give meaning to the study with the new construct based on previous knowledge (Randolph, 2009:2; Baker, 2016:265). Furthermore, a literature review acknowledges and gives credence to researchers who came before and contributed to the field (Knopf, 2006:127; Paul & Criado, 2020:3).

An exhaustive literature review has been conducted on the phenomenon of poverty; theories that explicate poverty; the international, continental, regional, and national statutory and regulatory framework on poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women; and the socio-economic causes and factors that influence the poverty levels of women in the North West Province. The following databases and sources were consulted to execute the literature study: Nexus; EBSCO Host; National ETD Portal; Google Scholar; African Journals; JSTOR; Juta; and LexisNexis. In addition, books, scholarly journal articles and conference papers will also be used to gather information for the literature review.

1.6.3. Data collection techniques

Any research is only as good as the information or data that has been collected; thus, choosing the most appropriate data collection technique can make a difference in

achieving the objectives of the research (Syed, 2016:202). In this research, personal semi-structured interviews have been conducted to collect data.

1.6.3.1. Personal semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews comprise a predetermined set of questions but allow for the flexibility of asking follow-up questions that would bring clarity and might pursue an area that the interviewee did not expect or address (Blundell, 2014:24; Showkat & Parveen, 2017:3; Tracy, 2019:133; Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi & Syam, 2022:29). Kayornboon (2005:5); and Syed (2016:212) explain the flexibility of semi-structured interviews, stating that questions can be asked in non-chronological order to accommodate the direction of the discussion. However, the same questions must be used for each interviewee (Edward & Hollard, 2013:29; Stofer, 2019:1; Mannan & Afni, 2020:2). Personal semi-structured interviews involve one person at a time (Turner, 2016). Therefore, using semi-structured interviews will solicit answers through a two-way discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee (Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019:4; Wishkoski, 2020:92). Bengtsson (2016:13); and Ruslin *et al.* (2022:26) support the notion that communication with respondents by interviewing them is used in gathering data and can be done at the place and time that best suit the interviewee (Tan, 2008:51; Ruslin *et al.,* 2022:29). The advantages of semi-structured interviews include that, it is an open session and discussion that allows freedom of expression that links to the theoretical questions (Galletta, 2013:2); the researcher can get clarity on answers since they can ask the interviewee to elaborate on their answers (McIntosh & Morse, 2015:7); the researcher has the control of steering the discussion in the direction of the study's purpose (Brinkmann, 2014:286); the interviews can be conducted in an environment that is relaxed and comfortable to the interviewee (Keller & Conradin, s.a:1); and the interaction is done in real time (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014:9)

Interviews for data collection in qualitative studies give the researcher direct access to information that can be linked to the phenomenon under investigation to be interpreted and compared to the theoretical framework (Bengtsson, 2016:10; Antonellis & Berry, 2017:42; Belina,2022:3). In this study, the personal interviews gathered information from interviewees (SMS members) explaining their understanding and own

experiences on the poverty experienced by women in the North West Province. Thus, giving credence that the researcher views the poverty of women in the North West Province through the eyes of the interviewees (SMS members).

1.6.4. Population and sampling

Population represents a group of people with similar characteristics (Ravikiran, 2023). Pandey and Pandey (2021:41) refer to a population as a targeted group that is in line with all the set characteristics of being heterogeneous with differing elements; or homogenous but possesses the same elements.

The study's total population is seventy-nine (79) senior managers from the North West Provincial Government's SMS with a sample of 15 participants from three provincial departments: Department of Social Development (DSD); Department of Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development (DREAD); and Department of Local Government and Human Settlements (DLGHS).

It is an accepted practise to have a small sample in qualitative research to achieve in-depth knowledge (Sanders, 1982:356; Moser & Korstjens, 2018:10; Shaheen & Pradhan, 2019:270; Morse, 2020:5; Hennink & Kaiser, 2021:8). Malterud, Siersma and Guassora (2016:1); Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young (2018:2); and Staller (2021:7) emphasise that the deep knowledge, which is a strength provided by the participants, augment for the small number of research participants in a qualitative study.

The study used the purposive, non-probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling is directed by the decision made by the researcher regarding who are best suited and relevant for the purpose of the study (Sharma, 2017:751). Through purposive sampling the researcher deliberately targets participants to the study who are familiar with the topic of the research that is undertaken (Orcher, 2014:62). The SMS members from the provincial DSD, DREAD and DLGHS were purposefully selected for the sample since they possess the required knowledge on the poverty levels of women in the North West Province and are involved in the policymaking process. These senior managers are also custodians of the policies and programmes

implemented for the poverty alleviation of women in the Province and in particular those for the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality. Therefore, the uniqueness of their positions, knowledge and experience made them suitable as participants for this study. The population and sample for this study is indicated in Table 1.1 below:

Table1.1: Population and sampling

Department	Senior Managers (Population)	Males	Females	Sample
Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development	23	11	12	5
Social Development	29	19	10	5
Local Government and Human Settlements	27	16	11	5
TOTAL	**79**	**46**	**33**	**15**

(**Source:** Researcher's own)

1.6.5. Data analysis

The study made use of thematic analysis. The interviews with the SMS members were recorded in writing and audio. The data obtained from the interviews was read, re-read, and listened to on several occasions to acquire an in-depth understanding. The data was furthermore subjected to coding and grouped according to identified themes to assist in the thematic analysis of the results. Ongoing analysis was conducted to refine the specifics of each theme before the final analysis commenced. Subsequently, the analysed data was grouped to identify patterns that could support the interpretation and conclusions drawn, as advised by Costa, Breda, Pinho, Bakas and Durão (2016:39); and Herzog, Handke and Hitters (2019:2). Thematic analysis is not depended on the number of responses but focuses on the effect of the themes on the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006:10; Roberts, Dowell & Nie, 2019:1). Furthermore, thematic analysis assists in the establishment of concepts that relate to

the primary variables and the connected phenomena of a study (Alhojailan, 2012:40; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3353). In addition, it is suitable for any size of sample and applicable to any theoretical framework (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:2; Herzog *et al.*, 2019:2).

1.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To collect data, the researcher and sampled participants interact and communicate (Lapan, Quartaroli & Rimer, 2012:19-20). This is an important relationship that should be ethical, based on fairness, and the observation of cultural differences (Lapan *et al*., 2012:19-20). Participants should be treated with respect including an open and transparent selection process to eliminate deception and which affords the participants the right to accept or to refuse participation in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:65).

All the participants were informed of the study purpose, their role in the study, and the expectations of their participation. All the participants completed consent forms and were informed of the consent process before the commencement of the empirical investigation. They were also ensured that their participation in the study is voluntary and that they could withdraw at any given time as participant from the study. The participants were furthermore assured that their privacy, confidentiality and anonymity would be protected and that the information they provided would only be used for research purposes. Furthermore, no third party was involved in the study.

As per the ethical requirements of the Faculty of Humanities, North-West University (NWU), the proposal for the study was submitted to the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC), who approved the ethics application and provided ethical clearance for the study.

1.8. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The empirical investigation was limited to the North West Province and more specifically, the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality. Although it is expected that the results of the study are comparable to other local municipal areas in the North West Province (due to similar socio-economic

circumstances), the results of the study could not be generalised to be representative of all local municipal areas in the country. A further limitation was that the study focused only on the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. Should the study have included a focus on the poverty of men in the province, the results may have varied.

For the data collection, interviews were conducted with SMS members in selected departments of the North West Province. The inclusion of officials at the lower levels as interviewees may have presented different results, since these employees are in direct contact with the communities in the North West Province. However, a strategic approach was followed since the focus of the study is on a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, typically a strategic function. Thus, the inclusion of senior officials as the participants of the study.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges to the data collection. Due to a national lockdown, followed by various levels of lockdowns and restrictions, the personal semi-structured interviews could not be conducted during the initially planned period and had to be postponed.

1.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In spite of the multitude of international, continental, regional, and national legislation, policies, mechanisms and programmes available for the poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women, the prevalence of poverty among women in the North West Province continues unabated, especially for those residing in rural areas. It was therefore inferred (supported by the theoretical framework and the empirical investigation) that the root of the problem is found in the implementation of the legislation, policies, mechanisms, and programmes, rather than the formulation thereof. In this respect, the study's contribution is found in the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province that was developed. The implementation framework will assist in improving the effect of poverty alleviation initiatives for women in the North West Province by readjusting the programmes, methods, and interventions to include women as the primary key driver for the poverty alleviation programmes.

The study furthermore contributes to the scholarly knowledge in the discipline of Public Administration.

1.10. CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters of the study were constructed as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This chapter provided an introduction and background to the study through a delineation of the poverty experienced by women globally, more specifically in developing countries, and particularly in the rural areas of South Africa. Subsequently, the parameters of the study were demarcated and a rationale for the focus on the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province was provided. The chapter furthermore presented the problem statement as the primary focus of the study: Despite an array of international, continental, regional and national attempts made towards the alleviation of poverty among women; the myriad of legislation and policies formulated for the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women; and several mechanisms and programmes developed for this purpose, women in the rural areas of the North West Province continue to experience grave poverty. Based on the research problem, research objectives and questions were formulated to address the problem statement. Furthermore, the chapter outlined and motivated the research methodology adopted to address the research problem and achieve the research objectives of the study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women

In Chapter 2 of the study, the theoretical framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women is established. The chapter expounds on the phenomenon of poverty, specifically among women, and reflects on the methods utilised to measure poverty, with a view to establish effective ways to alleviate the poverty levels among women in the North West Province. The chapter also clarifies the difference between absolute and relative poverty and conducts a review on the theories that clarify the concept poverty, including, Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; and

Individualistic Theory. Furthermore, the four relevant Feminism theories are also reviewed to demonstrate the relationship between poverty and women, namely, Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory.

Chapter 3: Statutory and regulatory framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women

The third chapter of the study reviews the national, regional, continental and international statutory and regulatory framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women. In this respect, the internal mandates of the UN, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), and France as part of the European Union (EU), aligned to humanitarian assistance to developing countries are reviewed. Additionally, the legislation, policies and mechanisms developed by the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are expounded on in the creation of a conducive environment to alleviate poverty and enhance empowerment. Also reviewed in this chapter is South Africa's participation in the UN's programmes for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women.

Chapter 4: Socio-economic factors related to poverty among women in the North West Province

In addition to the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and the legislative framework (Chapter 3), certain socio-economic factors and causes to poverty were also considered in the development of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. Subsequently, Chapter 4 of the study reviews these factors, particularly as they materialise in the North West Province and more specifically, in the jurisdictions of the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality. As part of the contextualisation of the socio-economic factors and causes to poverty, a profile of the broader North West Province is provided.

Chapter 5: A conceptual policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province: Empirical findings

This chapter presents and interprets the empirical findings of the study. The results obtained from the empirical investigation are underpinned, analysed, and expounded on by the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 of

the study. Chapter 5 commences with a review of the research methodology used for the empirical investigation, followed by the empirical results. The primary findings of the study are presented, thenceforward the components significant for inclusion in the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, as derived from the empirical results, are propounded and substantiated. Finally, the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province is presented and explicated.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

The final chapter of the study provides a summary of the thesis and reveals the achievement of the research objectives. Furthermore, recommendations are made towards the implementation of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

1.11. CONCLUSION

Following the introduction and orientation to the study provided in this chapter, the following chapter reviews the theoretical framework in which the study is embedded. The phenomenon of poverty is expounded on and theories are reviewed with a view to establish effective ways to alleviate poverty levels among women in the North West Province.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is considered a significant social ill that undermines human rights, justice, and an individual's dignity. The mentioned three aspects find expression in the Bill of Rights which forms the cornerstone of the Constitution, 1996 (Chapter 2). Thus, it is argued in this study that poverty as a negative phenomenon, which affects the rights, justice, and dignity of a person should be prioritised by the government.

It was revealed in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, that not only is poverty widespread in South Africa, but women, especially those in rural areas are the most vulnerable and severely affected by poverty. It was also established in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, of this study that poverty among women affects not only themselves, but the entire family. The key responsibilities of women in the home are to take care of their children and family. Consequently, the need to alleviate poverty among women is paramount. The literature review conducted in this chapter explores the need for fundamental efforts towards the alleviation of poverty and the empowerment of women.

The chapter expounds on the phenomenon of poverty, specifically among women, and reflects on the methods utilised to measure poverty, with a view to establish effective ways to alleviate poverty levels among women in South Africa. The chapter also clarifies the difference between absolute and relative poverty and conducts a review of the theories that clarify the concept poverty, including, Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; and Individualistic Theory. Furthermore, the four relevant Feminism theories, namely, Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory are also reviewed to demonstrate the relationship between poverty and women. It should be noted that the four theories on Feminism are considered the most relevant to this study and contributed towards drafting a policy implementation framework to alleviate poverty amongst women.

2.2. CONCEPTUALISATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF POVERTY

Since poverty is the primary variable of this study, it is necessary to clarify and provide a comprehensive understanding of poverty, its manifestations in society and its socio-economic consequences. Poverty is an ancient phenomenon that can be traced back to 1820 (Moatsos, 2021:195; Roser & Hasell, 2021:46). Information on poverty has been refined through reasearch and the World Bank has published extensively on the poverty since 1981. Roser and Hasell (2021:48) assert that, globally, most humans are poverty stricken. Poverty is therefore not only a national challenge, but a globally pervasive phenomenon (Mautjana & Makombe, 2018:1; Mensah, Tamakloe & Essaw, 2018:221; Kura *et al.*, 2020:44), and the Sub-Saharan is the most affected region (Moletsane, Reddy, Ntombela, Dayal, Wiebesiek, Munthree, Kongolo & Masilela, 2010:10; Addison, Pikkarainen, Rönkkö & Tarp ,2017:1). In 2015 the majority of South African citizenry lived in poverty (Stats SA, 2017a:14). Alcock and Craig (2009:202) report that the worst years of poverty in the 20th century was experienced during 1992 – 1993 and 1999 – 2000. Furthermore, Sisk (2017:12) reveals that poverty was still prevalent in 2017 and affected 16 million South African citizens; classified as unable to meet their daily basic needs. Subsequently, the government's primary focus in South Africa is poverty alleviation (Mautjana & Makombe, 2018:1). The NDP (RSA, 2011) is a strategy utilised by the government to address poverty and equality. Regrettably, the efforts do not match the results, because most of the citizens are still excluded from actively participating in economic activities. Thus, comparatively to the first quarter, an increase in unemployment of 3.4 % was observed in the second quarter (Stats SA, 2022:2).

Institutions often fail to take appropriate action to ensure that opportunities are created to uplift the marginalised group (the poor) from the peripheries of society and place them in mainstream activities to realise their capabilities (Durojaye & Mirugi-Mukundi, 2020:3). Extensive research on poverty has revealed that it is a complex problem which cannot be resolved easily (Khumalo, 2013:5643; Egharevba, Iruonagbe, Azuh, Chiazor & Suleiman, 2016:32; Meyer, 2016:132; Buheji, 2019:2; Jannah,Musllim & Prasojo, 2021:27). In this respect, various global strategies to alleviate poverty have been drafted throughout the years by international institutions, for example, the UN.

These strategies include the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs), 2000, and the subsequent SDGs, 2015. Yet, poverty remains a global pervasive phenomenon.

The MDGs (2015) resulted in a failure to reach the primary objective, this is, to minimise poverty by 50% (Beegle, Christiaensen, Dabalen & Gaddis, 2016:76; Nhamo, Dube & Chikodzi, 2020:35). Rather, it appears that poverty has increased in South Africa, since the citizenry is more poverty-stricken in 2015 compared to 2011 (Stats SA, 2017a:14). According to research conducted by Leibbrandt, Finn and Oosthuizen (2016:398), 20% of the wealthiest citizens in South Africa own 70% of the country's wealth; 20% of the wealth is owned by those referred to as wealthier, while the remaining meagre 10% of the wealth is owned by 60% of the population. In Chapter 1, Section 1.1, it was argued that poverty is concentrated in the rural areas, and women are affected the most. Thus, it is argued that the bulk of the 60% of the population, owning only 10% of the country's wealth resides in rural areas. It is possible that if 60% of the poor is expected to share 10% of the wealth, even sharing equitably, it would not be enough to alleviate poverty.

The policy direction of the NDP (RSA, 2011) places equity as one of the nine interlinking priorities to alleviate poverty. Thus, failure to achieve equity can have a negative spill-over of non-performance of the remaining eight priorities (RSA, 2011:25-26). The inequality between the rich and the poor, as noted in the NDP (RSA, 2011:25), continues unabated. A report of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), *Time to Care,* 2020, mentions that the 22 richest men in the world own more wealth than the entire population of women on the African continent (Coffey, Espinoza Revollo, Harvey, Lawson, Parvez Butt, Piaget, Sarosi & Thekkudan, 2020:10). Various contributory factors are responsible for the divide between rich and poor. The complexity of poverty incorporates economic, cultural, regional, and geographical factors (Achrol & Kotler, 2017:4). In support of the previous view, the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAF, 2015:8) states that poverty is affected by several areas such as the economic, social, and political environments, therefore, it compounds the efforts of having a universally accepted definition of poverty.

To achieve the national targets set to alleviate poverty, it is argued that the concept poverty ought to be direct, specific, and relevant in the South African context. Siddique,

Shehzadi and Shaheen (2016:1431); Jannah *et al.*, 2021:27 suggest that poverty is equated to a situation where financial ability is non-existent. Okeke, Onuorah and Oboreh (2016:80) explain that poverty is a negative state of economic affairs which inhibits people from affording basic needs to meet standard social activities anticipated and acceptable to form part of a normal life. Poverty excludes people from normal social activities and leaves them as spectators (Vandermeershen, 2016:1). Furthermore, poverty is multidimentional and posseses global charateristics which affects both the national and international realm (UN, 1995:41; Chamhuri*,* Karim & Hamdan*,* 2012:80; Bhalla & Lapeyre, 2016:xvii). Manap, Zakaria and Hassan (2017:91) reiterate that the multi-dimensional nature of poverty constitutes diverse deprivation which is primarily attached to poor financial conditions and coupled with destitute living conditions that lack access to significant needs, such as health services and education.

A definition of poverty by Bradshaw, Gordon, Levitas, Middleton, Pantazis, Payne and Townsend (1998:5) assert that "poverty, like…. health, is both a scientific and a moral concept", thus confirming that numerous factors contribute differently and at distinctive times to the onset of poverty. Musa*,* Abdullah, M.A.I.L.B. & Wahid*.* (2016:1395), also hold that over and above its multi-dimensional nature, poverty has varying contributors. Palmer (2011:210); Prastyanti *et al.* (2018:125) concur with this notion and state that no specific factor can explain poverty, but a myriad of various and interconnected factors, for example, socio-economic issues and geographic locale should be considered when attempting to comprehend the concept poverty. What remains clear, however, is that poverty encompasses any form of deprivation suffered by people (Anand & Sen, 1997:4; Rohwerder, 2016:3).

In addition to an individual understanding of poverty, categorising entire countries as rich or poor also differ significantly. Rich countries' understanding of poverty differ from that of poor countries (Ravallion, 2003:9). Rich (developed) countries view poverty as relative while poor (developing) countries consider the poverty as absolute (Ravallion & Chen, 2017). Absolute and relative poverty is reviewed in detail in Sections 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.2 below. In general, governments find it easy to define poverty based on income (Adeoye, Seini, Sarpong, & Amegashie*,* 2019:11), whilst poor citizens pivot the definition of poverty on social exclusion and the lack of basic needs such as, but

not limited to education, health, housing, and security (Samuel, Alkire, Zavaleta, Mills, & Hammock, 2018:1). The latter explanation confirms that poverty is multi-dimensional. Moreover, Ali and Ali (2013:109) support the view that poverty is connected to the lack of meeting basic needs, for example, shelter, failing to visit a doctor when sick due to a lack of finances, being unemployed and failing to plan.

In 1997, a Kenyan was asked what poverty meant and he responded as follows: “Don’t ask me what poverty is because you have met it outside my house. Look at the house and count the number of holes. Look at my utensils and the clothes that I am wearing. What you see is poverty.” (Palmer, 2011:211). In this respect, Cimadamore, Koehler and Pogge (2016:3) state that poverty is overt in nature and its existence clear for everyone to see due the stark differences between the rich and the poor. It can be argued that poverty can also be explained as deprivation, exclusionary and marginalising in nature. Various people and countries define poverty differently and align it to their own experiences. Furthermore, the fact that governments define poverty by their national income than the ability of each citizen to afford basic needs, further exacerbates the complexity of the poverty. Consequently, the extent of poverty levels through suitable methods become significant (see Section 2.2.2 below).

Goswami and Majumdar (2017:78) argue that men and women perceive poverty differently. This variance filters down to the differences noticed between them when discussing poverty, although the nature thereof is not selective since it affects both men and women. It was mentioned earlier in Section 2.1, that the myriad of domestic responsibilities in a household are solely discharged by women and include but are not limited to taking care of the children and ensuring that the entire household duties such as cooking, laundry and cleaning is accomplished. Thus, poverty among women is aligned to a lack of various resources, including the inability to achieve domestic and basic household needs because of a lack of finances. On the other hand, it is argued that the major responsibility of men is to provide financial assistance for the family. Hence, for men, it is the only need, or it heralds poverty for them. It is against this background that poverty alleviation for women is important to ensure that the family’s basic needs are met, and that the standard of living is enhanced.

Anyebe (2017:81) accentuates that the definition of poverty must be aligned to and be gender sensitive. In understanding that poverty is gender sensitive, Hunt, Nowak and Osmai (2004:9) argue that an explanation of poverty, or the measure thereof would be incorrect if defined as homogenous because what one person (or gender) considers as adequate resources could be inadequate by the next person (or gender). It is for this reason that Luna (2016:79) claims that the definition of poverty is dependent on who explains it and the person's experiences at that time. However, the underlying factor is that poverty as a broader term is continuously explained as the lack of the ability to achieve socially acceptable standards of living or the lack of resources to meet basic needs (Suich, 2012:2).

In consideration of the above review, this study perceives poverty as multi-dimensional (with various contributing factors, for example, socio-economic conditions and geographical locale), influenced by the social, political, and economic environments, where people experience severe financial constraints and live in dire socio-economic conditions. Consequently, the people are unable to afford basic needs to meet their standard social activities, which are anticipated and acceptable to be part of a normal life. It was further revealed that institutions often fail to take appropriate action to ensure that opportunities are created to uplift the poor. Hence, they remain on the periphery of society; unable to access mainstream activities to realise their capabilities. The NDP (RSA, 2011) underscores poverty alleviation, and thereby accentuates it as a priority in the South African environment.

Since women, especially those in rural areas are the most affected by poverty (refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.1), this study focused specifically on women who meet the aforementioned definition of poverty in certain rural areas in the North West Province. Furthermore, this study focused primarily on reviewing poverty among women. The next section explores poverty among women.

2.2.1. Poverty among women

Women constitute 70% of the world's poverty (ASSAF, 2015:77; Kabeer, 2017:180). Poverty among women received much attention during the oppressive racist apartheid era. UNESCO and the Institute of Development Studies (2016:56) explained that

during the last years of apartheid, the prevalence of poverty among women revealed a significant increase compared to men. Moreover, the high level of poverty continues unabated to date. This confirms the consistent and persistent gendered nature of poverty which impacts women more than men. It is regrettable that poverty that was rife among women during the apartheid era, continues unabated in the democratic dispensation. It can be argued that if the government is truly prioritising poverty alleviation amongst women, the high percentage rate of deprivation (70%), as well as the continued persistence thereof for decades, is perhaps reason enough to direct spending towards the alleviation of poverty for women. Such a bold decision is, especially relevant and applicable when considering legislation and policies (Housing Act 107 of 1997; Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000; Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013, among others and discussed in detail in Chapter 3), promulgated since the advent of the democratic dispensation and the establishment of a Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. The latter department and the promulgation of legislation and policies, which focuses on the empowerment of women implies that women's affairs should be prioritised.

Globally, women are charged with household responsibilities that are not attached to any form of remuneration (Littlewood, 2017:113). Their domestic responsibilities are fundamental in their family lives because women carry both the internal and external family obligations which develops into multifaceted responsibilities: Internal family obligations such as the responsibility of looking after the entire upkeep of the family, cleaning, cooking and feeding them (Anyebe, 2017:82); while external family obligations such as women in rural areas protect natural resources such as water, wood and domestic animals to ensure that they continue to support their families (Singh, 2015:137). According to Bach (2013:324), all women face this challenge, including the married who struggle to strike a balance between the economic activities, if they have any, and their household responsibilities. However, the struggle is more pronounced among single women who bear the responsibility of single-handedly balancing the act of managing the homes, where failure to achieve the balance leaves them exposed to extreme suffering.

According to Louw and Shaw (1997:9), "poverty is not only about being poor; it is also the risk of becoming poor or poorer in the face of change". It may be argued that those who are not poor in some way end up being poor and advance into the poorer category that increases the number and the depth of poverty among women. Women's perpetual state of poverty does not appear to benefit from policy amendments to eradicate poverty, because they consistently appear in the poverty trajectory. Flento (2021:27) argues that poverty is relative and not static; people can move out of poverty by moving away from the poverty-stricken place in search of a better one that has the prospect of taking them out of poverty (refer to Section 2.3.2). However, for women it is perhaps a difficult process to undertake because as keepers of the house, they would have to carry their household responsibilities along. They would then merely relocate poverty to another place or stay in the same place and sink deeper into poverty. Moving from one place to another in pursuit of a better life appears to be a complex option for women who are looking after their children.

Consequently, children and their well-being lie at the heart of poverty when women define poverty (Lange, Dáu, Goldblum, Alfano & Smith, 2017:xvi). In general, women tend to live in larger families compared to men, because women are more likely to live with children who are fully dependent on them for their livelihood (ASSAF, 2015:74). Atkinson (2016:114) argues that poverty among women is a challenge on its own, even before the inclusion of poverty that is suffered by their children, because poverty among children has an unintended bearing on women. It could be that due to the cultural and traditional expectations, as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, women tend to carry double the burden of poverty which can be categorised as their own and that of their children whom they still account for. It appears that cultural and traditional expectations result in women continuing to sink into poverty, while men can escape poverty to improve their lives, because in most instances, men do not have to carry the burden of taking the entire family along in pursuit of a job opportunity. Therefore, women's exclusive family responsibilities inhibit them from participating in gainful economic activities and fail to secure benefits from empowerment (Afshar, 2016:67).

It can be argued that women spend most of their time on socially constructed household activities and these myriads of unpaid responsibilities deprive them of the opportunity to leverage from the established poverty alleviation programmes, and

thereby inversely trap them in a continuous circle of poverty. However, chances are that if women find an opportunity to be employed, the earning is likely to be lower than that of men. The inequality and injustices are dire when black women and men are compared, as also alluded to in Section 2.3.4.4 below. It is, therefore, argued that black women continue to suffer more because of poverty, irrespective of whether they are employed.

As far back as 1995, the UN (1995:7) confirmed the continuous growth of poverty among women in the upper level of poverty. It can be argued that inequality, as illustrated by the Feminist Theories (refer to Section 2.3.4.1 – 2.3.4.4 below), presents the plight of women and suggests solutions that are coupled with the major deprivation of unemployment and poverty borne primarily by women. Even in 2015, 21 years into the democracy, South Africans continued to live in poverty and women experienced extensive extreme poverty compared to men[2] (Stats SA, 2017a:57). This prevalent state of poverty among women continues to label them as the marginalised group (Jacobs, 2017:3), as also discussed in Section 2.2**.** Both men and women experience poverty, but the level of poverty among women is consistently higher than that of men. Furthermore, household poverty among women outnumbers that of men (Moletsane, *et al.*, 2010:1).

If poverty is a deprivation of human potential development, then poor women are deprived of realising and utilising their capabilities. Hence, they are trapped in perpetual poverty (Luna, 2016:79). It appears that self-actualisation in women, like any other human being, is a far cry for poor women whose destiny is poverty. The Constitution, 1996, mandates the government to ensure that the citizenry has access to basic human needs and to be treated in a fair and equal manner. It is for this reason that poverty alleviation is government's most important constitutional mandate.

The need to measure poverty levels effectively in a particular context and society (in this instance women in particular municipal areas in the North West Province), through

[2] On the 26 March 2020 the President pronounced a country-wide lockdown which was necessitated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, Statistic South Africa was derailed from their five-year schedule of collecting and publicising the country's official and reliable statistics. Thus, the poverty trend report of 2006 and 2015 released in 2017 is the latest released by Statistics South Africa and was utilised for this study.

suitable methods in the specific context and community was highlighted in Section 2.2, above. The need to measure poverty levels is also necessitated by its subjective nature, as also alluded to in Section 2.2. No single acceptable method to measure poverty levels can be considered universal (Madden, 2014:16). Therefore, the following sections elaborate on the various tools and methods utilised to measure poverty.

2.2.2. Measurement of poverty levels

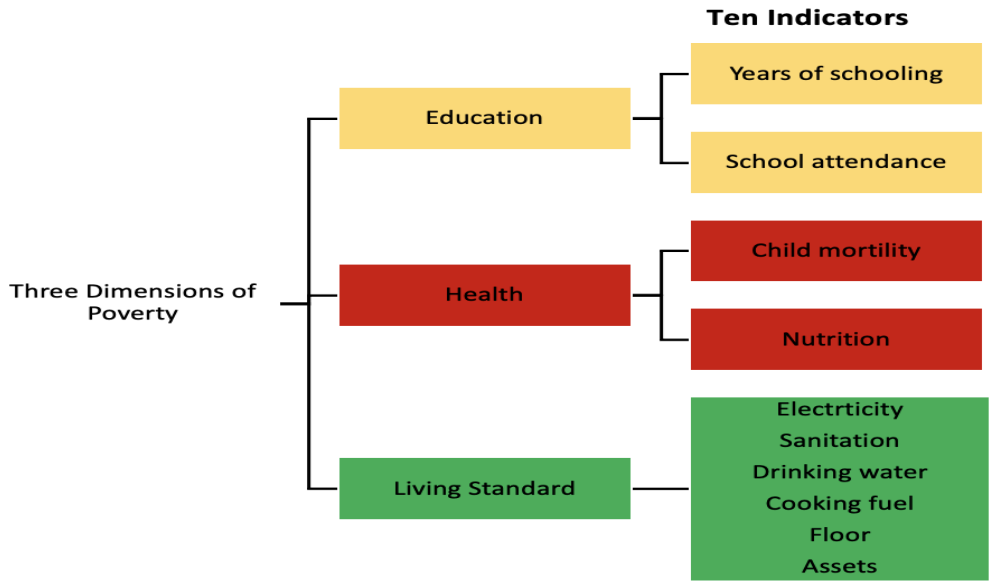
Measuring poverty supports the decision-making process, assists to approach poverty accordingly and develops relevant methods to address issues related thereto (Alkire, Jindra, Robles Aguilar & Vaz, 2017:1). The effective measurement of poverty levels also empowers government officials to benchmark against set objectives and to appreciate registered progress, as well as attend to the outstanding work that needs to be conducted (Manap *et al.*, 2017:92). Furthermore, as alluded to in Section 2.2, poverty is dependent on how a specific group of people of that environment perceives and understands poverty, and subsequently adopt a relevant method to align its policies thereto (Alkire & Foster, 2011:1). Direct and indirect methods have been used to measure poverty. The direct method concentrates on the ability to meet the basic need which encompasses respect for the people's rights, whilst the indirect method focusses on the alignment of the income level to the poverty line (Alkire & Santos, 2014:5).

Allen (2016:17) states that a poverty line measures poverty and is a way of distinguishing the rich from the poor. Datt, Ravallion and Murgai (2016:8) further classify the poverty line through nutritional values, 2 400 and 2 100 calories per day per person in a rural area and an urban area respectively was used as their measurement. Poverty line measurements in villages revealed that women who live below the poverty line far exceed that of their male counterparts (Goswamid & Mjumdar, 2017:28), as indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, and in the preceding section. In his book *Poverty and Social Exclusion*, Gordon (2006:53) draws attention to the measurement of poverty according to the following approaches:

- The **consensual method**, which defines people who have both a low income and a low standard of living as poor.
- The **income poverty method**, which defines people as poor when their income falls below a relative income poverty threshold.
- The **subjective method**, where people define themselves as poor in response to questions using different definitions of poverty.

It is not the intention to downplay any methods to measure levels of poverty. However, for this study, the consensual method is considered the most relevant poverty level measurement since it indicates the target population's low standard of living and low income and supports both the direct and the indirect methods to measure poverty. The **consensual measure** as an approach to measure the level of poverty is premised on having the same understanding and consensus of the needs which are perceived basic for survival (Nandy & Pomati, 2015:698). The World Bank and the UN, through broad consultation, agreed that the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) used to measure levels of poverty, should constitute three dimensions and relevant indicators aligned to, initially the MDGs, and later SDGs (Adeoye *et al.*, 2019:1084). It is against this background that (1) education; (2) health; and (3) standard of living are determinants of the level of poverty (Alkire & Santos, 2014:7; Dotter & Klasen, 2017:3). Figure 2.1 below illustrates (1) education, (2) health and (3) standard of living as determinants of the level of poverty according to the MPI.

Figure 2.1: Dimensions and indicators of the MPI



(**Source:** Adapted from Alkire & Santos, 2014:5)

Figure 2.1 above illustrates that nutrition forms part of the ten indicators classified under the health poverty dimension. Furthermore, the findings by Statistics South Africa revealed that food nutrition forms part of the prerequisites for survival and the promotion of a healthy body (RSA, 2008c:18). The food basket is a measure utilised to illustrate the important nutrients needed by the body, but not necessarily considered a scientific prescribed eating plan which constitutes the following: grain products; meat; fish; poultry and their products; fruit and vegetables; dairy products and eggs; oils and fats; and beverages and miscellaneous (RSA, 2020:9-10). Electricity is used to prepare the identified food, thus making it part of the food basket (Bohlmann & Inglesi-Lotz, 2021:2).

Another poverty determinant illustrated in Figure 2.1 above is education. Hofmarcher (2021:2) states that education results in economic emancipation, is regarded as a tool to alleviate poverty, and has the potential to change the lives of people. Hofmarcher (2021:2) furthermore mentions that with more years spent in school, the possibility of alleviating poverty increases. In South Africa, education forms part of the constitutional rights enjoyed by every citizen (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1) aimed at the alleviation of poverty; hope to bring equality in the country; and ensure that every person has access

to the opportunities presented by the government. For women, education is beneficial to manage their responsibilities and provides them the power to make appropriate decisions when the need arises, that is, either on the home front or personal (Zhu, 2020:658).

Based on Figure 2.1 above, another contributor to the MPI is the standard of living which includes sub-indicators, namely: electricity, sanitation, drinking water, cooking fuel, floor, and assets. Deprivation of these sub-indicators is perceived as forming part of the existence of poverty (Dotter & Klasen, 2019:12). The standard of living should be adequate for the quality of life which is primarily assessed by the material assets a person owns, over and above access to the basic needs of water, sanitation, and electricity (Rao & Min, 2018:226). The standard of living as part of the MPI is highest in rural areas due to a lack of resources and the under-developed nature that characterises such areas (Megbowon, 2018:15). The North West Province, which is the focus of this study, is predominantly rural and expounded upon in detail in Chapter 4.

Figure 2.1 above illustrates that measuring poverty levels relates to the poverty dimensions of education, health and living standards and provides for the multi-dimensional nature of poverty to cover various issues that cause poverty. Thus, it is easy to be specific when measuring poverty and to link it to the intended purpose of the study, that is, to develop a policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. Furthermore, it includes the relevant indicators of poverty alleviation that should be included in the framework.

It is evident from the above review that poverty needs to be measured through the MPI (education, health and standard of living as determinants of the level of poverty) to mitigate its subjective nature (as expounded upon in Section 2.2 above) and adopt approaches to alleviate poverty from an informed perspective. This would enable government decision-makers to align policies related to poverty and develop suitable methods and address it as a priority.

As alluded to, the consensual method is considered the most relevant poverty level measurement because it includes both the standard of living determinant and the low-

income levels of the targeted population. Hence, it supports both methods of poverty measurement: direct method (to satisfy the basic need); and the indirect method (alignment of the income level to the poverty line). Furthermore, as stipulated in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996, education, health and standard of living forms part of human rights, enshrined in the Bill of Rights. It is evident that the use of the consensual measure and the MPI to assess poverty levels both relate to the core areas of human dignity preservation that results in the protection of human rights and societal justice.

Foster, Seth, Lokshin and Sajaia (2013:26), explain that measuring poverty can be approached from two perspectives: firstly, absolute outlook, which perceives a poverty line from a static perspective; and secondly, the relative approach which considers a poverty line to form part of the income standard. Therefore, poverty has qualifiers which can either be perceived as absolute or relative poverty (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2015:7). These two qualifiers are explained in the sections below.

2.2.2.1. Absolute poverty

It has been commonly assumed that zero (0°) degree is the lowest temperature reading on the thermometer and referred to as absolute zero. This notion can also be related to absolute poverty. Allen (2016:4) explains that absolute poverty is the lowest level of poverty. Katikireddi and Dundas (2017:26) suggest that absolute poverty is a situation where a person can only afford the bare minimum necessities. Deprivation of the basic needs such as food, shelter, water, and sanitation are at the heart of absolute poverty (UN, 1995:41). Absolute poverty can, therefore, be perceived as the non-availability of resources to access basic needs such as education, health, shelter, and other basic amenities (Siddique *et al.*, 2016:1431). Moreover, Suich (2012:2) maintains that absolute poverty is the inability to afford basic needs; live a normal life; and link it to subjective poverty that centres on people's perceptions. Thus, the three dimensions of poverty, as reflected in Figure 2.1 above (education, health and standard of living) and the consensual measurement thereof, includes absolute poverty determinants which should be considered in a strategy to alleviate the poverty. Noble, Michael, Ratcliff, Andrew, Wright, and Gemma (2017:4) concur with the above perceptions and assert that "the concept of absolute poverty refers to poverty that

exists independently of any reference group". Hertel (2016:12) confirms that rural areas have sustained absolute poverty into the 21st century, given that people who live in the rural areas experience a high level of outright absolute deprivation. As indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, and Section 2.2, above, poverty is more intense in the rural than urban areas and is further exacerbated by gender and inaccessibility to education for women and girls. This deepens the intensity of poverty among women (Beegle *et al.*, 2016:13). A study conducted by Haq and Amin (2017:111) also underscored the high level of poverty in rural areas which is fuelled by women's lack of education. Thus, the findings by Beegle *et al*. (2016:14) and Haq and Amin (2017:111) confirm the multi-dimensional nature of poverty; the role of education, health and standard of living as determinants; and the significance of utilising the MPI (as reflected in Figure 2.1) to assess the level of poverty to develop an alleviation strategy.

To satisfy the poverty dimensions (education, health and standard of living), as reflected in Figure 2.1, Bradshaw *et al.* (1998:12) state that to avoid absolute poverty, financial autonomy is needed by the poor to satisfy the basic needs and to enjoy participation in social activities that are performed by other members of the community. It is evident that funding could form part of the mechanism that relieves the burden of poverty by affording the basic needs to fulfil people's requirements. On the contrary, the high rate of unemployment limits funds to numerous citizens and forces them into a position of being unable to afford basics needs (Kossen & McIlveen, 2018:10; Zizzamia, 2018;39). Consequently, Roser and Ortiz-Ospina (2017:1) suggest that the measurement of absolute poverty is based on a fixed standard of living which is dependent on a permanent time frame and the geographical locale that provides a sound comparison to measure absolute poverty between countries. It can be argued that in addition to the time frame and geographical location, the comparison could further be utilised to measure poverty levels between women and men including rural and urban areas.

Given the fact that a vast percentage of South African citizens live in poverty and presented according to their geographical location, 70% of persons who live in rural areas are poor while 30% of those who reside in urban areas live in poverty and are unable to afford basic needs to provide for an acceptable standard of living (RSA,

2018j: 27). It is argued that the poverty in South Africa can be considered absolute. Thus, the poverty alleviation strategy for women in certain municipal areas in the North West Province, developed in this study, focused on the alleviation of absolute poverty.

2.2.2.2. Relative poverty

According to a definition provided by Gordon (2006:31), relative poverty is objective since its definition is in relation to norms or standards set by a community or society in proximity or in the same locality. Suich (2012:2); and Jannah *et al.* (2021:27) concur with this definition and describes it as objective and gauged in relation to other citizens who reside in the same community or society (Currie, 2011:29). This definition is not commonly used in developing countries but primarily by the developed countries to measure the social responsibility investment as opposed to measuring the bare social needs because it indicates the society's level of material possessions (Poudel, Zheng, Wood & McGowan, 2014:4). The disparity of material wealth amongst the communities gives rise to the injustices and inequalities that could be referred to as relative poverty. This is as the result of government because selected citizens benefit at the expense of others (Jamaludin, Masri & Nurfakhanah, 2019:48)

Hence, Dunn (2017:3); and Ezeh, Oyebode, Satterthwaite, Chen, Ndugwa, Sartori and Caiaffa (2017:6) argue that the relative poverty of people in rich counties differs from those in poor countries, because poor people in rich counties can afford more than the relatively poor in poor countries. It was explicated in Section 2.2, that poverty is multi-dimensional and cannot only be defined by monetary value. In this context, non-monetary value is another relative aspect that forms a fundamental part of defining poverty (Nandy & Pomati, 2015:694). It is therefore argued that the concept of poverty has the propensity of being relative to either monetary value or social aspects.

It is further argued that absolute poverty (the non-availability of resources to access basic needs) is more relevant than relative poverty in the South African context if one considers specific communities. Given the dire needs and socio-economic circumstances experienced in rural areas, large components of the South African society clearly experience absolute poverty. This notion is especially true when the circumstances of the residents in the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung

Local Municipality (the locus of this study) are considered. It is further argued that poverty measurements from a relative poverty perspective (measured in relation to other inhabitants from the same community), is unlikely to yield different results between residents, as the community (e.g., a rural community) in its entirety is likely to live in equitable absolute poverty. However, if rural communities are compared to urban communities and other factors (e.g., race or gender) are considered, the term relative poverty would be applicable. The poverty alleviation strategy developed in this study for women in specific municipal areas in the North West Province, focused predominantly on the alleviation of absolute poverty, but also considered relative poverty when comparing poverty experienced by women to that experienced by men. It is against the above background that theories applicable to comprehend poverty and its direct influence on women formed part of this study, however, without disregarding other theories on poverty not identified for this study. Subsequently, the next section analysed the theories on poverty relevant to this study.

2.3. THEORIES THAT EXPLICATE POVERTY

The multi-dimensional nature of poverty promotes the notion that no theory on poverty is adequate to clarify poverty (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2015:3). However, several feminist theories examined in this chapter attempted to reveal a fundamental linkage to poverty among women and, most significantly, association with policies that address poverty alleviation among women. The following theories under review are central to poverty and premised on injustices and inequalities suffered by women and the systematic manner used to disregard the upliftment of women, as well as provide opportunities for their development: Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; Individualistic Theory; and Feminist Theory (Radical Feminist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, Social Feminist Theory, and Black Feminist Theory).

Social Exclusion Theory posits that established barriers marginalise and exclude people from social activities that other people enjoy (Figueroa, 2018:10). It is regarded as the best theory to explain poverty since it covers poverty in its totality, explains its forms, causes and effects (Sameti *et al.*, 2012:46). Structural Theory predicts that there is a correlation between the life of people who struggle and the system which denies them the opportunity to move out of poverty and to take charge of their lives

(Brady, 2006:154). Individualistic Theory acknowledges that poverty is caused by individual deficiencies and the lack of a concerted effort to overcome poverty (Kura *et al.*, 2020:49).

Feminist Theory is grounded in the liberation of women from oppression, dominated by patriarchy and characterised by gender, race and class that undermines women's rights (Ellehleh, 2019:2817). Radical Feminist Theory as a branch of Feminism is defined by its focus to discard oppressive behaviour suffered by women and allow them to enjoy justice in all their social dealings without an intent to destroy men (Effiong & Inyang, s.a:12 – 13). Liberal Feminist Theory primarily focuses on gender equality and gratification of the same rights such as education and employment benefits, irrespective of the biological difference (Enyew & Mihrete, 2018:60). Social Feminist Theory uses a social lens to identify the lack of equality between men and women in social and economic reproduction (Jackson & Jones, 1998:12; Armstrong, 2020:4-5), while Black Feminist Theory aims to understand the nature of the inequality of Black women's intersectional challenges and focus on gender inequality like other Feminist theories, but is further compounded by race (Davis & Brown, 2017:3; Brewer, 2020:92). Each of the theories are reviewed in more detail in the following sections.

2.3.1. Social Exclusion Theory

Exclusion finds its character in the deliberate imposition of failure to be part of activities which ultimately bear a direct negative influence on one's life (Gordon, 2006:31). Currie (2011:27) claims that social exclusion is strongly aligned to social injustice where the non-participation of a selected number in mainstream activities is beyond their control. Thus, Social Exclusion Theory approaches poverty from a perspective where the social deprivation of a group such as discrimination of a marginalised people, as opposed to concentrating on the deprivation of individuals (Laderchi, Saith & Stewart, 2003:21). It is important to note that women have been classified as a marginalised group since the inception of democracy (Ndinga-Kanga, Van der Merwe & Hartford, 2020:34). Furthermore, Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd and Patsios (2007:9) claim that social exclusion does not exclusively cover the economic section of life, but also refer to other substantive facets that promote equality and are political and cultural in nature. Perhaps the factors could either be individual in nature

or embedded in the institutions which impedes development by disadvantaging the marginalised group from participating in the social and economic activities which in most instances oppresses women. Consequently, this contributes towards their exclusion from the socio-economic environment.

Commenting on social exclusion, Sameti *et al.* (2012:46) posit that: “It seems the theory of social exclusion best captures the phenomenon of poverty, unlike the other perspectives, the social exclusion perspective covers the processes, forms, causes, and effects of poverty”. One such social experience is capitalism – a process which results in the working class to forgo the opportunity of self-development that usually gives rise to poverty among those excluded, whilst the leaders become wealthy (Luna, 2016:78). Social exclusion can be equated to poverty although the definition is not similar (Littlewood, 2017:58). In this respect, social exclusion and poverty are occasionally referred to as inseparable twins because both are identified by social or economic marginalisation and share the same factor of exclusion which deprives people from socio-economic participation, irrespective of whether they are interested in participation or not (Levitas *et al.*, 2007:20).

Houston (2007:26) asserts that cultural norms and traditional practices also tend to exclude women from activities which could promote their standard of living. Rambuda and Masenya (2017:99) argue that the unpaid household duties performed by women promotes their exclusion from productive activities which could enhance the standard of living, as indicated in Section 2.2.1, above. It is evident that women who are poverty stricken live a life on which they are financially dependent to access basic needs. Moreover, they are excluded automatically from participating in beneficial activities which could enhance their social, economic, or political standing. In most instances, these are an avenue to empower women.

Sameti *et al.* (2012:46) concur with the aforementioned notions and assert that poverty effectuates exclusion as a result of involuntary deprivation of participating in certain social activities. Consequently, Fernandez, Plaza, Lomnitz and Hernánde. (2017:5) assert that having control over basic needs is a prerequisite which demonstrates the capacity to participate in social, economic, or political activities. The fundamentals of Social Exclusion Theory reveal the social structure which culminates in poverty.

Furthermore, it is beyond the concept that can be dealt with outside the realms of the social and economic spheres (Hickey & Du Toit, 2013:2). It is argued that social class positions in the community influences how resources and opportunities, which include the economy, are unequally distributed, and deny the poor an opportunity to participate in the activities. Class structure as mentioned above, sustains the level of poverty because poverty is tied to the social class (Davids, Roberts, Houston & Mustapha, 2022:207) and not easy to break due to the employer and an employee's relationship that continues in perpetuity. The social class standing of women in society is generally at the lowest level particularly among women in the rural areas whose domestic responsibilities carry no financial remuneration and subjects them to severe poverty (refer to Section 2.1).

Haan (1998:15) considers poverty as an ongoing debate and, comparatively speaking, perceives social exclusion as a phenomenon which captures deprivation determinants in their relevant form, and not confine it to being individualistic in nature but instead considers the external factors of the societal settings. It thus reflects the extent to which poverty extends itself to various settings, irrespective of the implemented efforts to understand and eradicate it.

As alluded to previously in this and the preceding chapter, women are affected most by poverty; marginalised; and prone to social exclusion. The fact that both poverty and social exclusion is identified by social or economic marginalisation and share the same factors of exclusion makes Social Exclusion Theory particularly relevant to this study. The theory is further applicable to this study and the development of poverty alleviation framework for women in the North West Province since it focuses on the social exclusion of a group (in this case women), as opposed to the exclusion of individuals, as well as focuses on all the processes, forms, causes, and effects of poverty. The framework developed in this study focused on factors which contribute towards the social exclusion of women (particularly in certain municipal areas in the North West Province). For example, inability to earn a salary due to household duties, lack of education, a patriarchal tradition and culture, classism, racism, inadequate health facilities, inadequate water provision, spatial challenges in rural areas, lack of electricity, and a high unemployment rate. These socio-economic factors and the influence thereof on poverty among women is explored in Chapter 4 of this study.

2.3.2. Structural Theory

The differences in the levels of poverty are based on the structures which promote poverty for a particular group (Sarlo, 2019:ii). As alluded to in Section 2.3.1, above, social exclusion reinforces and supports division amongst individuals which is experienced more by marginalised groups, particularly women. Furthermore, social class categorisation deprives the poor from both social and economic opportunities due to the social structure which cause disparities. Brady (2005:3) explains that the social structure classification of demographics and macro-level labour market contain characteristics which expose people to poverty. Bruenig (2014:1) disagrees with Brady (2005:3) and hold that the structural nature of poverty is involuntary and a temporary experience because people are not static and move from one experience to the other and have the ability of steer away from poverty. Thus, it can be argued that although Structural Theory perceives poverty as temporary, the migration therefrom is dependent on the removal of impeding structural barriers which requires a collaborative effort to eradicate, because some of the structural barriers are designed such that the poor on their own would fail to remove. However, irrespective of the removal of structures which cause barriers to abandon poverty as indicated in Section 2.2.1 above, for women it is a difficult process because they would have to manage their household responsibilities along and continue to look after their children. Furthermore, poverty is further exacerbated by structural barriers such as tradition and culture, lack of education and spatial challenges unique to the rural areas.

Ridge and Wright (2008:64) explain that the environment could be used as the fundamental platform to promote differing structures to classify people according to asset ownership, discount the reality that accessibility to resources is occasionally equal. Both the poor and the rich have the same ambition of pursuing their interests. The only difference is the environment they operate from where the infrastructure, policies and the economy serve them differently. Unfortunately, the poor remain deprived (Govender, 2016:238). Furthermore, Ridge and Wright (2008:64) suggest that a strong relationship exists between the rich and poor because assessment of their assets is similar and based on their economic and social standing. This is likely another confirmation that the poor is subjected unfairly to the unequal environment by

placing them through the same assessment structure as the wealthy. For example, the former Minister of Finance raised value added tax (VAT) in his 2018 budget speech which affects both the rich and the poor (Gigaba, 2018:11). It can be argued that irrespective of how the situation is perceived, the poor are severely affected by any tax increase. It is likely for this reason that the public considers the government's annual budget as anti-poor. The poor are further segregated into gender, as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, and women operate from a premise of inequality in all empowerment structures and remain disempowered due to poverty (also see Section 2.3.1, above).

As alluded to above, social structures promote poverty for a particular group that is excluded from social and economic opportunities due to structural barriers that affect the poor, particularly women. Furthermore, also mentioned above, the increase in VAT affects every person and influences everybody, both the wealthy and the poor because everyone is subjected to an additional financial burden. However, due to their financial status and challenges, the poor are affected more than the wealthy. The poor are characterised by both genders and as mentioned previously, women suffer more from inequality and poverty due to various factors including social structures in the form of tradition and culture, lack of education and spatial challenges unique to rural areas. The poverty alleviation framework underscores mitigation for the alleviation or removal of social barriers that promotes poverty amongst women.

2.3.3. Individualistic Theory

Individualistic Theory postulates that the decision taken, or the action of an individual contributes towards the individuals state of poverty; therefore, the inception of poverty is fully dependent on the individual's capacity. Consequently, individuals should take full responsibility for their state of poverty (Addae-Korankye, 2019:56). For political conservatives, poverty is self-inflicting and characterised by laziness and a lack of intellectual capacity which impedes the ability to make correct choices; hence, perpetuating a life of poverty (Bradshaw, 2007:6). However, Zwolinski (2015:10) highlight that the inception of poverty is sometimes attributed to the situation beyond people's control, however, concedes that it could also be assigned to bad choices and reckless behaviour. Brand, De Beer, De Villiers and Van Marle (2013:273-274)

contend that “what determines access to these basic resources is economic and political power; any response to poverty must therefore engage power”. It is against this background argued that the inception of poverty is not solely individually based, since access to economic and political power depends on the government creating a conducive environment for every person to participate fairly and equally. It appears that strong intellectual abilities, capacity, and skills are worthless if the playing field is skewed.

Zwolinski (2015:11) asserts that state power is directly linked to addressing state interests and it has been revealed frequently that the marginalised and poor are overlooked in the allocation of scarce resources in favour of state interest. Spencer (1851:324) holds that as far back as 1852, the socio-economic environment has been hostile towards the implementation of set legislation. It can be argued that perhaps the same hostile environment affects the implementation of legislation negatively, preventing it from realising to the stipulations of the Constitution, 1996. Despite the legislative and policy efforts to alleviate poverty, as alluded to in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, poverty remains persistent. This may be due to the imbalanced situation that is beyond the control of the poor. Therefore, the individuals who suffer poverty cannot always be blamed for their poverty-stricken circumstances.

Individualistic Theory confirms that individuals should take responsibility and be accountable for their own actions, including poverty. This theory perceives individual decisions which emanate from a low level of intellectual capacity or laziness are to blame for poverty. However, on the contrary, numerous factors contribute towards poverty, for example, allocation of economic state resources which does not benefit the marginalised group. If legislation for socio-economic challenges, including poverty had been implemented effectively, it is believed that poverty as a construct would not be an issue that plagues women. Thus, the burden of poverty is not solely placed on an individual but rather a systemic issue (Chapter 3 expounds on legislation and policies relevant to poverty alleviation).

From the review of Social Exclusion Theory, Structural Theory, and Individualistic Theory, it is evident that Social Exclusion Theory supersedes the other theories, because social exclusion does not focus on the individual, but primarily on the holistic

society, while deprivation attributes towards the community and its actors. However, Structural Theory and Individualistic Theory also remain relevant to this study. Women remain the marginalised group and it is imperative that they be prioritised in the policy implementation process. Social Exclusion Theory is relevant in justifying the recognition of women as the primary stakeholders in the alleviation of poverty. Furthermore, the social structures which are hostile in the emancipation of women was also addressed in the policy implementation framework to alleviate poverty. Research conducted on Social Exclusion Theory and Structural Theory (Bak & Larsen, 2015:2; Danaan, 2018:27; Egwea, 2019:2) confirms that it is unjustifiable for individuals to be held accountable for poverty that manifests itself structurally and difficult to change, *e.g.,* the traditional and cultural role of women. Thus, the premises of the three aforementioned theories was considered in the development of a poverty alleviation framework for women in selected municipal areas in the North West Province.

Feminist Theory plays an increasingly important role in drafting a strategy to alleviate poverty. It should be noted that not all the theories under Feminism are included in this study, but only those relevant to the focus thereof. The following sections below reviews Feminism.

2.3.4. Feminism

Feminism is an age-old resistance against patriarchal practices that bears the outcomes of women's oppression (Samuel, 2016:371). The founding principle of Feminism is premised on equality for women in all spheres of life; ability and freedom to decide their own destiny; and access everything available (Yadav & Yadav, 2018:60; Raina, 2020:3372; Mohajan, 2022:2). One of the most important events of the 1960s and the 1970s was the Feminist Theory which questioned the traditionally accepted treatment of women under the patriarchal believe, *viz*., treat women as voiceless, barred from mainstream participation in activities and handed inferior treatment compared to men (Rivkin & Ryan, 2004:765). Commenting on Feminist Theory, Thompson (2001:7) argues that "feminism is centrally concerned with judgments of what ought and what ought not to be the case, with what constitutes right action and the good life and with what operates to prevent that, with the nature of the human conditions within which we want to live and those which must be resisted

because they are morally wrong". Thus, it is argued that to accomplish the Feminist premises, decisions taken about women ought to include them as the key role players, which would better enable them to understand what is relevant to enhance their situation and what would work best to address their challenges. It is further argued that the process of including women in matters related to enhancing their circumstances and increasing justice would yield the best results by implementing the set decisions which would suit their challenges.

Butler (1988:523) believes that Feminist Theory attempts to present women's actual cultural situation in their oppressive state, whilst simultaneously tries to correct their representation. It could be assumed that all theories related to Feminism are rooted in the same commonality of freeing women from any bondage that perpetuates their suffering and inequality. Feminists believe that women are treated as secondary human beings to men which they consider as discriminatory, unethical, and unacceptable (Effiong & Inyang,2016:2). In confirming that Feminism is based on correcting the differing treatment assigned to women and men, MacKinnon (1989:37) argues that Feminist Theory has the reservation that gender differentiation ought to be a foundation that builds opportunities to access benefits. It is argued that these benefits often tend to evade women because they are considered inferior and unimportant, as well as discount their efforts and inputs, and along the way undermine their rights and dignity in an unacceptable and unethical manner (refer to Section 2.3.1).

Feminists underscore the belief that men are accorded superior value while women are recognised as inferior by employing the traditional belief of excluding them. This is justified by the cultural belief to eliminate women from external institutions such as political and religious sectors which provides power, honour and includes remuneration benefits (Effiong & Inyang, 2016:1). Discussions on Feminist Theory attempts to understand the difference between men and women as well as men having an edge over women, accompanied by inequality and the power relation that favours men (Sturgeon, 2016:16). Feminist Theory that identifies and deals with the ills that bedevils the life of women who are discriminated against, denied the right to vote, as well as access to education and property ownership (Laing, 2016:13). Processes of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism developed remnants that positioned inequality

along the lines of gender, race, and class (Haraway, 2006:122). It can be assumed that traditional or cultural impediments such as patriarchy deprives women of the opportunity to participate freely in any social beneficial activity that would result in both social and economic emancipation of women.

Feminism is driven by the quest to eradicate man-made oppression which shapes women's lives; systematically eradicate poverty among women and emancipates the working-class women by challenging capitalism (Ehrenreich, 1976:3). Thus, Feminist Theory generates the understanding of power relations, gender politics and core issues founded on strengthening women's rights and interests. It is against this backdrop that, being female, Feminism perceives women to belong to a particular group, not only because they possess the same quality as determined by the biological make-up, but also a fundamental commonality that women share which is associated with the challenges and oppression that are female specific, related to politics, and social in nature (Stanley, 2013:21).

Mahdawi (2016:1) explains that a person who self-identifies as a feminist does not imply that she/he is a feminist. Adichie (2014:17) provides an alternative definition – a feminist, she writes, is "a man or a woman who says, yes, there's a problem with gender as it is today and we must fix it, we must do better". Therefore, shared benefits across the entire spectrum of women take precedence over individualistic benefits. Thus, Feminism could be perceived as an emancipation of women working towards the same objectives that encompass the economic, social, and cultural aspects for all women. According to Levit, Verchick, and Minow (2016:9), Feminism can be perceived as a house comprising of different rooms which serve various tasks. It is not a fixed viewpoint that is focussed on a conviction of a single theory at the neglect of other perspectives, but rather considers various theories and perspectives (Kang, Lessard, Heston & Nordmaken, 2017:6). It can be argued that as every room has its own function, these complement each other and cannot fulfil its obligation independently from the other rooms. Likewise, every sub-theory under Feminism serves a purpose and highlights a particular aspect of women's rights. Consequently, to address all inequalities, respectively emphasised in the various sub-theories of Feminism, holistically focuses on ensuring harmony in the lives of women.

As alluded to in Section 2.3.1, Donovan (2012:169) argues that it is not only the practice of equal rights that would satisfy the feminist objective, but the inclusion of eradicating traditionally depriving practices towards women. The core of Feminist Theory could be referred to as housing critical thinking, empowerment, and social change (Laing, 2016:304). It was argued in Section 2.2, that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Feminism, like poverty, comprises of various causes which must be addressed simultaneously through various methods to arrive at the set goals. Hence, this study does not underscore any of the feminist's "rooms" or feminist theories but only committed to those "rooms" or theories which are core in liberating oppressed women and the inequalities which promotes poverty among them. Radical Feminist Theory is one such 'room', which explores gender dictates rooted in patriarchy, the oldest form of oppression by men over women, which provoked feminists to fight for equality.

2.3.4.1. Radical Feminist Theory

Radical Feminist Theory is a sub-theory of Feminist Theory and is premised on equality for women. The Women's Movement propelled women forward and forced them to understand that men created a reality that designed them into subordinate human beings, and a view that must be challenged (Smith, 1974:7). The disdain of men against women could be understood by the men's actions during the 1969 anti-inauguration rally in Washington where feminists took to the stage with the hope of presenting their views but were denied the opportunity. The men booed them off the stage. Subsequently, the future reaction of women equalled the treatment that feminists received on that day and resulted in radical action that accentuated their demand to be heard; eradicate male supremacy; and denounce insubordinate treatment (Donovan, 2012:139).

Radical Feminist Theory holds that the oppression of women is a result of the accepted patriarchal practices based on the oppression of women with the sole purpose of benefitting men (Lewis, 2020:1). Similarly, Taylor (2014:3) believes that the oppression and deprivation that women suffer because of their gender are attributed to patriarchal tendencies which inhibit them from enjoying the same benefits as men. This situation gives men power to dominate women as well as push them into

subordination, and thereby justify and reinforce a domineering behaviour of men over women (Storey, 2015:135). According to Hooks (2000:84), Radical Feminist Theory seeks to change the acceptable *status quo* of the power domination from one gender over the other. The theory considers the entire spectrum of women, irrespective of what differentiates them. Race or class is not the bases of this approach; rather, the oppression of women is attributed to the domineering nature of males which results in differences among humans (Thompson, 2001:133). It can be assumed that the difference is not meant to ensure that the oppressed gender is accorded the support to overcome their challenges to enhance themselves but used to advance oppression amongst women.

Radical feminists abhor and challenge rooted societal patriarchy and believe that the practice cannot be allowed to continue (Sand & Nuccio, 1992:490). Fighting oppression is part of the plan to address patriarchy (Doherty, 2019:23). Shulman (1980:601) argues that radical feminists systematically ensure that women push for change in the power relation that benefits males and the envisaged changes aimed to abandon the insubordination expected from society by women. It can be assumed that women should understand the cause and the reason of their fight, and thereafter, identify the envisaged method that could bring about results as also alluded to in Section 2.3.4, above. The expected outcome of the fight could be policy changes but that must not be a distraction from the fundamental motive of the fight which is aimed to structurally improve the living conditions of marginalised women (Cohen & Jackson, 2016:3). Thus, the core responsibility of improving the lives of women resides within themselves by taking charge to initiate the change they envisage and to perform a fundamental role in the entire process of change (Kang, Lessard, Heston & Nordmaken, 2018:310). Women must confront patriarchy and change the traditional dictates of insubordination and prioritise their own development over and above the historic system of the family. Therefore, women should abandon the *status quo* preserves that perpetuate poverty and re-enforces male dominance.

It is argued that Radical Feminist Theory highlights the patriarchal tendencies of power domination from one gender over the other, resulting in gender inequality and the oppression of women. It is inferred that to address this situation, women themselves should take responsibility and play a leading role to enhance their lives through

initiatives that bring about the envisaged change. The poverty alleviation framework developed in this study concentrated on how a patriarchal system would counteract and inhibit oppression amongst women. The framework included initiatives which women could adhere to in alleviating oppression.

In addition to Radical Feminist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory reviewed in the section below, explains that the innate efforts of women that could be appreciated in public institutions is ignored with the belief that women's capabilities are required and meant to deliver household chores (OECD, 2014:1). Removing the household burden has a potential to accord women freedom of choice, afford them equal right to use their time as they deem fit, seize equal opportunities, and demonstrate their capabilities.

2.3.4.2. Liberal Feminist Theory

Liberal Feminist Theory is the second which was reviewed in relation to poverty amongst women. As mentioned in Section 2.3.4.1, above, this theory seeks total equality of the rights of women. However, it should be considered that total emancipation could become difficult for women due to the lack of authority and the right to craft their desired destiny (Baehr, 2013:1). As stated in Section 2.3.3, power is pivotal to access resources. Liberal Feminist Theory supports the notion that poverty is not only caused by market distortion, but by other contributing factors, such as underdevelopment (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2015:35). It could be assumed that the deprivation of women calls for government intervention as formulators of legislation and policies to address poverty and enhance empowerment amongst women. According to Lewis (2020:1), Liberal Feminist Theory intends to promote gender equality in all public spaces, gain the same benefits accorded to men in the workplace, and educational settings for women.

The theory is in alignment with legislation listed in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, and encapsulated in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2, Section 9) in the Constitution, 1996, which underscores the right to freedom, dignity, and equality (RSA, 1996:6). The fundamental principles of liberalism are equality and freedom (Harrison & Boyd, 2018:202). Failure to align equality and freedom due to any form of group differences misses the liberalism compliance mark (Kymlicka, 1995:165). It is probable that if the

values and principles of liberalism are fully observed in social institutions, the process would give women the support to exercise their rights and effectively contribute towards any operations. According to Dewey (1963:625), liberalism seeks to release the bondage experienced by individuals from social organisation. Stark (2009:429) further state that Liberal Theory (from which Liberal Feminist Theory stems), is rooted in justice, morality, and utility. Both last-mentioned authors focus on justice. It seems that if future social operations are based on justice, it would be difficult to continue with any form of unethical or inequitable practices. It could be assumed that unethical or inequitable behaviour thrives in social institutions if justice is abandoned. It is argued that Liberal Theory could be better placed and applied to ensure that justice is at the centre of operations, and subsequently counteract future challenges which are likely to occur because of inequality.

Allen, Brennan, Cornell, Cudd, Hampton, Lloyd and Smith (2004:113) support Dewey (1963:625) and Stark (2009:429), but in addition to justice, perceive liberty as a critical part of Liberal Theory. It could be inferred that if liberation is another important component of liberalism, justice and liberty would strengthen the future of liberalism and, by implication, the tenets of Liberal Feminist Theory. Future considerations should also contemplate that the Attribution Theory is premised on self-blame and contradicts Liberal Feminist Theory by concluding that oppressors must be held accountable for their own non-achievement and failure to realise their aspirations (Lehning, Vu & Pintak, 2007:7). Therefore, Attribution Theory rejects structural deprivation that promotes poverty among women (as was alluded to in the discussion on Structural Theory – see Section 2.3.2), coupled with the lack of control to change the environment. It can be argued that poverty amongst women has many attributes that contribute towards their failure and predominantly insurmountable for them to resolve and thereby suggest that Individualistic Theory ignores other aspects that cause poverty.

It was stated in Section 2.2.1, that poverty is a multi-dimensional concept that cannot be assigned to a particular cause. This implies that poor women cannot be held solely responsible for their poverty. In demonstrating the difficulty that women face to address poverty, Mackinnon (1989:237) states that “law becomes legitimate and social dominance becomes invisible. Liberal legalism is thus a medium for making

male dominance both invisible and legitimate by adopting the male point of view in law at the same time as it enforces that view of the society. It can be argued that women's traditional expectations, as illustrated in Section 2.2.1.1, and Section 2.3.1, sustains itself by manifesting it in varying conventional aspects of the environment. Therefore, it is argued that women must use the premises of Liberal Theory to liberate themselves and ensure their own liberty and justice from oppressive practices and poverty.

Fineman and Thomadsen (2013:122) claim that “many women much of the time are giving selves rather than liberal selves”. To liberate themselves, women need to be vigilant and ensure that the goal towards equality and sameness includes the spheres of decision-making and guards against gender differences that promote the “non-sameness” of “women and men” (MacKinnon, 1987:22). Liberal Theory’s effort to acquire freedom and equality is acknowledged; however, in trying to explain the predicament of the situation of women, Rank (2004:50) clarifies that the approach underscores that the loser of the game should be replaced by understanding why the game in the first place produces losers. It can be argued that since Liberal Theory makes a plea for justice, which is underpinned by doing well for those who do not have the power to change their lives for the better, the reason why women are exposed to poverty must be accentuated.

On the other hand, to address the cause of poverty, the need for equality is articulated in the objectives of the SDGs and the prescripts of the Constitution, 1996, which should be realised either through community members supporting each other, or, more importantly, the government fulfilling its responsibilities and takes care of its citizenry. The underlying factor is that social justice is a basic human right for all. However, the liberal approach expounded by Feminism is primarily aimed at institutional changes, which is a concern because women’s feelings and efforts are discounted (Holmstrom, 2003:4). Its limitations on economic emancipation and lack of radicalism have also been criticised. However, acknowledgment of the immense contribution of all the feminist theories towards the emancipation of women must not be undervalued, irrespective of the limitations (Lorber, 1997:7).

It is necessary to reiterate that Liberal Feminist Theory is based on equality and justice; biologically women and men are different, which should never be a determining

factor to judge nor disaffirm opportunities for women. It is argued that women should be able to operate from an enabling environment, free of limitations and disadvantageous arrangements because they are not less significant than men. This calls for the rejection of inequality, as described by Liberal Feminist Theory, and the enforcement of freedom of choice to demonstrate women's worth and shape beneficial projects to alleviate poverty.

Another feminist theory under the Feminism umbrella is Social Feminist Theory, which reflects on the difficulty women experience to excel in a class-stratified environment. The extent of power and control determines access to societal privileges. Hence, too much power in the hands of men must be redistributed between men and women to realise equality (Enyew & Mihrete, 2018:59). Therefore, efforts to alleviate poverty should not only concentrate on women but also be directed at men who control the power. Subsequently, the following section reviews the primary tenets of Social Feminist Theory.

2.3.4.3. Social Feminist Theory

The focus of Social Feminist Theory (a derivative of Socialism) is aimed at inclusivity to act against challenges to which women are exposed instead of viewing these from one perspective. It incorporates inequality that relates to class, sexism, and racism (Sands & Nuccio, 1992:490). Similarly, Epstein (2001:4) concurs and argues that Socialism is not a fight against one stand-alone inequality, but it incorporates other central inequalities in race and class which are undemocratic and detrimental towards the growth and progress of females. Furthermore, Schneider and Pham (2017:91) maintain that Social Feminism Theory is a product of class and race and to resolve women's challenges, both must be dealt with simultaneously. This is unlike Radical Feminist Theory that has its foundations rooted in gender inequality that oppresses women and believes that if eradicated, class and race issues would be resolved automatically.

Donovan (2012:31) denotes that under Social Feminist Theory, women have the right to relinquish their socially constructed responsibilities of being home-bound to establish an avenue to operate in the public space. Social Feminist Theory seeks to

understand how gender and class influences women's social lives, particularly the capitalistic nature which confines them to the production line (MacKenzie, 2008:186). According to this theory, the class-based treatment that ensued from the capitalist and patriarchal way was stratified and classified, and resulted in inequality (Effiong & Inyang,2016:12). Social feminists have revealed the same situation in the family-setting where the household and production work undertaken by women goes unnoticed and is undermined (Haraway, 2006:125). Social feminists highlight two primary points, namely: class and race because these disengage from other women's challenges of power relations which harm them (Brenner, 2014:38). Holmstrom (2003:1) characterises a socialist feminist as a person who takes an all-inclusive approach to free women from the entire spectrum of oppression, be it gender, class, or race.

The social feminists' perception is that economic equality provides women freedom and independence to discharge their domestic responsibilities effectively because the drivers of this chore are financial in nature (Lipschultz, 1989:136). It was established in Chapter 1, Section 1.1; and Section 2.2.1, that household work is women's sole responsibility and cleaning detergents are the primary ingredients in the house to realise a normal standard of living. Also alluded to in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, and Section 2.2, of this chapter, is that electricity is another financial cost to cook, and money is required to buy water and soap for the laundry. Women are faced with these costs, and they discharge the household responsibilities without payment (Hess, Ahmed & Hayes, 2020:7). Lastly, food, which is expensive, is needed to maintain the children's health. However, the untoward rise as illustrated by the consumer price inflation as contained in the Statistical Release, Consumer Price Index May 2021 (RSA, 2021:3) makes it impossible for women to meet basic expenses. These needs are important and presented as part of the ten indicators that fall under the three dimensions of poverty (refer to Figure 2.1).

Napikoski (2016:1) suggests that in striving to find solutions, social feminists believe that men have a role to play to help women to manage and overcome these problems. It appears that men's minimal household responsibilities provide them with an opportunity to search for salaried employment which should be shared with the women who perform most of the household responsibilities and benefits the entire family.

It is evident that both the radical and social feminists concur with the criticism levelled by Liberal Theory that poverty is a shortcoming of economic emancipation. Radical Feminist Theory found its origin in the negative treatment by men of women when they raised their concerns about the unacceptable way they are treated. Moreover, the reaction displayed by men is tantamount to patriarchy. Thus, it is argued that the focus of Radical Feminist Theory is based on discrimination that is practised by men on the social front, who turn women into secondary human beings and powerless to make their own decisions and life choices. Women strive to improve their lives and move away from the bondage by changing the balance of power that favours men and promotes inequality. Furthermore, Social Feminist Theory, similarly to Radical Feminist Theory, focuses on the inequality faced by women. Moreover, other inequalities that did not play a major role in the tenets of Radical Feminist Theory were incorporated, for example, racism and classism suffered by women in both the workplace and the family-setting where their work is undervalued and solely meant for them while men take no form of responsibility in discharging household responsibilities. The inclusion of gender equity, race, and class in the development of the proposed policy implementation framework was critical to support women to alleviate poverty.

From the above review, it can be inferred that Liberal Feminist Theory pivots on the belief that both men and women be treated equally to realise equality and freedom. These two factors (equality and freedom), if properly supported could give rise to justice, and in turn level the playing fields as well as promote economic emancipation of women. According to Liberal Feminist Theory, poverty is borne from other factors and not distortion of the market while it perceives effective policy implementation by the government as another form of poverty alleviation.

Thus far, the focus on Feminist Theory included a review of Radical Feminist, Liberal Feminist and Social Feminist Theory's. The following section reviews another Feminist Theory, namely Black Feminist Theory.

2.3.4.4. Black Feminist Theory

The previous theories on Feminism were founded on equality of women, but specifically gender and social equality, as well as freedom (liberty). Apart from these theories, Black Feminist Theory brings race into the equation. Therefore, this theory does not have any bearing on white women since they do not share the same experiences as black women (Gamble, 2004:81; Gary, 2018:7). African Feminism confirms that women have distinctive traits and do not qualify to be clustered as a homogenous group, although they aspire to attain a common goal of transformation (Musk, Botha & Neil, 2017:64; Ibokessien, 2020:102). Mohajan (2022 :22) argues that the initial theories on Feminism and anti-racist policies ignore black women and operates from the premise that fails to represent the collaboration of race and gender effectively. Intersectionality is fundamental to address black women's issues which gives them the insubordination status that cannot be addressed through their inclusion in the existing structures as an afterthought (Crenshaw, 1989:140; Śliwa, Villesèche, & Muhr 2018:1; Mojab & Carpenter, 2019:2). It is argued that Black Feminist Theory aims to address the shortcomings that led to the development of this specific theory as a sub-theory of Feminism. It can be argued that gender equality (Radical Feminist Theory) is the starting block of Feminist Theory followed by societal freedom (Social Feminist Theory), justice and liberty (Liberal Feminist Theory) and lastly race, which is equally important but initially languished when the above-mentioned feminism theories were discussed and was not given the attention it deserved to benefit black women.

Walker (2004:2) observed that black Feminism for black women is an outlet to address the multi-layered challenges that bring them closer together with the hope of finding a solution from all the women-orientated oppressions and place race at the centre. Carby (1996:111); Chapagain (2020:117) and Brahmbhatt and Kaushik (2021:2794) identify race, gender, and class as triple oppressions which black women have to endure in their daily lives to survive, resulting in them being unnoticed and marginalised. The strength of these three barriers (race, gender, and class) could enhance the challenges faced by black women more difficult compared to their white counterparts who have race discounted from their battle for equality (Hooks, 2014:21). Black women suffer double jeopardy: firstly, they share the race anguish with their

black male counterparts; and secondly, they are bracketed with white women and exposed to the misery of patriarchy (King, 1998:42; Hooks, 2014:21).

The acceptance of the differences among women (race, gender, and class) formed the departure point to comprehend intersectionality in Feminism studies (Davis, 2008:70). Evans-Winters and Love (2015:1), as well as Waters, Rosie and Scheinpflug (2021) view the intersectionality of race, gender, class, and culture as inseparable because this overlap. Thus, it is impossible to separate these issues that are in a way linked to each other and need to be managed simultaneously, because addressing one challenge and disregarding the other does not solve the problem. Therefore, focusing on women's challenges, but disregarding race, gender and class renders the discussion incomplete (De la Rey, 1997:7).

In reflecting on the divergence between race, gender and class, Bartlett (2017:270) claims that the disregard for race influences black women negatively and increases the economic state of disparity, because women inherently suffer from gender inequality. Both gender inequality and race are mutually interdependent and find sustenance from each other's individual support (López, Erwin, Binder & Chavez 2018:5). Therefore, if the treatment of black and white women is based on the same cultural standard, the development and inception of the set standard should incorporate both the black and the white cultural attributes. Moreover, if it is based on white cultural attributes only, it would be racially discriminatory against black women (Gould, 1999:196). Although all women are exposed to socially constructed sufferings and oppressions, it appears that the intensity black women suffer is deeper than that of their white counterparts (Chapagain, 2020:116), as mentioned above.

It is important for white women to realise that black women tend to find it difficult to align themselves with their counterparts' convictions due to the race difference which portrays blacks as inferior (Carby, 1996:128). The privileges enjoyed by white women tend to distract them from acknowledging the challenges black women experience, thus resulting in a disagreement between women who must work as a united front but fail because of race (Hooks, 2014:23). Consequently, unity is lost among women who could provide consolidated power to overcome their challenges (Rivkin & Ryan, 2004:856; Martinez & Hanisch, 2012:12). It was mentioned in Section 2.3.4, that

Feminism is grounded in equality for the right of all women, irrespective of sexual orientation, race, or class and should never overlook each other in all their operations, even when not in the company of other women.

In the quest to improve their lives, black women continue to highlight difficult experiences through expression of their dreadful past experiences of race and gender discrimination that continues to date (Nash, 2008:9; Chapagain, 2020:114). Despite the historical awareness and policies that benefit all citizens, it appears that fighting race, gender and class has always occupied the centre stage to overcome oppression amongst black women (Akala, 2018:228). Knowledge is a strategy for black feminists to overcome the triple challenges (race, gender, and class); simultaneously empowering themselves to change their situation and expel objectification and any form of domination (Collins, 1990:553). Furthermore, Alam (2020:38) established that Black Feminism identified various challenges faced by black women including gender, sexual aggression, and daily economic exploitation. Furthermore, it can be added that black women are currently fighting poverty which is prevalent among the black rural communities and that it affects most women, as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.1; and Sections 2.2 and 2.2.1 above.

The inequalities experienced by black women requires them to be cautious of the type of leaders they appoint (Cohen & Jackson, 2016:3). Appointed leaders should have first-hand experience of the real challenges that women suffer; and the ability to manoeuvre around the difficulty of relating these into policies which would serve women from various backgrounds (Bacchi & Eveline, 2015:98).

As indicated in Sections 2.3.4.1 and 2.3.4.4, it can be asserted that, perhaps women themselves are better placed to work towards their own agenda because they live, understand, and have first-hand experience of the problem. It is for this reason that Emejulu (2018:272) opines that it is it upon women themselves to change their situation and not only to talk about sisterhood but to show action, commitment, engage in difficult issues amongst themselves, for example, superiority of white women over black women; acquire a solution that would give them collective power to challenge the oppressive situation they experience.

The fundamentals of the theories on Feminism are premised on values that act as barriers to equality, social justice, and freedom of women which directly entrenches poverty into their lives. Black Feminism Theory, like all Feminist Theories, finds its basis in the promotion of equality. However, race is brought to the fore, and the theory's focus is predominantly on black women. This theory confirms the need for intersectionality when addressing the plight of black women who suffer inequities identified earlier in the chapter and is further compounded by race which does not affect white women. It is argued that black women suffer double jeopardy since they need to join in the fight for survival with their black male counterparts when race is at the centre and take up arms with their female counterparts when patriarchy is used to oppress women. Race and gender inequality are interdependent thus resulting in the loss of economic emancipation of black women.

It is against this background that occasionally, black and white women find it difficult to work together because the race difference places pressure on the former who have to explain themselves continuously while on the other hand the latter enjoy the historic privilege as a result of their race.

2.4. POVERTY ALLEVIATION

The Cambridge advanced Learners Dictionary and Thesaurus (2017:1) defines the concept *alleviate* as: "to make something bad such as pain or problem less severe". Thus, alleviation, and in this study *poverty alleviation*, is the process or the techniques employed to reduce the level of the suffering that emanates from poverty, either completely or partially. Therefore, to alleviate poverty, it is argued that the process and/or programmes must be designed such that they are uncomplicated; as well as ensure that it is understandable and simple to utilise, without further exposing people to embarrassment or painful experiences.

Bradshaw (2007:2) states that understanding poverty, its origin and manifestation is a departure point towards designing an appropriate method to address poverty, as explained in Section 2.2.1. Poverty alleviation programmes in South Africa date as far back as 1929 and is aligned to its ancient origin of 1820 (refer to Section 2.2). One of the most important events in 1930 was the Carnegie Commission that was meant to

alleviate poverty among poor white South African citizens, through financial aid from the New York Carnegie Cooperation (Vosloo, 2011:2; Francis & Webster, 2019:789). Subsequently, the recommendations were solely directed towards developing white people into contributors to the economy and neglect the plight of the majority black (Mabungazi, 2009:446; Note,2004:11; Suffla & Seedat, 2021:25-26). After 54 years, a second Carnegie Commission was established in 1984, which encompassed all South Africans who fall under the category of human deprivation. The alleviation of poverty was the primary objective (Mabungazi, 2009:447; Note,2004:11; Bowers-Du Toit, 2014:514). Furthermore, the second Carnegie Commission report concluded that the cause of poverty could not be attributed to only one contributing factor, but various factors (Mabungazi, 2009:448); Bowers-Du Toit, 2014:523; Francis & Webster, 2019:799). This illustrated the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, as revealed in Section 2.2, above. In this respect, it was concluded in Section 2.2, that the multi-dimensional nature of poverty prevents a government from finding one method that could alleviate poverty, and more than one method is required to address various causes.

As mentioned above, in the second Carnegie Commission, black people were not the only group that was investigated but were combined with their white counterparts whose situation was also investigated during 1930. The white populace's investigation had an advantage over that of the black populace because the objective with the white citizens was to refine the gap that was missed during the first Carnegie Commission. It is probable that the reason for the late inclusion of black people (in the second investigation) was that they experienced extensive poverty compared to their white counterparts whose struggle against poverty had already been identified and dealt with earlier. Furthermore, it was possible that the rural areas were not the Carnegie Commission’s initial area of focus. The second Carnegie Commission took place during a time when increased international pressure was place on the oppressive racist Apartheid Government to ensure a non-racial society. This could have contributed to the inclusion of black citizens in the second Carnegie Commission. Nevertheless, when addressing poverty, poor people should be treated equally to alleviate poverty (Lister, 2004:38).

It could be argued that a poverty alleviation strategy is a process and not an end, since efforts to develop such a system was started in 1929, yet poverty continues to be a challenge almost a century later. Furthermore, such a strategy is not static and has to be updated because circumstances change. As explained in Section 2.2, Suich (2012:3), as well as Akinyetun (2022:1) claim that poverty is multi-dimensional, and programmes geared towards poverty alleviation should be exclusive to a particular dimension to avoid missing the target. Moreover, it cannot be a one-size-fits-all programme. Poverty alleviation ought to use parallel approaches to manage deprivations which are critical and specific in nature, for example, address economic and basic social needs simultaneously (Harish, 2018:35).

Using one method to address poverty alleviation defeats the purpose because it would be a narrow approach and likely neglect interrelated factors to address the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. Hence, intense critical thinking forms part of developing a poverty alleviation framework (Lade, Haider, Engström & Schlüter, 2017:9). For example, a person who has money but lacks health because of the lack of such facilities in the community is as deprived as one who is healthy but has no money to attend school (Anand & Sen, 1997:5). Although the two situations differ, both these result in deprivation. Furthermore, to address specific deficits, it would require various approaches to complement each other and run concurrently, as addressing poverty alleviation. Haile and Asfaw (2018:12) agree that numerous factors contribute towards poverty and as such cannot be addressed by a single approach, but rather through a multi-dimensional one (also see Section 2.2.1).

For an effective poverty alleviation system, inclusivity should be observed through transparency and wide consultation should form the cornerstone of the process (Bradshaw, 2007:11). In this respect, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) encourages countries to embark on an effective consultation and include transparency in their poverty reduction strategy (IMF, 2015) Furthermore, any other method that is used to alleviate poverty, for example, an economic growth income generating method, would have to be long-term and sustainable (Rossi & Dupont, 2016:127). Maintaining the assets base is critical to alleviate poverty because the lack of accumulation of assets such as human capital and monetary savings traps people in a continuous cycle of poverty. The reason is that the time passes without people

earning an income; places pressure on the already accumulated wealth; and reduces the accumulated assets to the point that it might reach the stage of depletion (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2015:39). As alluded to in Section 2.3.2, poverty is not static, implying that a person can move out of poverty. However, as was indicated in Section 2.2.1, that this notion does not necessarily hold true for women. It is often a difficult process for women to migrate from poverty because they would have to carry their household responsibilities as well as continue to look after their children. Thus, adding to the certain structural barriers such as tradition and culture, lack of education and spatial challenges, unique to rural areas as mentioned in Section 2.2.3, results in a significant challenge for women to move away from poverty.

Poverty alleviation is part of the government's responsibility to ensure that they herald in equality, uplift the citizens, and lift them from their suffering and afford the entire citizenry opportunities which would benefit the country. Poverty alleviation programmes date back to over a century. For example, the Carnegie Commission was charged with the responsibility of establishing poverty alleviation programmes for the white race only, while the black race was included 54 years later to form part of the commission's responsibility. The late inclusion of black women in the Commission could be a reason that poverty is still rampant in the black communities. It was argued that poverty alleviation should have a specific target to ensure proper implementation thereof. As stated in Section 2.2, poverty is multi-dimensional and requires such an approach. Thus, failure to identify the target could render a poverty alleviation programme futile. Furthermore, it is argued that poverty alleviation programmes should be consultative, transparent, and inclusive, long-term, sustainable to break the circle of poverty, and address the abovementioned factors.

In the context of this study, the aim of poverty alleviation was to enhance and empower the lives of women through frameworks, plans and programmes to: (1) reclaim their dignity through equal treatment (eradicate the patriarchal system and ensure gender equality); (2) increase social justice and liberty; (3) improve access to basic needs; and (4) enhance economic capability. It is presumed that women are not the sole beneficiaries of poverty alleviating projects, but the entire family and, inversely, the community and the country would also enjoy the benefits (Bueno & Morefield, 2017:9). It is against this background that the anticipated end results of poverty alleviation

should be such that the effect is felt on the home-front, and the entire family share in the benefits. Equal participation of women in generating income also increases the level of equality (Haq & Amin, 2017:114) and various methods could be used to ensure that the economic status of women contributes towards the alleviation of poverty. One such method is micro-financing, which is expounded upon in the next section.

2.4.1. Micro-Financing

To alleviate poverty and to improve women's financial status, micro-financing is one such method that can be applied thereto. As is the case with any other strategy, flaws are imminent. Banerjee and Jackson (2017:17) argue that using micro-financing as a poverty alleviation tool develops various unintended consequences, such as, plunging poor people deeper into the trap of failing to repay their loans or using the loan money for unrelated activities. Thus, the granting of micro-finance needs to be clearly outlined and understood prior to transferring the funds and be coupled with regular and proper monitoring of its utilisation. Hussain, Bhuiyan, Said and Ab (2017:42) believe that education and training could be used as another form to develop business skills which could enhance and grow businesses, followed by a reduction in poverty. It is against this background that micro-financing should be coupled with sound education and training to create an understanding of the responsibilities attached to the people involved in micro-financing.

The approval of micro-financing should not be merely based on the received application or request without proper due diligence (Ravallion, 2016:23). Alcock and Craig (2009:258) argue that micro-finance should not be a process whereby money received is meant for immediate use but utilised to build long-lasting wealth. Micro-finance should be fashioned such that it would bind the women to utilise the money for its intended purposes with the hope to create an asset-generating income base (Alcock & Craig, 2009:258). It is argued that the micro-financer should play an active role in the poverty alleviation transaction. When considering micro-financing, the lender or the banks could develop a measuring tool to assess comprehensive knowledge about the loan applicant. Furthermore, a tool can also be developed to monitor spending after the approval of the application and the payment of the loan.

2.4.2. Saving

Another method that could be used to alleviate poverty is to encourage women to open a savings account with the intention to earn interest. Steinert, Zenker, Flipiak, Movsisyan, Cluver and Shenderovich (2017:1) confirm this notion, but state that it is difficult for people who are poverty stricken to prioritise desire over need (Allen, 2016:16). It is likely that poor people understand the benefits of saving and would like to pursue that direction, but the immediate needs take precedence over the long-term benefits. If people find it difficult to afford basic daily needs such as food, shelter, education and health, saving does not necessarily make sense to them, since survival is more important than the ideal of saving at that stage (Deloitte, 2014:1; Lawlor, 2018; Makgele & Chikwekwete, 2019:18; Nasriddinovna, 2021:134).However, the situation is different with the wealthy.

Bozio, Emmerson, O'dea and Tetlow (2017:1102), as well as Valodia and Francis (2020) argue that after the wealthy satisfy their basic needs, they are likely in a position to have a surplus and possibly find it easy to save. This difference sustains the inequality gap and money remains in the hands of the wealthy. If not properly managed, inequality has the potential of being a by-product of economic growth, affect poverty negatively and inversely impede economic growth, and thereby form a vicious circle (Ako, 2017:43). Therefore, poverty's multi-dimensional nature needs multi-dimensional poverty reduction approaches. This is supported and explained in the next section.

2.4.3. Economic growth

Economic growth would be a futile exercise to reduce poverty and could fail to yield the expected results if it operates from an unequal terrain and most importantly, when economic growth and inequality is consistent (UNESCO, 2016:123). Mehrotra and Sinha (2017:57) confirm that gender inequality derails economic growth and presents itself in a form of difference in household duties, educational skills, and cultural dissimilarities where people do not enjoy the same status and opportunity. The research conducted by Hussain *et al*. (2017:3); and Siddique *et al*. (2016:1433), reveal that there is a direct correlation between poverty reduction and economic growth.

Inclusive development should be a precursor to inclusive growth if the poverty reduction process is to succeed in its endeavour (Ngepah, 2017:52). However, women are not given the same economic opportunities as men (UN Women, 2015:236). Therefore, this could be perceived as an unethical achievement if economic growth is hailed and applauded at the exclusion of checking the influence it has on the economic status of citizens in its entirety to ensure that growth is inclusive and equal for all.

The North West Province experienced an economic growth of 4.9% in 2015 while the unemployment level increased to 27.2% (Bokone Bophirima Government, 2017:1). It could be argued that the economic growth in the North West Province is still operating in an environment plagued by inequality. It is possible that the economic growth is benefitting the few and wealthy and while the majority of the unemployed and the poor continue with the struggle (Keeley, 2015:33). There is a significant correlation between economic growth and poverty because the income from economic growth is not distributed equally and benefits some members of the population at the exclusion of others. This is a contributory factor for women who do not realise the income benefits from the economic growth.

Perhaps, for the economic growth to be fair and just, every person must be afforded the opportunity of active economic participation and enjoy the benefits thereof. Moletsane *et al*. (2010:20), claim that the fundamentals that form part of poverty reduction should be aligned to the redistribution of resources and wealth. It could be argued that the distribution of wealth must not only be expected from the wealthy who have been enjoying and living a life of luxury for an extended period but the new entrants joining the list of the rich must also contribute. Perhaps in a bid to inculcate the spirit of poverty reduction among women, it could be that every new entrant into the empowerment space ought to immediately assume the responsibility of assisting other women to distance from poverty through empowerment. As stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.4, women should treat poverty as a struggle for all women and not their own individual fight. Possibly and most importantly, the practice should be systematic amongst women themselves to grow the economy and uplift each other by introducing them to economic activities. Women should also be partly accountable for each other's involvement in income generating activities and not abandon their responsibility to empower other women.

Empowerment through employment poses a damper on the economy (Mabiza, Mahlalela & Mbohwa, 2017:4). In this respect, self-employment creates jobs and improves women's economic situations as an alternative to looking for employment, as well as inversely build the economy to generate cash with the intention of alleviating poverty (Begum, Islam, Khan, Islam & Tapu ,2016:84). Thus, women working together towards a common goal could be perceived as another avenue to create own employment and afford women the opportunity to leverage from each other and promote and develop a social support system instead of seeking employment.

Social capital is characterised by the networking and association relations that are built on cooperation and trust between people (Banerjee & Jackson, 2017:8). Story and Carpiano (2017:4) argue that the social capital is built on the personal or organisational network and affords the affiliates the advantage of leveraging resources for their personal or organisational benefits. Roark (2004:1) elaborates that the success of working together as a unit pulls in the individual strength that ultimately benefits every participant in the unit and provides a formal self-help group of women another avenue of uniting and fighting poverty.

2.4.4. Self-help group strategy

A network of poor women as part of the poverty alleviation process plays a critical role to ensure that a self-help strategy is informed by committed persons whose input has an experience of the targeted problem. Narasimha, Anand, Ravish, Navya and Ranganath (2017:2027) claim that women take advantage of the self-help group strategy which can absorb the negative effects related to patriarchy and connected risks that suppress women's leadership capabilities. This notion is supported by Srivastava and the Institute of Cooperative and Corporate Management, Research and Training (ICCMRT) which states that the formation of a self–help group should be geared towards the promotion of empowerment of women (ICCMRT, 2016:7088). The UN (1995:44) encourages community development through projects that promote communal assistance to foster the development of individual benefits, self-reliance, and confidence among the poor, as well as fight and reduce poverty. It is possible that learning from others could reduce the risk of committing the same mistake and lessen

the implementation phase. Women should move out of discomfort by emulating others who have benefitted from the self-help strategy and realised poverty reduction.

According to Davis and Sanchez-Martinez (2015:13), it is incumbent on women to fight poverty because it affects them directly. Joining hands, working together, and taking care of the resources that have been allocated to alleviate poverty is the responsibility they have to embrace (Haq & Amin, 2017:2017) (also see Section 2.5.3). Therefore, if poverty or under-development is to be addressed in a poverty-stricken area, the participation of women in the alleviation of poverty is fundamental. Moreover, women cannot afford to operate disjointedly, but require the concerted efforts of the self-help group and all the relevant partners, including the entire women folk to succeed, as also alluded to in Section 2.5.3. This should give credence to the imperatives of unification and inclusion that embrace the notion of "when they enter, we all enter" (Crenshaw, 1989:167). The possibility is that, for women to prosper and alleviate poverty, they do not have to wait and discount themselves from the inception and implementation participation process. Women should cooperate and group themselves to access the area that men have sheltered for themselves with the aim to enhance their own lives.

Another fundamental issue should be the behaviour of women towards others once they enter the empowerment space. It is argued that the focus should not only be on projects, but also on cooperation. Women should benefit and share among themselves as self-help groups. De Kok (2011:46) confirms that institutions' operations have changed and reached a stage where knowledge and networking form the fundamentals of decision-making. Culas, Razafindrakoto and Roubaud (2016:209) concur and refer to the participatory approach that was launched in 1999 after policies had failed to address the housing problem and claim that the participatory approach underscores and includes the affected communities in trying to resolve their problems. The participatory approach to include the community was a global intensive effort where countries, including South Africa, were expected to implement the strategy to address the housing problem (Culas *et al*., 2016:209). It could be argued that human resource management is the core function in the self-help group strategy that encourages self-development and cooperation and possesses the same underlying

effects that promotes organisations operations and people's capabilities and shortcomings are appreciated and corrected to promote empowerment.

It is further argued that women benefitting from empowerment projects ought to enter into a standard agreement of ensuring that empowered women introduce other women to these projects through the self-help group strategy. Each contract can, for example, dictate that every empowered woman takes no less than two women under her guidance to nurture and introduce them to the same empowered self-help space. The strategy could develop a substantial group of women to fight the imagined 'they' group that is masculine dominated with all the resources and the imagined ‘we’ group, deprived of voicing their opinion publicly (Haraway, 1988:575). Thus, women must support each other through self-help groups; deviate from the victim space of “we, the deprived women” and enter the resourced space of ‘they, the resourced women', simultaneously accounting to enhance their lives and alleviate poverty for other women through the self-help strategy. As stated in Section 2.3.4, Feminism is not individualistic but responsible to uplift other women from social and economic inequalities.

The community could further extend the self-help strategy by avoiding the role of buying or consuming external products from which they are excluded and enjoy the benefits of the profits from the sales (Pansera & Martinez, 2017:11). Women are the ones who use products to manage their household responsibilities and would benefit from the creation of their own product through self-help strategies to keep the money within their ranks, rather than give it away, as alluded to in Section 2.3.4.3. Furthermore, it was mentioned in Section 2.3.4.2, that women should put in their own efforts to achieve their liberation instead of expecting others to work on their behalf. Taking the individual responsibility of doing things which are self-beneficial results in being distance from poverty, but individual efforts require the supplementary support which Bradshaw (2007:15) postulates must be “deep and wide”. It is against this backdrop that a collaborative effort from all the role players is paramount to realise poverty reduction amongst women, the self-help strategy coupled with external support, self-development, and sustenance is accentuated.

Based on the above discussion, it is important to take heed of what Brenner (2014:38) states: “Women’s self-organization can be parochial or coalitional — that is; it can either reproduce existing social divisions among women or reach beyond them”. Thus, acknowledging that the self-help strategy, as other phenomena, has its downside, and in turn recognise weaknesses among women themselves, it is necessary to correct these and avoid situations where women empowerment could be derailed. Nonetheless, this should not deflect from the strength that could benefit the self-help group.

The four poverty alleviation strategies for women, reviewed above, are identified as follows: (1) micro-financing; (2) saving; (3) economic growth, consistent with equality; and (4) self-help group strategy. From the literature review it can be inferred that micro-financing is helpful to raise funds for women to alleviate poverty, if it is managed properly. It is important to ensure that the process of funding women to alleviate poverty is managed properly by the funder and that the due diligence process is part thereof because the funds from micro financing could on occasion be misdirected and utilised for unintended purposes. Furthermore, if not managed properly, it could lead women deeper into poverty instead of creating asset-generating income to alleviate the scrouge. Education and training are skills that could be utilised to support women to manage the funds received from micro-financing.

Saving is another strategy that can be used to alleviate poverty. The social-economic status of women presents a difficult choice to save money and utilise for immediate basic needs, for example, food, shelter, education, and health, because it appears more important than saving. The same cannot be said of wealthy citizens who arguably find it easier to save. This further increases the inequality gap between the wealthy and poor.

Economic growth as a poverty alleviation strategy is disrupted by the gender inequality gap and poverty. Women and men should be given the same opportunity to participate in the economy if the latter is to realise the set goal to alleviate poverty because failure to include everybody perpetuates inequality and benefits the wealthy at the expense of the poor. The North West Province realised economic growth in 2015 with a negative correlation between economic growth and unemployment. This increase in

the unemployment level revealed that the economic growth is not inclusive and benefits only the wealthy. Consequently, the poor who are primarily women are excluded. The distribution of wealth plays an important role in the quest to reduce poverty; not only the wealthy should participate in the process, but also the poor. Moreover, women should be the critical role players because they can assist in the alleviation of poverty process by ensuring that the empowerment of women plays a crucial role towards economic growth. Women who participate in an empowerment programme ought to introduce others in the same empowerment space and embrace the inclusion to participation with a view to empower as many women as possible. This would provide women the opportunity to network and be accountable for their own empowerment by creating employment and contribute towards economic growth.

The self-help group strategy to alleviate poverty presents an opportunity for like-minded women to draw strength from each other and use the self-help group to mitigate the risk of having their potential side-lined (e.g., women leadership that is suppressed because of the lack of opportunities). Through a self-help group, communal assistance, confidence, and self-development through joining hands and working together could likely be achieved, as well as realise the goal to alleviate poverty. All the above-mentioned poverty alleviation strategies play a role in the development of a poverty alleviation framework for women in the North West Province.

2.5. CONCLUSION

The literature review conducted in this chapter expounded on the phenomenon of poverty, specifically among women, and reflected on the methods utilised to measure poverty, with a view to establish effective ways to alleviate poverty levels among women in South Africa. In this respect, three approaches to the measurement of poverty were reviewed: the consensual method; the income poverty method; and the subjective method. The consensual method was established to be the most relevant poverty level measurement to this study since it indicates the target population's low standard of living and low income. Furthermore, it supports both methods of poverty measurement: direct method (to satisfy the basic need); and the indirect method (alignment of the income level to the poverty line).

Moreover, it was found that the measurement of poverty levels relates to the poverty dimensions of education, health and living standards and provides for the multi-dimensional nature of poverty to cover various issues that cause poverty. It was established that the measurement of poverty levels should be followed by the adoption of approaches to alleviate poverty from an informed perspective. This would enable government decision-makers to align policies related to poverty and develop suitable methods and address it as a priority.

The chapter also clarified the difference between absolute and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is a deprivation of the basic needs such as shelter, water, health, sanitation. It was further revealed that the rural areas (the locus of this study) have sustained absolute poverty in the 21st century. Since relative poverty is objective and gauged in relation to other citizens who reside in the same community or society, it was not found to be entirely relevant to the locus and focus of this study, given that the inhabitants that are focused upon in this study (those residing in the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality) live in equitable absolute deprivation. In the context of this study, relative poverty can only be considered when a comparison is made between the poverty levels between rural and urban areas and when other factors (e.g., race or gender) are considered. It is therefore argued that the poverty in South Africa can be considered absolute poverty, especially poverty experienced in the rural areas of the North West Province.

Theories that clarify the concept poverty were reviewed, including, Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; and Individualistic Theory. Social Exclusion Theory posits that established barriers marginalise and exclude people from social activities that other people enjoy (Figueroa, 2018:10). It is regarded as the best theory to explain poverty since it covers poverty in its totality, explains its forms, causes and effects (Sameti *et al.*, 2012:46). Structural Theory predicts that there is a correlation between the life of people who struggle and the system which denies them the opportunity to move out of poverty and to take charge of their lives (Brady, 2006:154). Individualistic Theory acknowledges that poverty is caused by individual deficiencies and the lack of a concerted effort to overcome poverty (Kura *et al.*, 2020:49). From the review of Social Exclusion Theory, Structural Theory, and Individualistic Theory, it was revealed that Social Exclusion Theory supersedes the other theories, because social exclusion

does not focus on the individual, but primarily on the holistic society, while deprivation attributes towards the community and its actors. However, Structural Theory and Individualistic Theory also remain relevant to this study. Women remain the marginalised group and it is imperative that they be prioritised in the policy implementation process. Social Exclusion Theory is relevant in justifying the recognition of women as the primary stakeholders in the alleviation of poverty. Furthermore, the social structures which are hostile in the emancipation of women was also addressed in the policy implementation framework to alleviate poverty. Research conducted on Social Exclusion Theory and Structural Theory (Bak & Larsen, 2015:2; Danaan, 2018:27; Egwea, 2019:2) confirms that it is unjustifiable for individuals to be held accountable for poverty that manifests itself structurally and difficult to change, *e.g.,* the traditional and cultural role of women. Thus, the premises of the three aforementioned theories was considered in the development of a poverty alleviation framework for women in selected municipal areas in the North West Province.

The Feminist theories relevant to this study were also reviewed to demonstrate the relationship between poverty and women, namely Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory. In the review of these theories, it was argued that gender equality (Radical Feminist Theory) is the starting block of Feminist Theory followed by societal freedom (Social Feminist Theory), justice and liberty (Liberal Feminist Theory) and lastly race, which is equally important but initially languished when the abovementioned feminism theories were discussed and was not given the attention it deserved to benefit black women.

It was argued that the focus of Radical Feminist Theory is based on discrimination that is practised by men on the social front. Furthermore, Social Feminist Theory, similarly to Radical Feminist Theory, focuses on the inequality faced by women. Moreover, other inequalities that did not play a major role in the tenets of Radical Feminist Theory were incorporated, for example, racism and classism suffered by women in both the workplace and the family-setting where their work is undervalued and solely meant for them while men take no form of responsibility in discharging household responsibilities. The inclusion of gender equity, race, and class in the development of the proposed policy implementation framework was critical to support women to alleviate poverty.

The final section of the chapter focused on techniques employed to reduce the level of the suffering that emanates from poverty alleviation, either completely or partially. It was argued that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that requires a poverty alleviation strategy that employs various methods to realise the objective of poverty reduction.

It was further revealed that a poverty alleviation framework should encompass strategies to: (1) allow women to reclaim their dignity through equal treatment (eradicate the patriarchal system and ensure gender equality); (2) increase social justice and liberty for women; (3) improve women's access to basic needs; and (4) enhance the economic capability of women. Equal participation of women in generating income also increases the level of equality and various methods should be used to ensure that the economic status of women contributes towards the alleviation of poverty. These methods can include: (1) micro-financing; (2) a culture of saving; (3) economic growth, consistent with equality; and (4) self-help group strategies. All the aforementioned poverty alleviation strategies play a role in the development of a poverty alleviation framework for women in the North West Province.

In addition to the theoretical framework on poverty, established in this chapter, the South African statutory and regulatory framework also provide direction in the development of a poverty alleviation strategy for women in the North West Province. Subsequently, the next chapter reviews the national statutory and regulatory framework relating to poverty and the socio-economic factors that affect poverty. South Africa is, however, also a signatory of various international organisations and therefore, international, and regional statutory and regulatory instruments are also reviewed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 it was revealed that poverty is a global multi-dimensional phenomenon coupled with socio-economic challenges that affects every country, but is experienced more by women in developing countries, in particular those who reside in rural areas. Feminist theories – Radical Feminist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, Social Feminist Theory and Black Feminist Theory – were reviewed in Chapter 2, highlighting the foundation of women's battle against patriarchal conduct that perpetuates discrimination and inequality.

Countries that promote women's affairs are actively involved in the alleviation of poverty and the empowerment of women. The role played by various countries is centred around legislation and policies, which in most instances are the outcomes of governments or organisations' accountability to ensure the formulation and the implementation thereof. Some countries are directed by their affiliation to recognised organisations, for example, the UN to deliver on their commitment through foreign aid to uplift developing countries, including South Africa (Rajabov, 2020:1505). Developed and developing countries forge relationships with each other to combat poverty amongst women. Since poverty remains a global phenomenon, both developed and developing countries adopt befitting legislation to in attempts to liberate communities from poverty (Mulaudzi *&* Mulaudzi*,* 2016:2; Doucet, 2020:3; Noorsetya, Dinata & Chayatin 2021:2-3). In certain instances, developed countries set up foreign aid projects for diverse reasons to serve both their own and developing countries' challenges (Amusa & Ngoh, 2016:2; Brett, 2016:2; Prastyanti *et al.,* 2018:128; Heinrich & Kobayashi, 2020:32).

Subsequently, reviewed in this chapter are the internal mandates of the UK, USA, and France, as part of the European Union (EU), aligned to humanitarian assistance to developing countries. Additionally, the AU and SADC are expounded upon as organisations that work in tandem to support each other in the creation of a conducive

environment to alleviate poverty and enhance empowerment in the region, continent and globally.

Also reviewed in this chapter is South Africa's participation in the UN's programmes for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women. Furthermore, the national and international statutory and regulatory frameworks to alleviate poverty and empower women and of significance to this study, are elaborated upon in the chapter. Since the primary focus of the study is on the development of a poverty implementation framework for the policy alleviation of women in the North West Province, the chapter commences with a review on what constitutes policy and a policy implementation framework.

3.2. POLICY AND A POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Policy as a statement of request is preceded by the identification of problems experienced by citizens who have an interest in, and influence on development through change (John, 2013:11; RSA, 2020d:9). Since public policies are developed to address the identified problems that hamper progress or the improvement of the community, they are goal oriented (Sanchawa, 2015:17; Hoeyi & Makgari, 2021:1). Thus, policy is an encompassing statement that directs how to achieve the set goals, as well as the inspiration encapsulated in the statement (RSA (2020:8). Policy decisions are not stagnant, but ever-changing (Gilliat, 1984:345; Patrick & Julia, 2017:28) and it can therefore be argued that set goals have targets and once achieved, the policy should be revisited for relevancy.

Policy can also be explained as a course of action, used to achieve the anticipated objective for the masses of the citizenry (Tummers, 2019:925). Abas (2019:1) and FitzGerald, O'Malley and Broin (2019:3) posit that policy is giving direction to what is expected to be done; and consequently, initiated and authorised by the government. Furthermore, policy directs resource allocation for the activities that have been identified as priorities through the political and ideological decision-makers who are the primary actors of policy development that should ensure the inclusion of interest groups affected by the matter (FitzGerald, O'Malley & Broin, 2019:7; RSA, 2020d:9).

It is important to regard policies as a means to an end rather than an end in itself with inclusivity pivoting on its development and implementation (Masango & Mfene, 2015:626). The best course of action in policy making is to encapsulate relevant challenges (Ajulor, 2018:1513) and attempt to find a common ground between the economic and social issues, whilst working within the framework of continuous human development (Gumede, 2008:20). Ferretti *et al.* (2019:4) state that a policy is a process directed to a purpose of addressing an identified problem or an opportunity and Sanchawa (2015:7) outlines the policy element as follows:

- intentions and purpose of the government's action;
- government goals;
- plans or proposals as means for achieving goals;
- programmes as authorised means the pursuance of goals;
- decisions or choices to set goals, develop plans, and implement and evaluate programmes; and
- the effect that programmes have on society whether intended or unintended.

In consideration of the policy implementation framework developed for alleviating the poverty of women in the North West Province, it is necessary to clarify the meaning and intention of a policy implementation framework. A framework is a path towards realising the outcome (UN, 2017:51; McKillop *et al*., 2017:7). Grant and Osanloo (2014:12); and Mehta (2014:5) perceive a framework as a guide that is people cantered and based on tested constructs intending to address the identified set of objectives.

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks explain that the framework brings to the fore the relationship between variables and draw conclusions by using prior knowledge from other studies, either by deducing from existing theories or inducing/developing theories from the current knowledge (Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:5). Furthermore, a theoretical framework brings together the concepts from relevant theories in support of the study (Varpio *et al.,* 2020:7) and helps researchers to accomplish the objectives of the study (Green, 2014:35; Sabatier, 2019:294). As an illustration, Grant and Osanloo (2014:14-15) liken a framework to a blueprint of a house that present a design

according to the architect's specifications: what is needed to build the exterior of the house and how it will look like, and considering that houses have different shapes, but irrespective of their shape, they all provide shelter. The same applies to a framework in research, allowing for a shape to form from various theories, for instance, Feminist theories.

The study adopted a Feminist framework to explain the impact of poverty on women and to broaden the knowledge of the study. Although poverty is a global phenomenon that affects the entire population, women tend to be most affected by poverty (Setiawan, 2018:25). Thus, a thorough understanding of the variables that promotes the poverty among women forms a fundamental construct in implementing the process of poverty alleviation.

According to the definition provided by Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary and Thesaurus (2017:1), implementation is putting a plan in motion to achieve set objectives. The framework as explained in the above-mentioned paragraph is a guide towards achieving the outcome. Consequently, the implementation framework goal is to realise both the set objective and the outcome. Hirsch (2017:1) claims that an implementation framework, seeks to initiate a systematic change to a problem that has been identified. Meyers *et al.* (2012:4); and Albers *et al.* (2017:100) explain that the implementation framework process constitutes a direction that explains the processes, procedures, responsibilities, and resources for implementing a designed plan to realise desired results intended to address the concerns of the end users. Additionally, implementation takes into cognisance the relevant construct that forms part of the framework coupled with both the relevant internal and external factors in the process (Moullin *et al.,* 2015:9; Sidney,2017:51**).** It is important to have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the contributors to the phenomenon prior to the development of the implementation framework (Nilsen, 2015:5).

In view of the framework explanation considered above and the explanation by Birkland (2015:8), that policy is a consulted and agreed upon direction between the government and its citizens designed to address an identified problem, Ward *et al.* (2016:43) maintain that policy consist of a dual responsibility namely that of solving problems and attracting external stakeholders to form part of the process and identify

with the same believes. Therefore, according to a definition provided by Black's Law Dictionary (2022:1), a policy framework is “the set of guidelines, as well as long-term goals which are taken into account when policies are being made”. Policy formulation is a precursor to policy implementation since the initial reasons that necessitated the policy formulation should be satisfied through the implementation process (Masango & Mfene, 2015:626; Sidney, 2017:43; Hutahaean *et al.,* 2020:396).

The policy implementation framework developed in this study is focused on the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, and indirectly, the empowerment of women. This implies that women should play a critical role in their poverty alleviation and a central role in the empowerment of fellow women. It is vital for women to play an active role in all the policy processes, including its implementation to give their specific inputs and the direction needed to realise the collective benefit of the policy. Policy is a document that needs cooperative effort from its inception, with everyone affected taking part in its design and agreeing on its implementation (Gumede, 2017:4; Holmes, 2021:11).The inclusion of citizens in the policy-making processes supports government in realising their responsibilities towards its people; government responsibility is not directed towards doing things for the community (Mothepu *et al.*, 2015:903; Lendel, 2019:32; Lember *et al.*, 2022:1), but partnering with them to allow them the opportunity of getting involved in addressing their own challenges, as stipulated in the NDP (RSA, 2011).

Notably, to ensure that proper financial management is not the sole responsibility of the government officials, and also to uphold and maintain the effective and efficient implementation of government programmes (RSA,1999:1; Phago, 2015:712), the policy implementation framework should guide both the government officials and target audience (women residing in the rural areas of the North West Province) to ensure the effective implementation of poverty alleviation programmes for women as designed from relevant policies.

In the aforementioned context of a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West province, the sections to follow review the international, continental, regional and national legislation and policies, relevant to the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women.

3.3. INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

On a global level, the UN has through the years formulated various policies and mechanisms to address poverty in member states (Durojaye *et al.*, 2020:6). Since the UN's inception in 1945, the organisation upheld its mission to protect human rights and promote the empowerment of women and gender equality as part of their objectives (UN Women, 2014:20). Member states affiliated to the UN, including South Africa respond by formulating legislation and policies to realise the UN mandate (African Union, 2020:120). South Africa thereby demonstrated its commitment to the UN's legislation and policies by aligning the NDP (RSA, 2011) with the SDGs, 2015 (African Union, 2020:120; RSA, 2019:24). It is possible that international legislation demonstrates that what is of importance is not where the financial aid is directed, but whether it is best packaged to benefit women and in particular, the alleviation of poverty amongst women in rural areas. In support of the UN's mandate, the developed countries utilise policies to contribute towards realising set objectives of, among others, the alleviation of poverty in developing countries (Bent, 2019:79). Various developed countries' policies tie most of their financial aid to poverty alleviation projects (Briggs, 2017:5; Mahembe & Odhiambo, 2019:5; Rui & Nie, 2021:1092) to address the poverty in the Sub-Saharan region (Rivera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood & Kolk 2015:14; Yameogo, 2020:745-755; Akinyetun, 2022:1). The USA, the UK and France are identified in this study as countries that demonstrate the international aid geared towards the alleviation of poverty (See Section 3.3).

Developing countries such as South Africa have established its own legislative efforts to respond to poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women, reviewed in sections 3.6.1 – 3.6.14 and sections 3.7.1 – 3.7.3. of this chapter. As affiliates of the UN, the AU's policies are guided by the UN's legislation (Tieku, 2019:3). In their effort to alleviate poverty, developing countries that are member states of the AU enacted their own regional and national legislation in concurrence with the UN to support and ensure the alleviation of poverty among women. South Africa, as a signatory to both the UN and the AU is therefore responsible for the creation of a conducive environment to develop poverty alleviation mechanisms, specifically for women (Haywood, Funke, Audouin, Musvoto & Nahman, 2019:14). Fundamental to South Africa is the

Constitution, 1996, that stipulates equal rights to every citizen; and the NDP (RSA, 2011), including measures to address the challenges to eradicate poverty by 2030 (RSA, 2012:27).

The UN's Millennium Declaration guided its member states towards the adoption of the MDGs in 2000. Despite ratifying the MDGs, member states understood that achieving the set objectives would be challenging due to the lack of resources to implement these goals (Nhamo *et al.*, 2020:5). As skew as the results seemed, all the objectives of the MDGs were achieved but most of the disadvantaged citizens in poor communities, primarily women who reside in rural areas, failed to reap the benefits of the MDGs' outcomes (Way, 2015:8). The UN's MDGs 2000 target date was set for 2015 and subsequently followed by the SDGs in 2015.

3.3.1. Sustainable Development Goals, 2015

The UN, in consultation with member states, formulated and provided policy to support, improve and change people's circumstances, for example through the SDGs that was promulgated to alleviate adversity such as poverty and inequality, globally suffered by the citizens (Puri, 2017). The SDGs address the identified shortcomings implicit to the MDGs (Anuoluwapo & Edwin, 2018:94) and were implemented as the era of the MDGs concluded (Roy, Tscharket, Waisman, Abdul Halim, Antwi-Agyei, Dasgupta, Hayward, Kanninen, Liverman, Okereke & Pinho,2018:477; Haywood *et al.*, 2019:4).

The first SDG goal is committed to the eradication of poverty and to ensure that the poor and vulnerable enjoy equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services; land ownership; control over land; inheritance; natural resources; relevant new technology; and financial services (UN, 2015:15; Jackson, 2020:6). The fifth SDG goal is committed to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls universally; eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls; ensure women's complete and successful involvement in economic activities; provide equal opportunities in political, economic, and public life; and to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health care facilities (UN, 2015:18; Chinkin & Yoshida, 2020:3; Jackson, 2020:7-8).

It is evident that the first SDG goal places a responsibility on governments to take noteworthy steps to eradicate poverty and ensure that the endeavours to confront poverty is supported by the implementation of legislation, policies, and mechanisms to contribute towards the realisation of this goal. Furthermore, the fifth SDG goal compels governments to specifically focus on legislation, policies, mechanisms, plans and programmes to enhance gender equality and ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of women. The first and fifth SDG goals are thus relevant to this study since both these goals reflect the study's focus: "to eliminate poverty" (first goal); and to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (fifth goal) (UN, 2015:14). Further relevant to this study is the fifth SDG goal's focus on the lack of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the need to develop a gender-based poverty reduction strategy (UN, 2015; Kuosmanen, Campbell & Hilly, 2016:470; Jackson, 2020:7).

In addition to the SDGs (UN, 2015), various other policies and mechanisms that are aimed at eradicating poverty and increasing the development and empowerment of women have been established by the UN. The following sections elaborate on these additional efforts.

3.3.2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, was formulated with the aim to protect future generations against international conflict (UN, 1948:1). Article 25 of the Declaration stipulates that basic human rights for every person are as follows (UN, 2021b:7): food; clothing; housing; medical care; necessary social services; and rights to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control. Most of the identified basic needs are aligned to human rights and were considered in Chapter 1, Section 1.6; Chapter 2, Section 2; and Chapter 2, Figure 2.1 as either the dimensions of poverty, or the ten indicators that constitute the multi-dimensional properties of poverty. However, despite this Declaration, global poverty continues to be rampant. In this respect, it was revealed in Chapter 2, Section 2.1 that a significant number of women are still the bearers of poverty, especially in rural areas.

3.3.3. First World Conference of Women, 1975

The presence of women and civic organisations are noticeable in campaigns on women's rights (Borges & Labidi, 2021:210). The establishment and activities of relevant platforms address gender equality and development, irrespective of the place of origin or race as discussed below.

The First World Conference of Women was organised by the UN's General Assembly in Mexico and was held in the second year of the UN's Decade of Women (1976 – 1985). The conference laid a platform to discuss gender equality, to develop and advance women with the focus on "full gender equality and the elimination of gender inequality, integration and full participation of women in development and an increased contribution by women in the strengthening of world peace" (UN, 1975:1). The conference reached a consensus that, for the development of women to succeed, their full participation in the development process is critical, as also explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4. It is important to note that the First World Conference of Women in 1975 was a world conference that attracted various countries (including South Africa) with diverse problems. Such problems were premised on inequality, globally experienced by women. Subsequently, every country was afforded the opportunity to present their case. For example, women from the Eastern Block focussed on peace; women from the West accentuated equality; and women from the developing countries put forth development as their challenge (UN, 1975:2). Thus, South Africa, as part of the developing countries, experiences challenges regarding the development of women. Such an instance is evident in the predominantly rural North West Province, experiencing a high rate of poverty and discrimination suffered primarily by women, as explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1.

3.3.4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979

The gender discrimination that women experience manifests itself in different forms, for instance social or economic, as delineated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2. Furthermore, their experience of living in poverty should afford them the edge to provide input on the development of poverty alleviation tools, as presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979, is a coordinating arm of the UN that ensures women's rights and equality (UN, 1979:2) and occasionally is referred to as the women's bill of rights since member states are legally bound to protect and promote human rights (UN, 1979:4; Eze, 2020:101). CEDAW concentrates on rendering equality to both men and women and is aligned to the UN's imperatives that provides countries guidance to realise and acquire human rights (Chesler, 2021:xiv).

It is evident that poverty and its effect on women receives attention in different global policy statements (Tang, Santiago, Khan, Amaglobeli, Dugarova, Gifford, Gores, Honda, Klemm, Renteria & Soler 2021:3), demonstrating invested efforts to address the plight of poverty among them. However, despite these declarations, globally women still experience poverty (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). The above deliberation further reveals that women continuously engage amongst themselves to formulate poverty alleviation plans that are validated through consultative processes by coming together and implementing empowerment tools to alleviate poverty and improving their lives.

By strengthening the role of marginalised groups, women are placed at the centre of their own empowerment progress to alleviate the contributory factors that promote poverty and eradicate negative behaviour that inhibits the empowerment of women (UN, 1992:2). Women therefore ought to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect their social and economic advancement, for example, education, health, and the workload they are expected to carry (UN, 1992:3), explicated in Chapter 2, Section 2. 3.4. It is argued that, by being involved in their own empowerment, women would gain at sense of ownership and subsequently the commitment and effort to grow and sustain projects.

3.3.5. Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, 1995

It was demonstrated in Section 3.2.4 and 3.2.5 that women-centred conventions are anchored on initiating relevant plans that are consistent with their plight to alleviate poverty and their empowerment. They learn from shared experiences and draw strength from each other's success because they emanate from various backgrounds

with different perceptions of matters related to women (Olchawski & Farmer, 2020:3) and thus, help create empowerment and poverty alleviation strategies.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, 1995, emanated from the Fourth Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995 (UN, 2014:3). The conference concluded that (1) women have the right to enjoy gender equality; and (2) that the need to support the empowerment of women formed part of the imperatives that should be prioritised (UN, 2014:4). The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action confirmed the need to address socio-economic challenges such as the lack of economic independence amongst women that often leads to poverty (UN, 2014:10). Women and poverty were also listed as an area of concern to manage global challenges (UN, 2014:33). These interactions between women from various backgrounds are critical for women since they have varying perspectives. Some tend to believe and accept the situation of, for example, daily poverty that plays a critical role in socio-economic challenges and accept patriarchal practices where decisions are dominated and directed by men, simultaneously strengthening the discrimination that the government endeavours to eliminate (Bent, 2019:82) (also see Chapter 1, Section 1.6). It is therefore sensible that women who hold these views attend conventions such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action to understand the avenues that can be followed towards their empowerment and poverty alleviation.

3.3.6. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), 2013

The UN commitment to address gender equity and the empowerment of women dictated the establishment of UN Women in 2010, an organ dedicated to address concerns that are solely related to women (UN Women, 2013). UN Women was preceded by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), 1946, an intergovernmental body established specifically to address gender equality and the empowerment of women and charged to acquire the emancipation of women (UN Women, 2021).

The mandate of the CSW, 2013, was expanded by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1996 to include the reviewing, monitoring and assessment of problems encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform

of Action (UN, 2013:3). The CSW presents a multi-year programme that focuses on various themes, for instance: the 2012 theme was *Rural Women Empowerment* and the role of women in the eradication of poverty and hunger (UN, 2013:3); and the 2017 theme was *Economic empowerment of women in the changing world of work* (UN Women, 2017:3). In addition, the 2017 CSW theme was coupled with the evaluation of the assessment of the implementation of the SDGs for Women and Girls and took cognisance of the empowerment of women from indigenous groups (UN Women, 2017:3). It is evident that the CSW's themes are targeted on the exact challenges faced by women in rural areas in the North West Province, including women from indigenous cultures. Thus, in their 2018 second session, the CSW's priority theme was directed towards the empowerment of women and girls in rural areas and focused specifically on challenges and opportunities to achieve gender equality (UN Women, 2018a:3).

It is evident that the UN uses multi-dimensional approaches to alleviate poverty as demonstrated by the CSW in its quest to ensure that the set objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action are achieved. It is furthermore clear that the UN is also prioritising the challenges experienced by women specifically because of poverty. In addition, relevant to this study, the UN recognises the considerable challenges faced in this respect by women residing in rural areas. To find solutions and assistance to these challenges, the UN member states formed partnerships to establish foreign aid policies and legislation that contribute towards the development and support of developing countries, clarified in the next section.

It is evident that the mechanisms reviewed in the above international regulatory framework have a focus on human rights and in particular, the human rights of women. A regulatory framework, such as the UN's SDGs (UN, 2015) are aimed at finding resolutions to the direst socio-economic challenges experienced by global citizens. Furthermore, the above mechanisms have a focus on the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women, with some giving particular attention to the struggles of women in rural areas. Several of these mechanisms (e.g., First World Conference of Women, 1975; and CEDAW) present women with the opportunity to meaningfully engage with each other and actively get involved in finding solutions to their own problems. The CSW is geared towards gender equality and the emancipation of

women. Gender equality is a factor expressed in the mechanisms reviewed above. Therefore, the international regulatory framework addresses the concerns of women pertaining to poverty alleviation, inequality, their empowerments and all the related socio-economic challenges.

3.4. FOREIGN AID

It was alluded to in Section 3.1 and Section 3.2 that developed countries demonstrated interest to support developing countries through the establishment of foreign aid directed to develop specific courses, while funds directed to develop developing countries are conditional to ensure that financial aid achieve the envisaged objectives and focus, specifically on the alleviation of poverty (Barder, 2009:1**;** Ika & Donnelly, 2017:46; Ugwuanyi *et al*., 2017:113). Furthermore, the foreign aid includes funding and programmes for the support and empowerment of women (Atwill, 2011:14). The UN identified member states involved in providing foreign aid, including the USA, the UK and France, the latter three countries under the umbrella of the EU. Subsequently, these countries direct foreign aid to developing countries, including South Africa.

3.4.1. United States of America

The USA, in concert with the UN Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, (see Section 3.2.2), formulated foreign policies, for example, the United States Agency International Development (USAID) to address various challenges identified in developing countries. In addition, the USA promulgated various legislation towards the provision of foreign aid for developing countries, including the United States Agency International Development (USAID); the Foreign Assistance Act, 1961; the Economic Growth and Development Act, 2014; the Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Setting Act, 2017; and the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, 2012.

When a country's president's term of office comes to an end their tenure is likely linked to their accomplishment, either negative or positive, and the actions they took or the events they sanctioned is generally remembered as the legacy they leave behind (Jansen, 2018). In 1961, under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the USAID

was established and subsequently, the era called “decade of development” was born in 1970 to help the developing world in terms of emphasising food nutrition, population planning, health, education, and human resource development (USAID, 2018:2; Lawson & Morgenstern, 2019:6; USAID, 2021:1). However, the aid was not intended to be in perpetuity. Thus, Mark Green, under the USAID administration stated: "The purpose of foreign aid is to end the need for its existence" (USAID, 2018b:1). It is possible that targeting the root cause of poverty and accentuating women’s health, education and other socio-economic challenges are the best means to alleviate poverty instead of concentrating on the symptom. Moreover, the approach of the USAID could in a long-term result in a developed community of women who could stand on their own without foreign assistance.

The Foreign Assistance Act, 1961, focuses on introducing peace and security in developing countries; creating a conducive environment to promote social, political, and economic progress; and maintaining healthy relationships with the USA (USA, 1961:12). The Act acknowledged that resources in developing countries mismatch their social ills, rendering partnerships between the developed and developing countries crucial (Lawson & Morgenstern, 2020:6); and established financial assistance programmes to resolve the problem (US Congress, 2003:20). Amid ensuring poverty alleviation for most poor citizens in developing countries, the USA demonstrated that in the process of assisting other countries their welfare system benefits its people (USA, 2018:1; Lawson & Morgenstern, 2020:24). Furthermore, the Foreign Assistance Act, 1961, supports poverty alleviation. It is evident that the USA packaged its foreign aid legislation and policies in a manner that provides empowerment to alleviate poverty and develop women into social and economic independent individuals. The USA further established the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), 2000 Millennium Challenge Act (MCA), 2003, in the hope that transparency and efforts would promote women’s aspirations in the social, economic, and political arena (USA, 2017:2).

The USA’s policies pertaining to foreign aid are aligned and designed to support each other to ensure that the intended purpose is achieved. The Foreign Assistance Act, 1961, as discussed in Section 3.3.1.2 above, sets the ground for the implementation of the USAID (see Section 3.3.1.1), by ensuring that stability and peace prevails. The

two are critical for the implementation of the Economic Growth and Development Act, 2014.

The Economic Growth and Development Act, 2014, supports the UN's goal to uplift citizens in developing countries and provides an opportunity to enhance the circumstances and opportunities for the USA business community (United States Congress. 2017:1). It can be assumed that foreign aid does not only benefit the recipient countries; donor countries themselves find returns from the agreement (see Section 3.3.1). The Economic Growth and Development Act, 2014 is directed at the economic growth. In Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3 it was highlighted that economic growth is a strategy with the potential to alleviate poverty; however, it was argued against such a strategy in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2, stating that the economic outlook is such that the poor are deprived from its benefits and, more so, disadvantaged women since they comprise the majority of the poor who do not participate in the economy. However, with the goal to include women in poverty to participate in the economy, the premises of this Act and the aid provided through its directives, can assist women towards economic freedom.

In Chapter 1, Section 1.2, it was posited that in most instances, poor citizens, and in particular women, tend to be uneducated due to various socio-economic challenges that increase the level of poverty and create difficulty for girls to access education. However, some stakeholders, both internal and external, (for instance through foreign aid - Section 3.3.1), provide for women to access education to culminate their independence on foreign aid, assuming that the need for poverty alleviation programmes could be eliminated in future.

The Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Setting Act, 2017, supports displaced people and refugees. It underscores education for girls and women as the vulnerable group that should benefit from socio-economic programmes (USA, 2017:2). It was delineated in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 and Chapter 2, Section 2.4, why women are regarded as a marginalised group regarding poverty. Thus, access to education for women is amongst the universal poverty alleviation tools that could empower them socially and economically (Munoz Boudet *et al.,* 2018:33; Doroba, 2018; Tagar *et al.,* 2019:96; Zhang, 2020:1; Wei *et al.*, 2021:14) (also see Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2).

The Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, 2012, attempts to position women and girls on par to men and boys for the former to also enjoy the social, political, and economic benefit accessible to the global community (USAID, 2012:1). Encompassing both genders in implementing the strategy for women and girl's empowerment could address men's patriarchy without disadvantaging them (USAID, 2012:11).

The legislation and policies promulgated by the USA, intended to provide foreign aid to developing countries regarding, for instance, poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women, is commendable. Conversely, with the high rate of poverty and the shortcomings in women empowerment and development, South Africa enjoys the USA financial support targeting the root cause of poverty and accentuating women's health, education, and other socio-economic challenges, elaborated upon in the next section. It can, however, be argued that the USA's primary objective continues to protect and benefit its own citizenry.

In addition to the USA, another prominent role player in the UN's foreign aid programmes is the UK, focused upon in the following section.

3.4.2. United Kingdom

In compliance with the UN mandate, outlined in Section 3.2, and the agreement signed with the EU (see Section 3.3.3), the UK committed to aid Sub-Saharan countries through policies to change their circumstances for the better. In reference to the UK as a signee to the EU agreement, it is necessary to mention that the UK in 2017 started the internal and external processes of communicating its intentions of withdrawing from the EU (Council of the European Union, 2020). The ultimate consensus of the UK withdrawing from the EU was reached and the effective date of withdrawal set for the 31 January 2020, declaring the UK a non-member of the EU (Council of the European Union, 2020; Polak, 2021:6).

The UK's intention is to alleviate poverty among the world's poor countries by 2030 and ensure that people have access to basic needs and, in particular, the most

vulnerable, namely, women and girls (UK Aid, 2015:9) marked the birth of the International Development Act, 2002. Stemming from the plight of the Sub-Saharan countries that experience high levels of poverty, as underscored in Section 3.3.3, poverty alleviation amongst women is key to social and economic development to empower and better their lives. The International Development Act, 2002, aims to ensure that financial assistance is directed towards development, among others, social ills to assist towards the alleviation of poverty (UK, 2002:1). Furthermore, the International Development Act, 2002, supports the global fight against poverty in developing states through the implementation of a system that would force the recipients to utilise the financial assistance to alleviate poverty (UK, 2002:1). To ensure proper utilisation of the funds, the UK's funding is restrictive and has specific conditions which directs financial aid strictly to women and girls. These prescripts are aligned to the UK's commitment to alleviate poverty amongst women.

Similar to the USA, the UK's foreign aid policies are directed towards the development and the support of poverty alleviation in the developing states by implementing a system that forces the recipient (e.g., South Africa) to utilise the funds for the sole purpose of poverty alleviation. It should be noted, however, that the UK abandoned the EU prior assistance and support to the developing countries even before its departure from the EU in 2020 (Polak,2021:6).

In addition to the UN, the EU, by virtue of a 27-member state representation also provides foreign aid to developing countries (UNRIC, 2007:2; UNDP Brussels, 2017; Ciss, 2020:11; UNRIC, 2021). The EU country that also commits to helping Sub-Saharan countries is France and its efforts are discussed in the following section.

3.4.3. European Union

The EU is also a signatory to the UN and its member states exhibit a dual obligation towards funding commitment: firstly, member states have a financial responsibility towards the EU; and secondly, are responsible to fund their targeted developing country at the national level (Maxwell, 2016:1; Bodenstein, Faust & Furness, 2017:443). Post-1960, EU member states committed to fund their former colonised countries (EU, 2014:3; Carnegie & Marinov, 2017:12). The 2009 Lisbon Treaty refined

the processes and procedures to streamline and improve the implementation of poverty alleviation projects (Von Bogdandy & Schill, 2011:2; Uyar, 2015:4; Bodenstein & Kemmerling, 2017:442). The EU operates on a consensus to promote human rights, democracy, and good governance in developing countries and is geared towards poverty alleviation as part of their responsibility (Wendorff, 2016:15; Meunier & Vachudova, 2018:5).

The EU's Union Development Cooperation, 2007, policy seeks to eradicate poverty within the EU's borders without ignoring their duty towards developing countries (OJEU, 2007:93). Furthermore, the European Community's Development Policy, 2000, statement by the Council and the Commission of the EU asserts that before committing support, the African countries targeted for financial aid ought to demonstrate a proper governance structure (EU, 2000:6); a functioning state with an ability to support the projects envisaged for promoting equality and accessibility for all citizens; and the promotion of human rights (EU, 2000:5; Winters & Martinez, 2015:526; Ciss, 2020:5). Furthermore, beneficiary countries should show capacity and integrity to lead programmes to their entire communities (EU, 2000:17). It is argued that the financial aid should be directed to the areas where it is needed the most which could be achieved by involving the affected people in the process to alleviate poverty; as well as help identify and shape relevant projects, as alluded to in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 and Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4.

The EU Commission commits to helping Sub-Saharan countries that experience problems to achieve the SDG's and to empower African countries to sustain and improve the provided development assistance (EU, 2000:5). The EU is among the largest donor funders to African countries (Meunier & Vachudova, 2018:5) and directs funding aid towards improving the social and economic conditions, not limited to human rights, peace, and security, as well as the eradication of poverty (European Commission, 2009:6; Lazarova, 2014:1; Saltnes, 2017:1).

It could be assumed that social and economic conditions are areas of concern that deepen poverty amongst women if unattended and overlooked. Foreign aid could play a prominent role to promote the alleviation of poverty and, in particular relevant to this

study, for women. The study identified France as the country that provides foreign aid to Sub-Saharan countries, elaborated upon in the following section.

3.4.3.1. France

In addition to the EU agreement with France, the relationship between the latter and the Sub-Saharan countries dates to the era of France's colonisation of a few African countries. It is against this background that France carries an additional obligation to intensify their support to the Sub-Saharan countries (Kallab, 2018:16; Diallo, 2019:1). France forms part of the developed countries that contribute towards the upliftment of developing countries through the France's Cooperation and Development Policy (CICD, 2018:6). France continues to show its interest in the sub- Saharan countries by introducing the France's Cooperation and Development Policy.

The Cooperation and Development Policy, 2011, ensures that policy implementation emphasises development and growth for poor citizens, poverty alleviation, the promotion of equality, as well as proper management of global public goods (Atwill, 2011:2). France also demonstrates its commitment to provide foreign aid by allocating two thirds of the French Agency for Development grant to the Sub-Saharan countries (France, 2016:10) with preference to their former colonies (Chiba & Heinrich, 2019:2).

The financial investments through France's Cooperation and Development Policy, 2011, place emphasis on the development and growth of poor citizens and in this case poor South African, by targeting poverty and promoting equality. Additional to the UN and the EU, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) is also committed to the socio-economic upliftment of developing states, focussed on in the next section.

3.4.4. Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD)

The OECD was established in 1961 (Thompson, 2017:7). It provides research to capacitate decision-makers with knowledge and suggests the policy courses of action to address social and economic difficulties in developing countries (OECD, 2022). The OECD operates different from, for instance, the World Bank that gravitates towards

economic expertise in support of realising transformation, whilst OECD is founded on technical expertise for the promotion of good governance (De Francesco & Guaschino, 2020:113). This confirms the global effort by various countries to utilise research to initiate poverty alleviation projects.

The 2015 OECD Report on South Africa touches on significant empowerment issues (OECD, 2015:1), with focus on segregating the population to reflect women who continue to experience poverty more severely than their male counterparts (also see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). Furthermore, both the primary and secondary recommendations made in the report are gender-neutral (OECD, 2015:39). It is argued that the use of gender-neutral language in developing, empowering, and promoting women should be avoided since it is contrary to the empowerment of women, as well as the need for a heightened focus on their poverty alleviation, highlighted in Chapter 1, Section 1.6. This notion is supported by Le Masson (2016:30); Buvinić and O'Donnell (2019:325); and Gumede (2021:2), stating that specific wording supports implementation success, and it is thus better to outline the target group). On the surface, this notion seems to be discriminatory against men. However, the use of direct wording could focus progressively towards addressing poverty among women (who are more affected) and bridging the gap identified between men and women.

From the above review on the foreign aid, it is evident that the support is primarily geared towards the socio-economic upliftment in the developing countries, with a particular focus on poverty alleviation and the enhancement of equality (e.g., USAID). The USA's Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Setting Act, 2017, directs the aid to the education of girls and women, especially relevant to this study. In Chapter 2, Section 2.2, education has been identified as one of the primary determinants of poverty. It was argued that education results in economic emancipation and is regarded as a tool to alleviate poverty. Furthermore, in South Africa, education forms part of the constitutional rights of every citizen (see Chapter 1, Section 1.6; and Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). For women, education is beneficial to manage their responsibilities and provides them the power to make appropriate decisions when the need arises, that is, either on the home front or personal (Zhu, 2020:658). Thus, access to education for women is amongst the universal poverty

alleviation tools that could empower them socially and economically (Munoz Boudet *et al.,* 2018:33; Doroba, 2018; Tagar *et al.,* 2019:96; Zhang, 2020:1; Wei *et al.*, 2021:14).

The USA's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, 2012, envisages to see women and girls alongside men and boys enjoying the same social, political, and economic benefits. However, gender inequality is demonstrated by the state of inequality in South Africa which is regarded as the most unequal in the world (Gumede, 2021:12) – see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

The USA's Growth and Development Act, 2014, focuses specifically on economic growth, undeniably relevant to South Africa. It should, however, be cautioned that using economic growth as sole strategy in an unequal environment is not benefitting the community in its entirety, as alluded to in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3. For the economic growth to be fair and just, every person should be afforded the opportunity of active economic participation and enjoy the benefits thereof. Inclusive development should therefore be a precursor to inclusive growth if the poverty reduction process is to succeed in its endeavour (Ngepah, 2017:52) and women should be given the same economic opportunities as men. Furthermore, the social class strata also hamper the distribution of resources depriving the poor from moving out of poverty, as articulated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1. It can be argued that the foreign aid with all its good intentions operate from a hostile environment that serves people differently diminishing the efforts of foreign aid to alleviate poverty. It is further argued that, despite the intentions of foreign aid aimed at benefitting the developing countries South Africa seems to be slow in alleviating poverty, especially the poverty experienced by women in the rural areas (such as the North West Province, in the case of this study). In this respect, it is envisaged that a targeted implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province will assist.

3.5. CONTINENTAL LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND TRENDS: ALLEVIATION OF POVERTY AMONGST WOMEN

The abovementioned international legislation and policies of the USA, UK and France are the outcomes of the developed countries efforts to deliver on the commitment to

alleviate poverty and empower women in the developing countries (Tieku, 2019:3). Furthermore, the AU is equally responsible to formulate continental policies (Tieku, 2019:11-12), amongst others, to address poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women in support of a poverty free continent coupled with an empowered population of women.

3.5.1. Constitutive Act of the African Union, 2000

The AU comprises of 55 African member states which joined voluntarily (Union, 2019:14) and every member state is represented by one member on the Executive council (African Union, 2019:15). Furthermore, the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) established the Pan African Parliament (PAP) which is an AU organ and affords member states full participation in the decision-making process. Each member state is allocated five (5) seats in PAP with at least two sits allocated to women while parliament sit is based in Midrand in South Africa (AU Commission, 2021:120-121). This confirms South Africa's membership in the AU as mentioned in Section 3.2.

The vision of the Constitutive Act of the AU, 2000, aims to promote strong partnership among member states to bring about a better social justice and economic life for citizens of all the member states (African Union, 2000:5; Chekol, 2020:34). It could be argued that women form part of the community that should be included in the process of building social cohesion among the communities (Brankovic, 2016:6). However, women in the African continent continue to live in poverty (Beegle *et al.*, 2016:106; Okrah, 2018:10). Perhaps with the fair representation in the PAP poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women plight for all the member states should find support because their poverty status is universal in the continent. Also, the issue of gender representation is important for fair and relevant representation of women issues as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4, and further confirmed in the composition of the AU programmes that respects equal gender representation (African Union, s.a:94).

3.5.2. African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981

In Chapter 2, Section 2.7, it was concluded that human rights provide a sense of belonging and dignity but is occasionally compromised by gender inequality that gives

men power over women. The birth of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, was initiated by the UN's international legal instruments (see Section 3.2), and the Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (see Section 3.2.2).

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, flows from the Constitute Act of the African Union and the political and civil rights are grounded on the economic, social, and cultural rights (African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981:1). Thus, all the political, civil, economic, social, and cultural aspects should be fulfilled to achieve the citizens development and socio-economic emancipation. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981:3) comprises of articles that advance, supports, and identifies the empowerment of women:

- Article 14: Right to property.
- Article 15: Right to work.
- Article 16: Right to health.
- Article 17: Right to education.
- Article 18: Right to protection of the whole family and vulnerable groups.
- Article 19: Right to equality.
- Article 20: Right to self-determination.

It is evident that the abovementioned rights, enshrined in the articles of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, are aligned to the human rights, stipulated in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996). The focal points of these human rights (e.g., the right to work, health, education, equality, etc.) are however, also elucidated in the NDP (RSA, 2011) among the primary socio-economic challenges faced by South Africa. It is therefore evident that, despite the statutory and regulatory prescripts from both South Africa and the AU, these human rights are still elusive to many South African citizens. As argued from the onset of this study, the neglect of human rights (also emerging in the South African landscape as socio-economic challenges), could be related to increased poverty (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). Poverty thrives mostly in an area that is disadvantaged and is characterised by socio-economic deprivation (SAHRC and UNICEF, 2014:37; Midgley, 2021:9).

3.5.3. African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003 protocol

According to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003a:2), the AU hopes to remove all the discriminatory practices that inhibit women from equal participation in socio-economic and cultural activities. Women should enjoy equal partner status in the decision-making process, be it policy formulation or empowerment programmes (African Union, 2003a:2).

As is the case with the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003, is also focused on human rights, in this instance, particularly on the rights of women. Similarly, it is argued that the focal points of these human rights also emerge as socio-economic challenges in South Africa and have a direct connotation to poverty. With women being a vulnerable group, and poverty more pronounced in the African continent, especially among women in rural areas (Kosec & Wantchekon, 2020:1), women are arguably the most deprived of human rights (see Chapter 1, Section 1.6; Chapter 2, Section 2.4; and Chapter 2, Section 2.7).

3.5.4. Consolidated Treaty of Southern African Development Community, 1992

In Chapter 1, Section 1.1 it was advised that women should take ownership of all the phases of the programmes targeted towards their poverty alleviation. Additionally, in Chapter 2, Section 2.1, it was argued that women have an in-depth understanding and experience of the identified challenges making them relevant partners to inform policy formulation and implementation. However, while emphasising the need for the inclusion of women in the policy processes, it must also be accentuated that women alone cannot alleviate poverty. As stated in Section 3.4.2, poverty alleviation for women requires a concerted effort from all the stakeholders who share the same vision. Section 3.4.1 alluded that the AU member states have a common duty of working together towards the common goal of social cohesion for the benefit of all the member states to achieve amongst its objective's, poverty alleviation and, in particular, amongst women.

The consolidated treaty of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) listed poverty alleviation among its objectives, and the determination to leverage the economic strength from sister states or governments to reduce poverty (SADC, 2015:2; 6). Furthermore, Article 26A – the Regional Development Fund (SADC, 2015:21) – binds all the member states which South Africa is a part thereof to contribute to these funds; included are the private sectors, NGO's, the society at large and gender mainstreaming in community operations (SADC, 2015:5). It has been established that women continue to be disadvantaged consequently, putting them in the forefront of economic and development programmes as an alternative strategy to alleviate poverty (Mayoux, 2020:248).

3.5.5. African Charter on the Right of Welfare of Children, 1990

In Chapter 1, Section 1.1 and Chapter 2, Section 2.4, it was stated that the poverty of children runs parallel to their family's financial status. Mothers who bring up children in poverty-stricken family spend most of their time together and share poverty. Children most likely find it hard to escape poverty in the household whose parents are unemployed and education levels is low (Le Menestrel & Duncan, 2019:52). Therefore, availing education to the children at an early age could prevent them from inhering their parent's poverty (Humble & Dixon, 2017:11).

It is worth noting that the African Charter on the Right of Welfare of Children (1990:3) article recognises education as a significant concern and holds the state responsible to ensure that girls access proper education irrespective of their background or mental capacity. This suggests that if properly implemented, the comprehension of concepts, as stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2, would not be a challenge because the African Charter on the Right of Welfare of Children dictates that education must begin at a young age to eradicate illiteracy for poverty to drop. In Section 3.3.1 it was explained that the USA invests efforts that provide support to educate the girl child and inversely reduce the level of poverty amongst women because the child would not grow up a poor woman.

In consideration of the above review on the AU's legislation and policies, aimed at poverty alleviation, it is argued that the support that AU member states render to each

other demonstrates the potential to accomplish more than would have been the case in the absence of the envisaged partnerships. For example, during the period when Burundi had instilled a transitional government, South African sent a peace keeping mission to safeguard the citizens of Burundi (Wilén & Williams, 2018:10). In addition, South Africa played host to Ethiopian delegates and, with the help of the former presidents from Nigeria and Kenya, managed to bring the two warring parties (the Ethiopian government and the Tigray) together to end the conflict (Fakude**,** 2022). It is therefore argued that the AU partnerships would also provide the confidence to negotiate with, for instance foreign countries that provide aid to developing countries; thereby, enhancing the probability of securing aid to give effect to its legislation and policies aimed at poverty alleviation in its member states.

It is argued that women continue to find it difficult to enjoy and realise the articles of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003. As contended in the sections above, it is evident that the focal points of the human rights, enshrined in these (e.g., the right to work, health, education, equality, etc.) are however, also elucidated in the NDP (RSA, 2011) as the primary socio-economic challenges faced by South Africa. It is therefore evident that, despite the statutory and regulatory prescripts from both South Africa and the AU, these human rights are still elusive to many South African citizens, exacerbating poverty (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). Especially relevant to this study is that, according to Group (2022:3); the South Africa Women's Month Status Report on Women and Girls (RSA, 2015b:2); and Picard (2021:10), women are classified as a vulnerable or disadvantaged group and are therefore excluded from accessing socio-economic benefits that relieve people from the hardship of poverty.

3.6. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY INSTRUMENTS TO EMPOWER WOMEN

The inclusion of poverty alleviation, gender equality and the empowerment of women in the MDGs and SDGs provided women an impetus that the world could not ignore (Nadim & Nurlukman, 2018:135). Empowered women are capacitated to improve their lives (Montalbo, Alejandro, Baylan, Lacea, Pepito & Villarante, 2021:29). It could be argued that the legislation and policies for the empowerment of women is instrumental

in a democratic society and supplements the regional legislation and policies to alleviate poverty amongst women. The four tools to empower women emphasised in this section are: (1) Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997; (2) Protocol on the Rights of African Women, 2003; (3) Protocol on Gender and Development, 2008; and (4) SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development.

3.6.1. Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997

Like poverty, inequality is also multi-dimensional in nature and could emerge in social, economic, or political forms; not autonomous, but somehow intertwined (Kanbur, 2021:3). Furthermore, inequality is compounded by gender ideology that presents itself in gender inequity with women and men defined by the societal dictates of the type of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for different genders (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018:2).

The Declaration on Gender and Development (SADC, 1997:2) acknowledges the importance of using gender mainstreaming as a tool to promote sustainable development in the SADC region and encompassing women as the gender living in poverty. The Declaration is supplemented with the SDGs that conclude that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls plays a fundamental role in the alleviation of poverty (UN, 2015). In pursuit of gender mainstreaming, it was revealed in Chapter 1, Section 1.6; and Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.2 that equality in all spheres of life should benefit both men and women, whether it is in the workplace or any public social space. In Chapter 2, Section 2.4, it was noted that poverty is gendered and disadvantages women.

Women should be afforded the opportunity to access all the resources that have the potential to alleviate poverty, for example, access to land; credit; and any other resources, equally to men (SADC, 1997:4). It is also important to use gender mainstreaming to benefit all the citizens, but it is key to empower women to fulfil their development, accelerate poverty alleviation and allow them to shape their own destinies, as asserted in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.

3.6.2. Protocol on the Rights of African Women, 2003

As explained in Chapter 1, Section,1.3, women often experience overlapping social, economic, cultural, and psychological causes of poverty that feed off each other. Therefore, the utilisation of various poverty alleviation tools that supplement each other is critical when addressing poverty among women. Added to the international regulatory legislation and the foreign aid, outlined in Section 3.3 respectively, is the Protocol on the Rights of African Women, 2003 that seeks to alleviate poverty amongst women on the continent.

The Protocol on the Rights of African Women, 2003, Article 13, Economic and Social Welfare Rights (African Union, 2003b:18 – 20) mandates the AU's member states to:

- promote equity in all socio-economic areas;
- ensure that women enjoy the same benefits in the work environment as their male counterparts; and
- give credence to the plight of women by making sure that an equal job warrants equal pay for both men and women.

Based on the Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997, reviewed in Section 3.5.1, creating equal and fair opportunities through gender mainstreaming has the propensity to promote equity and better the lives of women.

3.6.3. Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, 2004

Social Watch Research Team (2005); and Wei *et al.* (2021:2) argue that it is an acceptable phenomenon that gender and equity are related to poverty. Thus, the manner of reporting gender disaggregation and the significance of providing specific reports assists in the development of proper poverty alleviation programmes, as stated in Section 3.3.4.

The Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, 2004, emanated from the meeting of the AU heads of member states who concurred that problem areas need to be considered

by all member states. A critical problem was extreme poverty that requires concerted efforts to addressed and alleviated it if women are to have access to financial resources (AU, 2004:2). It was asserted in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1 that micro-financing, with all its flaws of plunging poor people deeper into poverty by failing to repay their loans, remains a viable method to alleviate poverty amongst women. The need to use micro-financing to alleviate poverty is also supported by Shaikh (2017:3) and Campbell, Lemire and Pearson (2020:171) who argue that women find it difficult to qualify for micro-financing because of their conditions, for example, collateral by banks, which in most instances deprives women from being approved for micro-financing because of their poor financial standing (also see Section 3.4.3).

3.6.4. Protocol on Gender and Development, 2008

The Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, as indicated in Section 3.5.3, advances the efforts to alleviate poverty amongst women, but key to this is the aspect of implementation guidelines. The Protocol on Gender and Development, 2008, serves this purpose.

The Protocol stipulates that programme designs must incorporate equality to protect against discriminatory practices and tendencies that undermines legislation and policies (SADC, 2008a:9). It is against this background that the agreed upon SADC legislation should be scrutinised to verify if these achieve the set objectives and to corroborate whether equality forms part of these programmes. It can be claimed that the Protocol is the nucleus for most of the legislation that strives to empower women and to alleviate poverty. Furthermore, the protocol acknowledges that in ensuring proper implementation, a binding strategy to all the member state should include clear targets, timeframes, monitoring plans and evaluation (SADC, 2008a:6), as well as demonstrate government efforts to address the inequalities experienced by women and the discrimination that deepens poverty amongst them.

3.6.5. SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development, 2008

Following the review of the AU's poverty alleviation legislation and policies of which several are directed primarily towards women, establishing a process to ensure that all the efforts yield the anticipated results to alleviate poverty is imperative. According to Hudson, Hunter, and Peckham (2019:1) "there is an increasing awareness that policies do not succeed or fail on their own merits; rather their progress is dependent upon the process of implementation".

To implement the AU's mandate effectively, the continent is divided into five regions and South Africa in conjunction with 15 other countries constitute the SADC (African Union, 2020:18 – 19). The SADC declaration on poverty and sustainable development established the regional poverty observatory to ensure the implementation of poverty eradication through a well capacitated machinery (SADC, 2008b:4). Furthermore, it supports partnerships with community-based organisations (SADC, 2008b:5). As confirmed in Chapter 1, Section 1.6, poverty is multi-dimensional; thus, it was argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.5 that poverty eradication should also be regarded as multi-dimensional and requires approaches that could be achieved by the inclusion of various role players.

The regional poverty reduction framework (SADC, 2008c:5) in a draft form seeks to ensure that the regional poverty observatory monitors the poverty reduction programmes that emanates from the SADC legislation and policies envisaged to benefit the member states through synergy between regional strategies and national initiatives. The framework (SADC, 2008c:68) recommends that:

- SADC countries collectively and individually empower women across the board including have access to the means of production and rights to own property;
- regional special initiatives should be implemented to enhance access to finance for women; and
- gender should be mainstreamed in all areas of intervention of the SADC Regional Poverty Reduction Framework.

This is in collaboration with the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) that underscores the need for member states to integrate and address SADC's common challenges to achieve the set objectives which would benefit the cumulative community of the region (SADC, 2020:58).

The support of various structures to support the empowerment of women was underscored in the above review on the mechanisms established by the AU and SADC. However, the implementation of the regional structures' plans should not be dealt with in a stand-alone manner but should rather find expression in the national structures' directives to assert that the alleviation of poverty amongst women is streamlined, achieved, and cascaded further to all the AU member states, including South Africa.

The above review also revealed that, like poverty, equality is multi-dimensional and that women often experience overlapping social, economic, cultural, and psychological causes of poverty that influence each other. Therefore, the utilisation of various poverty alleviation tools that supplement each other, and involving various role-players, are critical when addressing poverty among women. This sentiment was echoed in the SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development, 2008. Moreover, this view was also articulated in Chapter 2, Section 2.5 and therefore, the premise is included in the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, developed in this study.

It is evident that the Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997, acknowledges the importance of using gender mainstreaming to promote sustainable development in the SADC region. In Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2 it was articulated that, some of the members in a community benefit at the expense of the others, displayed by the difference between the rich and the poor. The Gender and Development Monitor 2022 (SADC, 2022:11) confirms that the gender equality pace is slow as identified in the political leadership where mostly men are appointed in senior positions. It is the responsibility of women to initiate the change they want to see (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.1). However, with the inequality observed in leadership positions it can be argued

that the benefits of gender mainstreaming are not reaching all women and promotes inequality.

Aligned to the intentions of the Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997, the Protocol on Gender and Development, 2008, stipulates that programme designs must incorporate equality to protect against discriminatory practices and tendencies that undermines legislation and policies. SADC legislation should therefore be scrutinised to verify if these achieve the set objectives and to corroborate whether equality forms part of these programmes.

Government's efforts are noticed in the development of the IDP strategies which are based on community consultation and partnership to address the socio-economic challenges (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3), but, regrettably, despite these mechanisms to promote the empowerment of women, poverty in South Africa continues unabated. In this respect, the study aims to contribute to a solution through the development of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

3.7. SOUTH AFRICAN STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY AMONG WOMEN

South Africa is responsible to alleviate poverty in all community's and, important to this study, among women. In the quest to address and eradicate poverty in the broader socio-economic milieu, considerable legislation, policies, and mechanisms have been formulated, including the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), 2019-2024. The MTSF contains government's policy intents to support the objectives of the NDP (RSA, 2011) with the aim to address the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality, and poverty (RSA, 2019:13). The MTSF (RSA, 2019:17) also commits to directing government's policy agenda in terms of:

- a more capable state;
- driving a strong and inclusive economy; and
- building and strengthening the capabilities of South Africa.

In addition to the NDP (RSA, 2011) and the MTSF, 2019-2024, several other legislation and policies were promulgated to address the socio-economic circumstances that contribute towards the alleviation of poverty amongst its citizenry, most importantly, the Constitution, 1996.

3.7.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution, 1996, is regarded as the supreme law of the country and provides every citizen with equal rights and equal privileges, coupled with duties and responsibilities (RSA, 1996:3). The stipulations of the Constitution,1996, are aimed at ensuring social justice for the South African citizenry. Social justice is underpinned by fairness and equality (CFI, 2022) and brings inequality to the fore to address disparities (Govender, 2016:255). Several sections in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996) (also presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.1) enshrine human rights, relevant to women and, specifically relevant to (1) women in poverty; (2) the empowerment of women; and (3) equality:

- Section 9 – Equality: no citizen may be discriminated against based on gender. It is argued that equality is not obtained if poverty is more intensely experienced by women than by men.
- Section 10 – Human dignity: all citizens have their dignity and the right to their dignity respected and protected. It is argued that poverty deprive people of their dignity.
- Section 24 – Environment: all citizens have the right to an environment that is not harmful to their wellbeing. It is argued that the socio-economic circumstances and environment of poor citizens in rural areas do not provide for their wellbeing.
- Section 25 (5) – Property: the state is mandated to implement systems to ensure fair access to land (RSA, 1996:12). It is against this backdrop that no women should be deprived of property.
- Section 26 – Housing: all citizens have the right to have access to adequate housing, including women.
- Section 27 (b) – Healthcare, food, water and social security: water and food are basic needs that citizens must have access to (RSA, 1996:13). The high poverty

level among women as presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 revealed the difficulty government is facing to deliver on its mandate as specified in the Constitution 1996.

- Section 29 – Education: all citizens have the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, including women, especially women residing in rural areas who are often deprived of this opportunity due to household responsibilities.

It is evident that human rights relate to the typical challenges that women in rural areas face, for instance, inequality; inadequate access to health; limited opportunities to education; and unemployment. As argued in Section 3.4 above, the foci of the human rights are ironically also emphasised in the NDP (RSA, 2011) as the primary socio-economic and development challenges faced by South Africa, implying that these human rights are not yet fully met and not experienced by all citizens. This situation is particularly true in the jurisdictions of the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality (serving as case study for this research). For example, both these municipalities predominantly comprise of rural areas and the Ratlou Local Municipality is among the 12 poorest municipalities in the country (David *et al.*, 2018:10) – also see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.1; and Section 4.3.1.2. The causes and factors contributing to the dire poverty in these two municipalities are reviewed in Chapter 4, Section 4.4, including a lack of education; inadequate infrastructure; inadequate health facilities; water shortages; energy crises; spatial challenges; sub-standard road systems; unemployment; and low-income levels. Especially relevant to this study is that women are classified as a vulnerable or disadvantaged group and are therefore excluded from accessing socio-economic benefits that relieve people from the hardship of poverty (RSA,2015b:2; African Outlook, 2016:4; Picard, 2021:10). The Bill of Rights confirms that women have the right to realise all the state benefits (RSA, 1996:6). Yet, this is not consistently the case in South Africa.

Govender (2016:255); Adams and Mahomed (2018:1); Hundenborn, Woolard and Jellema (2019:1019); Plagerson and Mthembu (2019:10); Andreoni, Mondliwa, Roberts and Tregenna (2021:349); and Chatterjee *et al.* (2022:1) postulate that South Africa features as the most unequal society and confirms that the poor become poorer, while the rich become richer; thus, promoting inequality that supports social injustices

of hunger, discrimination, insecurity, and poor health, to name a few. Gumede (2021:2) reports that after nearly three decades as a democratic state, with equality enshrined in the Constitution, 1996, poverty is still defined by a prevalent inequity in South Africa.

Chapter 9 of the Constitution, 1996, deals with state institutions that support the governing structures of the constitutional democracy (RSA, 1996:109) and provide for both women and men. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus is placed on the Chapter 9 institutions significant to women issues *viz.,* South African Human Rights Commission (RSA, 1996:111); and the Commission for Gender Equality (RSA, 1996:112). These state institutions work independently and are underpinned by the values of fairness, impartiality and accountable to the National Assembly (RSA,1996:108). It could be argued that these provisions afford women the benefit and encouragement to access empowerment and poverty alleviation projects. Furthermore, they would be aware that, for any human rights- or gender-related challenge, they would have the support of the said state institutions. However, since multiple human rights- or gender-related challenge, enshrined in the Constitution, 1996, persist the NDP (RSA, 2011) was drafted and is currently South Africa's leading socio-economic policy.

3.7.2. National Development Plan (NDP): Vision for 2030 (2011)

Government policies attempt to achieve set objectives such as the alleviation of poverty as contained in the NDP (RSA, 2011). Attached thereto are target dates which are occasionally long-term, spanning around five years (RSA, 2019:10).

Since the inception of democracy in 1994, government has been enacting legislation and formulating policies that seek to address socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and the skills deficit in the country (Chagunda & Taylor, 2014:36; Hino, Leibbrandt, Machema, Shifa & Soudien, 2018:7; Beegle & Christiansen, 2019:148). Nonetheless in the 2017 State of the Nation Address (SONA), the then President indicated that the government acknowledges poverty through the NDP to address, among others, poverty, and inequality (Zuma, 2017:2). The NDP supports the SDGs and commits the government to alleviate poverty and

limit inequality by 2030 (RSA, 2012:34). In this regard, the objectives of the NDP are to:

- eliminate poverty and reduce unemployment (RSA, 2012:110);
- improve the quality of school education (RSA, 2012:27);
- deconstruct the spatial patterns of the apartheid system (RSA, 2012:276);
- reduce unemployment from 27% to 14% by 2020 and to 6% by 2030 (RSA, 2012:117);
- decrease the level of inequality, as measured by the Gini Coefficient from 0.7 in 2007 to 0.6 in 2030 (RSA, 2012:34); and
- allow South Africa to become a less resource intensive economy and adopt sustainable development practices (RSA, 2012:353).

It is evident that through its commitment to the SDGs and, coupled with the objectives of the NDP (RSA, 2011), the government placed the country on a development path and is committed to build a capable state by addressing challenges associated with poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

South Africa is a democracy as alluded to in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, as well as a developmental state (Khambule, 2020:167). A developmental state is a state planned such that it makes it compels the government to influence the direction and pace of economic development (RSA, 2012:54; Ngqebe, 2017:18). Furthermore, it can foster economic growth and development through which the state is not only able to transform its economic base but can also ensure that relevant economic policies enhance the standards of living of most of its citizens (De Wee, 2016:489; Mathebula, 2016:47; Shumuye, 2017:6). In contrast, Burger (2014:2) holds that a developmental state is selective and more concerned with the private sector. However, the NDP leads to promote the objectives of a developmental state (RSA, 2012:27).

The NDP (RSA, 2011) is the blueprint of a long-term road map (Haywood *et al.*, 2019:6; Khambule, 2020:156). In 2012, the Cabinet adopted it as a plan to fight poverty and inequality over an 18-year period (NSTF, s.a.:1). The inequality that the NDP envisages to eradicate by 2030 is a focus on all its components on a concomitant approach because inequalities feed off each other, as alluded to in Chapter 2, Section

2.3.4.4. Govender (2016:244); Plagerson and Mthembu (2019:5); and the UN (2020:34) maintain that inequality comprises of race, gender, geography, and the economy working in tandem. The NDP's Diagnostic Report asserted that "The quality of school education for black people is poor, spatial divides hobble inclusive divide; South Africa remains a divided society and too few people work" (RSA, 2012:35). However, the 2014-2019 NDP Mid-Term Review Progress Report registered achievements and addressed challenges in major areas, including the eradication of absolute poverty, and the reduction of inequality and unemployment (RSA, 2017:8).

Due to the government's shift towards a more market-based approach, it raises a concern regarding the availability of capacity to achieve the envisaged aim to ensure that the entire South African community accesses all the resources (Moyo & Mamabolo, 2014:947). This concern emanates from the premise that the NDP (RSA, 2011) requires the entire community to participate in economic activities (Rogerson, 2014:208; Haywood *et al.*, 2019:6), and community members, government and private sector taking ownership to realise the set goal (Ungerer, 2016:4; Haywood *et al.,* 2019:6). The suggestion is that every role player in the alleviation of poverty has to influence the process by taking a keen and total interest in their own development to alleviate poverty (Makalela, 2017:15).

The Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011) serve as interventions to address, among others, the plight of women living in poverty. However, the implementation does not demonstrate the expected outcomes, evident in the levels of poverty that women continue to experience (Moletsane *et al.,* 2010:1; Merten, 2017:1; Ndalamba, 2019:37). The level of poverty among women is visibly high in the country which could be attributed to the large number of women. Consequently, the registered progress is insignificant because poverty alleviation is taking place at an extremely slow pace.

Education is perceived to be a significant poverty alleviation tool (Dotter & Klasen, 2017:3; Navarro-Carrillo*,* Alonso-Ferres, Moya & Valor-Segura*.,* 2020:1) and subsequently focused upon in the following section.

3.7.3. South African School Act 84 of 1996

It was revealed in Chapter 1, Section 1.3, that education is a basic human right and it was reaffirmed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2 that it is a powerful empowerment and poverty alleviation tool that differentiates between illiterate and literate individuals. Comparatively speaking, the literate earns more and can afford basic needs, compared to the illiterate who earn less and experience poverty because their financial situation cannot meet their basic needs (Nadim & Nurlukman, 2018:154; Nadeem, 2021:59).

The Strategic Litigation Impact Equal Access to Quality Education (2017:45) highlights that post-apartheid South Africa came with various legislation to consider the inequalities of the past, *viz*. human rights violations that inhibited the black population from accessing equal education. The School Act, 1996, provides for a uniform education system for organisations, governance, the funding of schools, as well as amend and repeal selected school legislation (RSA, 1996b:1). In support of the legislation, South Africa underscores a learning culture and allocated a budget expenditure of R402.9 billion in 2020/2021 that represents the bulk of the national budget, while basic education apportioned the highest allocation of R272.3 billion of the learning culture budget expenditure (RSA, 2021:58). The significance of education is reflected by government spending (Rena & Wanka, 2019:597) and demonstrated by an increase of R25.8 billion on the previous year's budget (2020/2021) apportioned to basic education in 2021/2022 (National Treasury, 2022:3).

Hills (2015:158); and Matera (2015) identify the lack of education as factors that retards the progress of most South African women. Furthermore, young women in rural areas are faced with inadequate access to schools in their locality. Consequently, they are forced to attend schools a distance from their residential areas. Moreover, these challenges force them to drop out of school before Grade 12. Burger (2016:18) confirms that education is a social infrastructure with indirect empowerment returns on poor people and a tool to empower women (Panhwar, Tahir & Tunio 2021:77).

3.7.4. Housing Act 107 of 1997

Post-1994 the democratic government declared their intentions to address the disparity in housing that was created by the apartheid government and subsequently, encapsulated housing as one of the basic human rights, as indicated in Section, 3.6.1. The White Paper on Housing, 1994, points to customary laws and traditional traits as stumbling blocks that undermine women and expose them to unequal treatment (RSA, 1994:59). The Housing Act, 1997, explains that as government addresses the plight of the destitute, it should prioritise the marginalised group because of the direct discrimination they suffered (RSA, 1997b:7). The initial phase in the delivery of and prioritisation of housing as mandated in the Constitution, 1996, Section 26 (1) is to meet the needs of the poor before attending to other housing matters (RSA, 1997b:5). Included in the mandate of the Housing Act, 1997, are functions of the three spheres of government with appropriate funding allocated for national housing (RSA, 1997b:1). Moreover, it requires municipalities to utilise a progressive housing plan that would ensure the allocation of housing for the poor and especially for women (RSA, 1997b:19; RSA, 2000e:37). The Accounting Standards Board (ASB) (2017:12), as well as the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (RSA, 2000e:22) detail the local municipal function and include consultation with the national and provincial government to ensure that it delivers on its mandate to build and provide houses in a fair and just administrative system.

3.7.5. Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000

It was argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2 that people must be educated to understand basic human rights and without education, basic rights are a futile exercise. It is against this background that the lack of education deprives the uneducated access to opportunities established by the government to benefit its citizens and more specifically women, as stated in Section, 3.6.1.

In advancing justice for all administrative duties, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) of 2000 intends to hold public office bearers accountable by promoting transparency and openness in their daily operations (RSA, 2000d:2). It can be assumed that communicating government projects such as those intended to

alleviate poverty amongst women forms part of sound administrative governance. However, holding government officials accountable depends on an informed community that understands legislation and policies.

This classification of the uneducated and poor in most instances constitutes women who reside predominantly in rural areas. Furthermore, this could be exacerbated by the government officials' lack of communication with beneficiaries of the goods and services they provide.

3.7.6. Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

Amid South Africa's various constitutional rights enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996, the right of the citizenry to access information was affirmed in Section 3.2. This Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000, allows citizens access to information; to interact amongst themselves; and to communicate with various stakeholders, for example, government officials who disseminate opportunities meant to enhance the lives of citizens through information (Public Service Commission, 2002:24) (also see Section 3.6.5).

The PAIA, 2000, undertakes to ensure that every person has access to state information, or any information kept by the state or other person to realise or protect the rights of the citizenry (RSA, 2000c:2). Chapter 4 of the PAIA specifies grounds for the refusal of access to records but must not be exposed to abuse and construed to the disadvantage of any person (RSA, 2000c:25). It is against this background that adequate reason can be advanced to refuse information in pursuit of any human rights recourse or commence the process to alleviate poverty or empowerment of women. This is prescribed in Section 7 (1) of the Constitution, 1996, which dictates that information must be transparent to advance the process to maintain protection, dignity, and equality. Furthermore, access to education, as stipulated in Section 3.7.2, supplements the PAIA, 2000, since the premise for an accurate interpretation of information is literacy gained through schooling.

The phrase 'knowledge is power' has existed since 1597 and transcended over the years García, 2001:109). Thus, knowledge gained through education allows for the

proper interpretation of information and could lead to empowerment. It could be claimed that most women fail to access empowering information due to illiteracy, as confirmed in Chapter 1, Section 1.2. The PAIA provides citizens the right to seek information and to be provided with the required information.

3.7.7. Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000

Section 29 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996, safeguards the right to basic education and adult education for both the young and old. The formulation of the Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000, is in *lieu* of the apartheid social policy that benefitted the white minority with multiple consequences thereof still prevalent (Gumede, 2019:504), for example, those who are now older and were denied education during their formative years. However, currently there are those who cannot access education because of cultural and traditional beliefs. Having taken cognisance of these social injustices the government enacted the Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 in a bid to make education accessible for the different age spectrum.

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 directs and undertakes to focus on socio-economic injustices. It focuses on the past education imbalances with specific reference to marginalised women deprived from accessing education (RSA, 2000b:1). Furthermore, the Act promotes equal access to education, regardless of the person's age and allows women the opportunity to empower themselves (RSA, 2000b:1). The challenge could be that women struggle to balance their full-time domestic responsibilities. described in Chapter 2, Section 2.4 with the time to attend school. The determents of poverty should be addressed concurrently as specified in Chapter 2, Section 2.5 because access to adult basic education requires the support of family members to step in and take charge of some of the designated family responsibilities and allow women flexibility to incorporate time for school in their daily schedule (Buvinić & O'Donnell, 2019:310).

Women should possibly utilise the Skills Development Act, 2000, to enhance their domestic skills and improve themselves; however, the Act underscores the enhancement of skills of the employed whilst ignoring the unemployed who include

those whose responsibility is primarily household duties and of which the majority live in poverty. The HRSC's Diagnostic Report on skills development assert that the policy mandate should be specific for the target group they envisage to support, and in their quest address the unemployed, uneducated and the poor (Reddy, Wildschut, Luescher, Petersen & Rust ,2018:75-76) – also see Section 3.3.4. It can be argued that the involvement of the uneducated as the benefactor of the Skills Development Act, 2000, could promote the empowerment of women. However, skilling the employed and educated could widen the socio-economic gap and promote inequality. Aligned to this notion, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 reviewed in the following section focusses on addressing equality and discrimination amongst women.

3.7.8. Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000

Government efforts driven by legislation and policies to address socio-economic injustices could develop unintended consequences and deepen injustices, as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.6; and Section 3.7.5 of this chapter. The Skills Development Act, 2000, caters primarily for the employed. Its objective clearly fits the category of discrimination of the unemployed and widens the inequality gap. Moreover, as alluded to in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4, discrimination is the denial of voting rights, education, and property, whilst inequality stems from patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism developing through gender, race, and class lines. As contended in Chapter 1, Section 1.6, it is against the law to discriminate, including discrimination based on gender.

The Promotion of Equality and Discrimination Act (PEPUDA), 2000, seeks to promote equality, and simultaneously discourage discriminatory practices that could develop into uncontrollable circumstances (RSA, 2000:10). As noted in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.1, inequality comprises both the powerful and the weak since the former benefits at the expense of the weak. In Section 3.6.7 it was demonstrated that an imbalance is prevalent between the employed and the unemployed which can be perceived as discriminating against the unemployed. Effective implementation of the PEPUDA, 2000, could ensure that it affords the unemployed support to alleviate poverty and enhance their empowerment. However, as stated in Section 3.6.5, in certain instances

a poverty alleviation strategy fails if government officials' operations are not open, transparent, and easily accessible to the community. Thus, it was stated in Section 3.6.4 that different levels of government ought to cooperate in their functions to realise the implementation of policies. Subsequently, the next section explores the Cooperative Act 14 of 2005**.**

3.7.9. Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005

In Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3, it was maintained that self-help groups for women is perceived as a form of poverty alleviation which brings them together under a common purpose. The benefit of self-help groups, among others, can be equated to the participatory approach that accentuates participation of the affected target group.

The Co-operatives Act, 2005, mandates that the community registers cooperatives of people or groups that operate within the framework of the law and share the same values and objectives in generating income (RSA, 2005:1; 6). Women are encouraged to work together, leverage from each other and build a strong buying power by establishing a self-help group (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.4). In trying to formalise self-help groups, women should elevate their group to the cooperative level to garner support to empower themselves economically and alleviate poverty (RSA, 2005:1; Rui & Nie, 2021:1104). Perhaps they could also benefit from the available international foreign aid directed to alleviate poverty meant specifically for women, as advised in Section 3.2. The government could possibly accomplish their mandate to alleviate poverty amongst women by partnering with organised groups of women who share the same objectives. Consequently, more women could benefit instead of partnering with one and fail to make an impact on a larger scale to alleviate poverty.

3.7.10. Health White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System in South Africa, 1997

Most countries face barriers that inhibits the right to health (Odera & Mulusa, 2020:43). This is also the case in South Africa. It was established in the 2021 South African Budget Review that the Department of Health was allocated the third highest budget expenditure which amounts to R242.8 billion (RSA, 2021:58) to address public health-

related challenges and the 2022/2023 budget allocation revealed an increase of R17.8 billion (National Treasury, 2022:3).

White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System in South Africa, 1997, details that women in South Africa form part of the vulnerable group but health services often elude them because of their poverty-stricken situation (RSA, 1997:5). Women's biological make-up is such that they need specialised health treatment particularly during childbirth because proper maternal health care is clinical and complicated; however, if properly managed, saves lives (Kifle, Azale, Gelaw & Melsew, 2017:2; Dahab & Sakellariou, 2020:11). Women from poor areas are generally deprived of such services due to their socio-economic circumstances (Nuamah, Agyei-Baffour, Mensah, Boateng, Quansah, Dobin & Addai-Donkor, 2019:1). It is argued that the transformed health system should be established to accommodate health care requirements for women and more importantly accommodate women in rural areas.

3.7.11. White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance, 2003

In Chapter 1, Section 1.6 it was asserted that women experience diverse socio-economic challenges that are in contravention of their basic human rights and dignity and forces them into a life of inequality and discrimination, which is in violation of the law, as mentioned in Section 3.6.8. Women under traditional leadership are no exception.

The promulgation of the White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance, 2003, was envisaged to change the way traditional leaders' function. The White Paper focuses, *inter alia*, on citizens who live in rural areas where governance resides with a traditional leader (RSA, 2003:34). Inclusive in the role of a traditional leader is the management of the socio-economic aspects of their land which typically encompasses poverty, under-development, poor infrastructure, and a lack of access to economic opportunities (RSA, 2003:31). It could be that if effectively implemented, power relations of men's superiority over women could be addressed through this White Paper to benefit the empowerment of women and contribute towards their poverty alleviation. As mentioned in Section 3.6.7 and Section 3.6.10, education is a powerful poverty alleviation tool. Subsequently, he White Paper for Post-school Education and

Training, 2014, is reviewed in the following section to ensure that, irrespective of different circumstances, everybody has access to education.

3.7.12. White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2014

Supplementing to the Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000, reviewed in Section 3.6.7, is the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2014, that disaggregate women because the former addresses every person without primary and high school qualifications whereas the latter concerns itself with persons who are in possession of a high school qualification. The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2014, focuses on equipping citizens who join institutions of higher learning with lifelong skills (RSA, 2014:xi). Furthermore, the White Paper focuses on citizens from disadvantaged areas by recognising their prior acquired knowledge (RSA, 2014:xiv). It is presumed that the compromised security is another contributory factor of poverty; thus, the next section focuses on the Draft White Paper on Safety and Security, 2015.

3.7.13. Draft White Paper on Safety and Security, 2015

Safety and security are a government's responsibility as stipulated in Chapter 11 of the Constitution,1996, Chapter 11, further enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996, as a human right. Based on the statistical release on victims of crime, the crime category which reflected an increase in 2019/2020 is as follows: robbery, stock theft and high jacking (RSA, 2020:11). The increase in the crimes mentioned above can be perceived as the government's failure to fight crime.

The Draft White Paper on Safety and Security, 2015, is geared towards addressing and combating crime as its primary mandate. However, the White Paper links poverty indirectly to crime. It could be argued that people living in poverty-stricken areas are more likely to be affected by crime than those who reside in affluent areas (RSA, 2015:10; Cuthbertson, 2018:1; Ndlela, 2020:5). Ineffective security has a negative impact on the economy; the two are interdependent because the economy cannot thrive in an unsecured space. In Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4 it was mentioned that the

economy is envisaged to address the inequality of the past and to work towards poverty alleviation; however, the failing economy is a breeding ground for inequality. The economy is not the only determent that influences crime. It also stems from social exclusion, education level, culture, and family (Lobonţ, Nicolescu, Moldovan & Kuloğlu, 2017:96). Crime also affects women and the grave socio-economic factors experienced by women residing in rural areas expose them to crime.

3.7.14. Department of Women

It was confirmed in Chapter 1, Section 1.6 that women experience discrimination in different forms. Patriarchy is one of the discriminatory practices that, in certain instances, is complex to recognise; and to overcome discrimination against women, decisive plans must be designed to abolish oppression (Doherty, 2019:23). In the spirit of the government acknowledging socio-economic challenges and considering the discrimination of women a focal point, a Women Ministry was established based on the belief that setting up systems, strategies and the development of empowerment programmes could alleviate poverty amongst women.

The vision of the Department of Women is to address patriarchal practises and fast-track women's issues with the fundamental purpose to enhance the socio-economic status of women (DPWYP, 2022:10). Both women and poverty are classified as an inferior level of the socio-economic factors, and thus requires support to be moved to an essential level that would allow them to enjoy equality (DWYPD, 2022:10). The establishment of the Women Ministry confirms that government has prioritised vulnerable groups with a specific emphasis on women. Related salient matters such as patriarchy that is promoted by culture and tradition and has the propensity to develop into the oppression of women, renders them powerless and poor, as articulated in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.

As inferred in Section 3.6.2, the Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011) serve as the primary interventions to address, among others, the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. However, the implementation does not demonstrate the expected outcomes, evident in the levels of poverty that women continue to experience (Moletsane *et al.,* 2010:1; Merten, 2017:1; Ndalamba, 2019:37). The level

of poverty among women is visibly high in the country which could be attributed to the large number of women. Consequently, the registered progress is insignificant because poverty alleviation is taking place at an extremely slow pace.

In addition to the Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011) various legislation and policies promulgated by the government and reviewed above focus on the poverty alleviation of women. These legislation and policies address pivotal issues relating to the poverty alleviation of women, including, education (South African School Act, 1996; Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000; and White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2014); health (White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System, 1997); equality (Promotion of Equality and Discrimination Act, 2000); housing (Housing Act, 1997); safety and security (Draft White Paper on Safety and Security, 2015); access to information (PAIA Act, 2000); and cooperation between the role players in the efforts to alleviate poverty and empower women (Cooperative Act, 2005).

The statutory and regulatory framework reviewed above, particularly relate to particular socio-economic challenges experienced by the citizens of South Africa, and especially those that live in poverty, for instance, women residing in the rural areas of the North West Province. It is argued that the exclusion of socio-economic opportunities deprives citizens of their human rights, enshrined in the Constitution, 1996. A direct correlation can be found between exclusion from socio-economic opportunities and poverty (Kabeer, 2016:38). In this respect, Social Exclusion Theory (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1) postulates that established barriers marginalise and exclude people from social and economic activities that other people enjoy (Figueroa, 2018:10). These so-called barriers are observed in the rural areas of the North West Province where citizens experience a lack of opportunities to education, health, housing, adequate infrastructure, and sufficient water and electricity provision, to name a few (see Chapter 4, sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. Specific to the objectives of this study, the focus is placed on women in these communities and their poverty. Relevant to this focus is Radical Feminist Theory (see Chapter 2, Section, 2.3.4.1) that is defined by its focus to discard oppressive behaviour suffered by women and allow them to enjoy justice in all their social dealings without an intent to destroy men

(Effiong & Inyang, s.a:12-13). The tenets of Radical Feminist Theory are therefore rooted in gender equality.

3.8. SOUTH AFRICAN STATUTORY AND REGULATORY INSTRUMENTS TO EMPOWER WOMEN

The empowerment of women to make beneficial decisions to effect noticeable change to their lives and develop their capacity to manage their own lives properly, as was articulated in Chapter 1, Section 1.6. Furthermore, the empowerment of women is one of the pillars used to alleviate poverty and was supported by the President in his 2020 address to the UN's General Assembly on the 25th anniversary of the 4th Conference on Women, stating that "the empowerment of women is one of South Africa's national priorities and central to our development strategies" (Ramaphosa, 2020b).

3.8.1. Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000

The Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996, promotes a free, fair, and democratic society that is non-discriminatory and treats every citizen equally. It appears that selected legislation is contradictory in this regard and appears discriminatory on the surface but necessary to achieve the objective to manage discrimination and poverty alleviation amongst women, as articulated in the Section 3.7.2 below.

The Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000, is another framework used to establish a system to ensure that procuring preferences benefit the previously disadvantaged by incorporating race, gender, and disability (National Treasury, 2000:3). Advertised bids are published in the Government Tender Bulletin and other media publications thirty (30) days prior to the closure of the bid (RSA, 2004:43). If women are to benefit from this framework, a proper understanding of processes and procedures plays a critical role, but it could be claimed that the understanding could emanate from those with a certain level of literacy. As articulated in Section 3.6.5, officials and persons should manage the procurement processes to discharge their duty in an accountable manner and manage communication with the public fairly by

availing information (as was stipulated in Section 3.6.6) to help them submit their completed tender documents accurately as required.

Proper implementation in accordance with the set standards of PAJA (2000) and PAIA (2000), as contained in Section 3.6.5 and Section 3.6.6 respectively, could benefit the illiterate because of the support they will receive from government officials. Tagar *et al.* (2019:96) and Khuluvhe (2021:3) assert that it is difficult for most women who are uneducated to read, and comprehend documents (also see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1); thus, forfeiting advertised government projects meant to alleviate poverty and enhance empowerment. Based on the prescripts of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000, in conjunction with the BBBEE Act, 2013, black and poor women are relevant beneficiaries of empowerment. As elucidated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.2, the government ought to establish legislation and policies to empower women, one of these which is the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act of 2013, reviewed in the following section.

3.8.2. Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act 46 of 2013

Despite the legislation and policies aimed to promote the empowerment of women, the economic status of black citizens reflects a clear inequality that is glaring amongst women who are deprived of economic access and opportunities (Musk *et al.*, 2017:58-59). Taking cognisance of other established policies, the government observed that economic emancipation of black citizens and women is paramount and promulgated the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act (BBBEE) of 2013.

The BBBEE Act, 2013, also seeks to formulate a legislative framework to achieve black economic emancipation, particularly for women residing in rural areas (RSA, 2013b:4) Furthermore, the BBBEE Act, 2013, presents a distinctive race segregation without having to be accused of discriminatory practices (RSA, 2013b:4). It can be claimed that black empowerment should direct specific attention towards women's emancipation to bridge the inequality gap and poverty, as postulated by Black Feminist Theory (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5), as well as place them on par with men. In Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4, the combination of the struggle of black women and the high level of poverty among them in the rural areas was explored. It was concluded

that black women experience higher levels of poverty due to the triple oppression of race, gender, and class that they are exposed to. As articulated above, the BBBEE Act, 2013, provides for the right to distinguish between genders and target women based on the level of poverty that can be classified according to race or location.

The implementation processes should focus on the emancipation of black women through up-skilling and increasing access to economic activities (RSA, 2013b:4). The government utilises a scorecard developed in 2003 to measure whether an institution achieves relevant empowerment components by monitoring the BBBEE Act, 2013 (RSA, 2003b:21). These measurements focus on a direct empowerment score; human resource development and employment equity score; indirect empowerment score; and residual (RSA, 2003b:23). Thus, women's self-help groups, as explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.4, could leverage from the BBBEE Act, 2013, provided they are literate to understand and interpret how government projects could benefit them (also see Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2). It is argued that the benefits of the self-help group incorporate empowerment. However, as highlighted in Chapter 2, Section 2.6, equality must not be achieved at the expense of losing emancipation; thus, the focus in the next section is on the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013.

3.8.3. Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013

In Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.3, it was revealed that Social Feminist Theory and Radical Feminist Theory contest the Liberal Feminist Theory perspective that advocates for the same treatment of women, albeit poverty amongst women is more pronounced compared to their male counterparts. However, in the endeavour to correct the imbalance in the treatment of women and men, the government advanced legislation, including the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013.

The objectives of the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013, is to give meaning to the Constitution, 1996, and to comply with the legislation relevant to the empowerment of women (RSA, 2013:4), for instance:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (December 1979).
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (September 1995).
- Millennium Declaration and Development Goals (September 2000).
- Protocol on the Rights of African Women (July 2003).
- SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (August 2008).
- Sustainable Developmental Goals (2015).

The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013, further seeks to develop a framework to promote the empowerment of women (RSA, 2013:2). It can be argued that in trying to align the implementation process, it encompasses relevant legislation. The legislation relevant to the alleviation of poverty amongst women plays a fundamental role in this respect. It is possibly prudent for South Africa to commit to poverty alleviation and empowerment and support the interest of the entire women population in the country.

The legislation and policies promulgated by the government and reviewed above focus on the empowerment of women, recognising that it includes the poverty alleviation of women. These legislation and policies address pivotal issues relating to the empowerment of women, including, preferential procurement of government tenders (Preferential Procurement Policy Framework, 2000); access and opportunities to women within the BBBEE framework (BBBEE Act, 2013); and the promotion of gender equality (Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013).

Furthermore, it was determined that the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework, 2000, in its current form unintentionally excludes women who are uneducated due to the processes put in place in procuring goods and services of government. As asserted in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1, it is difficult for most women who are uneducated to read and comprehend documents. Thus, proper implementation of the framework in accordance with the set standards of PAJA (2000) and PAIA (2000) could benefit the illiterate.

It is argued that the BBBEE Act, 2013, is progressive and targets disadvantaged people including women. However, it is a challenge for women to benefit from the BBBEE because of their education level which hampers them from understanding how to use BBBEE to their benefit. In addition, the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013, gives impetus to the Constitution, 1996, since it is aligned to address socio-economic challenges to promote gender equality as human right.

3.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the national, regional, continental and international legislative framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women. In this respect, the internal mandates of the UN, the USA, the UK, and France, as part of the European EU, aligned to humanitarian assistance to developing countries, were reviewed. The AU's member states subscribe to the UN legislation and policies which, among others, target poverty alleviation amongst women and empowerment in the continent, regions and ultimately the respective countries. At the national level South Africa utilises the binding directives of both the UN and the AU to formulate its own legislation and policies to address poverty and empower women but strictly operate from the premise of the mentioned frameworks.

The mechanisms established through the international regulatory framework have a focus on human rights and in particular, the human rights of women. Therefore, the international regulatory framework addresses the concerns of women pertaining to poverty alleviation, inequality, their empowerments and all the related socio-economic challenges.

The review on the foreign aid provided by developed states and organisations such as the UN and the EU, revealed that the support is primarily geared towards the socio-economic upliftment in the developing countries, with a particular focus on poverty alleviation and the enhancement of equality (e.g., USAID). It was argued that foreign is regrettably serves people differently, diminishing the efforts to alleviate poverty despite the intentions aimed at benefitting the developing countries.

The USA's Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Setting Act, 2017, was especially found to be relevant to this study. The Act directs the aid to the education of girls and women, especially relevant to this study. Education has been identified as one of the primary determinants of poverty. In South Africa, education forms part of the constitutional rights of every citizen and access to education for women is amongst the universal poverty alleviation tools that could empower women socially and economically.

The USA's Growth and Development Act, 2014, focuses specifically on economic growth, undeniably relevant to South Africa. It was, however, revealed that using economic growth as sole strategy in an unequal environment is not benefitting the community in its entirety. For economic growth to be fair and just, every person should be afforded the opportunity of active economic participation and enjoy the benefits thereof. Inclusive development should therefore be a precursor to inclusive growth if the poverty reduction process is to succeed in its endeavour and women should be given the same economic opportunities as men.

In consideration of the review on the AU's legislation and policies, aimed at poverty alleviation, it became evident that the support that AU member states render to each other demonstrates the potential to accomplish more than would have been the case in the absence of the envisaged partnerships. It was therefore argued that the AU partnerships would also provide the confidence to negotiate with, for instance foreign countries that provide aid to developing countries; thereby, enhancing the probability of securing aid to give effect to its legislation and policies aimed at poverty alleviation in its member states.

It was revealed that women continue to find it difficult to enjoy and realise the articles of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003. It became evident that the focal points of the human rights (e.g., the right to work, health, education, equality, etc.) are also elucidated in the NDP (RSA, 2011) as the primary socio-economic challenges faced by South Africa. However, despite the statutory and regulatory prescripts from both South Africa and the AU, these human rights are still elusive to many South African citizens. As argued from the onset of this

study, a neglect of human rights exacerbates poverty. Especially relevant to this study is that the South Africa Women's Month Status Report on Women and Girls, 2015, states that women are classified as a vulnerable or disadvantaged group and are therefore excluded from accessing socio-economic benefits that relieve people from the hardship of poverty.

It was revealed that the implementation of the regional structures' plans should not be dealt with in a stand-alone manner but should rather find expression in the national structures' directives to assert that the alleviation of poverty amongst women is streamlined, achieved, and cascaded further to all the AU member states, including South Africa. The review on the mechanisms established by the AU and SADC also revealed that, like poverty, equality is multi-dimensional and that women often experience overlapping social, economic, cultural, and psychological causes of poverty that influence each other. Therefore, the utilisation of various poverty alleviation tools that supplement each other, and involving various role-players, are critical when addressing poverty among women.

It became evident that the Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997, acknowledges the importance of using gender mainstreaming to promote sustainable development in the SADC region. The Gender and Development Monitor 2022 (SADC, 2022:11) confirms that the pace of gender equality is slow, as identified in the political leadership where men are mostly appointed in senior positions. It was therefore argued that gender mainstreaming is not reaching all women.

The review of the national legislation and policies for the poverty alleviation of women revealed that the Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011) serve as the primary interventions to address, among others, the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. However, the implementation does not demonstrate the expected outcomes, evident in the levels of poverty that women continue to experience.

In addition to the Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011) various legislation and policies promulgated by the government, focusing on the poverty alleviation of women were reviewed. These legislation and policies revealed a focus on pivotal issues relating to the poverty alleviation of women, including, education (South African School

Act, 1996; Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000; and White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2014); health (White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System, 1997); equality (Promotion of Equality and Discrimination Act, 2000); housing (Housing Act, 1997); safety and security (Draft White Paper on Safety and Security, 2015); access to information (PAIA Act, 2000); and cooperation between the role players in the efforts to alleviate poverty and empower women (Cooperative Act, 2005).

The statutory and regulatory framework reviewed above, particularly relate to particular socio-economic challenges experienced by the citizens of South Africa, and especially those that live in poverty, for instance, women residing in the rural areas of the North West Province. It was argued that the exclusion of socio-economic opportunities deprives citizens of their human rights, enshrined in the Constitution, 1996. Research has also revealed a direct correlation between exclusion from socio-economic opportunities and poverty (Kabeer, 2016:3). These barriers are observed in the rural areas of the North West Province where citizens experience a lack of opportunities to, for instance, education, health, housing, adequate infrastructure, and sufficient water and electricity provision.

Following the comprehensive review of the international, continental, regional, and national statutory and regulatory framework on the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women, as well as the theoretical exposition on poverty in Chapter 2, the next chapter profiles the North West Province, particularly the rural areas and in specific, the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality, focused upon in this study.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS RELATED TO POVERTY AMONGST WOMEN IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to develop a policy framework to alleviate poverty amongst women in the North West Province. To contribute to the development of this framework, Chapter 2 evaluated theories that explicates poverty and were identified as follows: Social Exclusion; Structural; Individualistic; and Feminist Theory (Radical Feminist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, Social Feminist Theory, and Black Feminist Theory). The review of these theories was aimed to demonstrate the relationship between poverty and women and how it can contribute towards the drafting of a policy implementation framework to alleviate poverty amongst women. Chapter 2 also expounded on the phenomenon poverty, specifically among women, and reflected on the methods utilised to measure poverty, with a view to establish effective ways to alleviate poverty levels among women in South Africa

Chapter 3 reflected on the national and international statutory and regulatory framework to alleviate poverty and empower women. It included a review on the policies and mechanisms of the UN to address poverty in member states and foreign aid provided by developed countries (e.g., USA, UK, EU, and France) to developing countries for specific causes, including the alleviation of poverty and the empowerment of women.

In addition to the theoretical and legislative frameworks, certain socio-economic factors and causes to poverty should also be considered in the development of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. Subsequently, this chapter reviews these factors, particularly as they materialise in the North West Province and more specifically, in the jurisdictions of the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality, the focus of this study. As part of the contextualisation of the socio-economic factors and causes to poverty, a profile of the broader North West Province is provided, funnelling down to the profile of and circumstances in the Ratlou Local Municipality and the Greater Taung Local Municipality.

4.2. PROFILING THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

The North West Province forms part of the nine provinces of South Africa (RSA, 1996:62); is dominated by rural areas; is the fourth smallest province of South Africa's nine provinces (RSA, 1996:vii); and borders four provinces namely, Gauteng, Free State, Limpopo, and the Northern Cape; and further borders Botswana, one of the African countries (Britannica, 2019). The North West Province covers an area of 104 882km^2 (Stats SA, 2011b**:**9; Oduniyi, 2018:39).

Prior to the dawn of democracy in 1994, the North West Province operated under the homeland law and was known as Bophuthatswana, one of the former TBVC states (North West Provincial Review, 2016:5; Maditsi, 2018:26). The TBVC-states were established by the former apartheid government in 1976, 1977, 1979 and 1981 respectively (North West Provincial Review, 2016:5; Maditsi, 2018:26). These homelands lacked basic amenities (Becker, 2017:30; Alexander, 2018:*4*) and sustained negative socio-economic factors (Sewell & Desai, 2016:17). Thus, it is not surprising to find that poverty continue to be exacerbated by socio-economic factors in the North West Province. According to UN Women (2018:2), also presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, the majority of citizens who live in poverty due to the socio-economic challenges are women that face, for example, enormous unpaid domestic responsibilities, coupled with limited financial resources (Kabeer, 2016:38). According to Quarter 1 of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (RSA, 2021d:13), the North West Province's unemployment rate amounts to 32,2 %, and the South African poverty trends reveal that 64,3% of citizens in the North West Province live below the poverty line (Stats SA, 2017a:64).

As alluded to in Chapter 1, Section 1.2; and Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1, socially, women are expected to maintain cultures and traditions that have been ancient practises and, in the process, lose numerous economic opportunities to meet their basic needs (Segalo, 2015:75; Raselekoane *et al.*, 2017:10514). Furthermore, some of the challenges faced by women are preserved by gender-based discrimination, for example, the collection of water from far afield as their responsibility; failure to access schools and health facilities that are distant from their residences and living without

electricity (UN Women, 2018:2-4). These basic needs (e.g., water; electricity) constitute part of the local municipalities' service delivery mandates (Mkhatshwa-Ngwenya & Khumalo, 2020:268; Kalonda & Govender, 2021:5), while failure to deliver these services promotes poverty (Waziri & Idris, 2019:12).

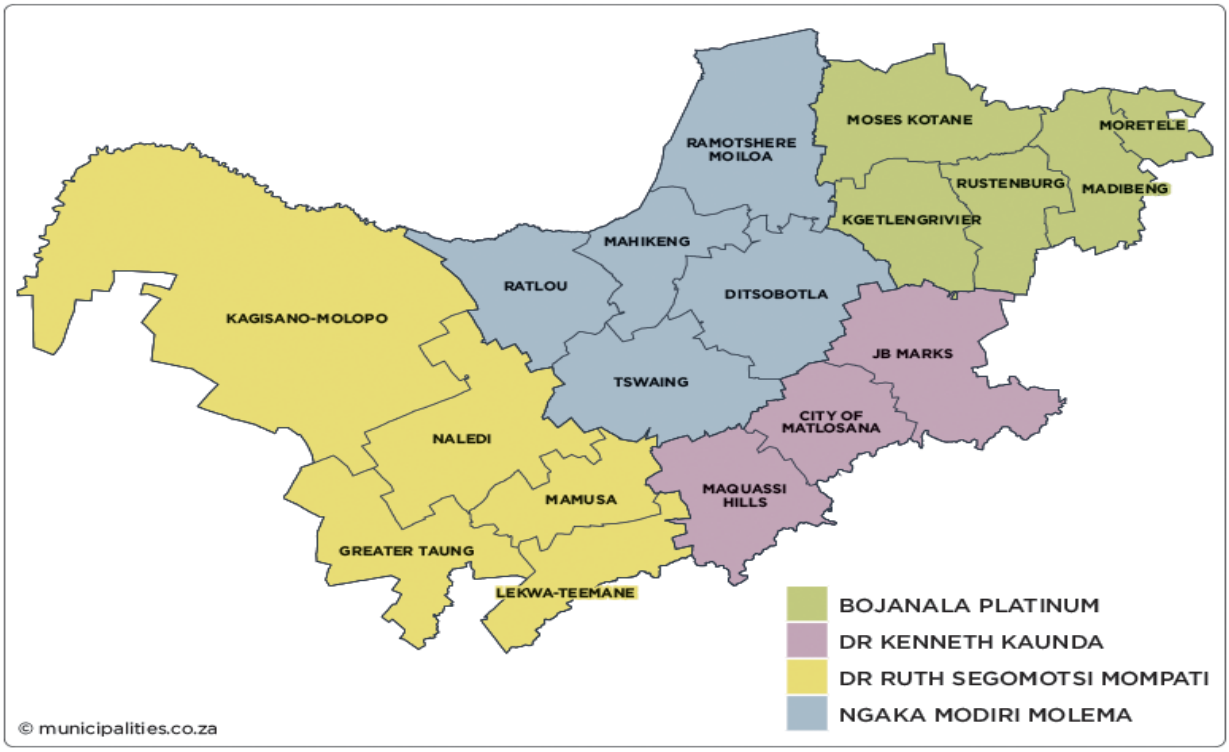
All four North West Province district municipalities comprise of a village, township or a *small dorpie* (VTSD). According to the Office of the Premier Annual Report, 2015/16, these residential areas are primarily occupied by the previously disadvantaged (Mahumapelo, 2015:22; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2020:24). In light hereof, the provincial government formulated the VTSD strategy to implement the NDP (RSA, 2011) to grow the economy and to eradicate poverty by 2030 (NMMD, 2019:74). The strategy dictates that by 2019, ninety percent (90%) of all provincial government expenditure must have been directed to the VTSD areas to stimulate its economy that would subsequently advance the alleviation of poverty (Department of Arts, Culture and Traditional Affairs, 2017:13).

Two of the local municipalities *viz*. the Ratlou Local Municipality (RLM) and the Greater Taung Local Municipality (GTLM) that are located in the Ngaka Modiri Moleme District (NMMD) and the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District (RSMD) respectively continue to have the highest rates of poverty and unemployment in the North West Province (Tshehle, 2017:3; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2020:21). The 2011 census[3] results revealed that the North West Province has a high number of traditional dwellings; an unacceptable unemployment rate amongst women (Stats SA, 2011a:73); and the highest level of poverty in the two most rural municipalities (Ratlou and Greater Taung local municipalities). The current population of the North West Province is based on the projection of the 2018 mid-year population estimates that stood at 1 986 197 for males and 1 992 752 for females respectively, with a total provincial population of 3 978 955 (Stats SA, 2018d:18). The State of the Province Address (Mahumapelo, 2017:6); and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Strategic Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 (Department of Agriculture and

[3] South Africa instituted three censuses since the inception of democracy in 1996. The 2011 census Stats SA, 2012:1) is currently in use.

Rural Development, 2020:2) highlighted that 1.7 million people, who account for 42% of the population, live in poverty.

Figure 4.1: Map of North West Province: District and Local Municipal demarcations



(**Source**: Municipalities of South Africa, 2018:1)

The North West Province comprises of four district municipalities and 18 local municipalities as illustrated in Figure 4.1 above. The figure illustrates the division of the four district municipalities: Bonjanala Platinum District Municipality; Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality; and Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality with their respective local municipalities. The two local municipalities that are the primary focus of this study (Ratlou and Greater Taung), are in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality (Ratlou) and the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality (Greater Taung) respectively. As mentioned, these two local municipalities also have the highest levels of poverty in the North West Province. It is therefore not surprising that the most grievous socio-economic challenges are experienced by residents of these two local municipalities.

Subsequently, the next section expounds upon the socio-economic variables that cultivate poverty.

4.2.1. Socio-economic variables

The socio-economic variables affecting the North West Province include the districts' population density by gender; educational attainment; health facilities; and the housing variables that differ by district and municipality along the spatial divide. In certain instances, the socio-economic variables are indicators that measure the citizen's standing in society (Navarro-Carrillo *et al.,* 2020:1). This intensity and impact of the socio-economic variables on community operations are therefore outlined in the following sections.

4.2.1.1. Districts' population density by gender

Documenting the population density of the country assists the administrative planning and government decision-making processes (Lehohla, 2015:iii; National Treasury, 2022:71). The population density is affected by people migrating between the provinces; the resultant decreases in the population; and the migration from other countries that increases the population, affecting socio-economic factors such as education, health facilities, housing to name a few (UN, 2018b:3).

The census cycle is set at an interval of five years; however, the lack of resources in Statistics South Africa resulted in the cycle extended to a decade. Thus, statistics from the 2011 census, the most recent census, was utilised for this study (Stats SA, 2018a:1). According to the Census 2011 Community, the Bojanala Platinum District (BPD) has a population of 712 977 females and 794 526 males, followed by the NMMD with a population of 529 300 females and 413 399 males; the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District (KKD) with 348 676 females and 347 258 males; and the smallest population found in the RSMD with 239 097 females and 224 718 males (Stats SA, 2011a:47). The female populace in the North West Province accounts for 49.1%, while the male populace amounts to 51%, which is not reflective of the South Africa population that is predominantly female (51%) (Stats SA, 2016e:7).

Reflecting on the population of the four districts in the North West Province, the North West Community Survey population states that the total population stands at 3 748 435 (Stats SA 2016e:6). The BPD is densely populated with a population of 1 657 148, followed by NMMD at 889 108, KKD at 742 821; and the RSMD at 459 357 residents (Stats SA, 2016e:7).

In respect to population distribution, more citizens are attracted to areas with a strong economic environment (UN, 2018:8). Therefore, municipalities that can create opportunities to enhance the socio-economic status of its inhabitants through, for example, mining, towns, and schools that attract more people with the primary economic activities in the North West Province being mining and agriculture (Bhorat *et al.,* 2017:19). It is therefore not surprising that the BPD is the most densely populated district, considering that it includes an urban area (Rustenburg), that allows for more economic activities than the rural areas, and comprises several mines that provides employment opportunities. The most rural district in the province, the RSMD, is also the least densely populated and includes one of the local municipalities focused upon in this research, the GTLM.

4.2.1.2. Educational attainment of population

In Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1.4, it was maintained that education is an important empowerment and poverty alleviation tool that affords people an opportunity to be liberated from poverty, unlike illiteracy that deprives citizens access to opportunities (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2). The location of the schools in relation to residential areas, as contained in Chapter 3, Section. 3.6.3, reveal several socio-economic factors and barriers to access education. For instance, inadequate lack of access to schools in the rural areas increases the number of girls dropping out of school at a young age, enhancing the level of illiteracy. In 2016, 73,1% of the population in the 5 – 24-year age category attended educational institutions, distributed as follows in the North West Province: KKD, 76,1%; RSMD, 74,3%; NMMD, 73,2%; and BPD, 73,1% (Stats SA, 2016e:31). Furthermore, 65,1% of the 20-year and older age category obtained secondary schooling (Grade 12 & N3), while only 4,6% in this category was exposed to education of higher learning. In descending order, the district with the highest education achievement is KKD with 6,5%, followed by NMMD with 4,8%; BPD

4%; and lastly, RSMD with 2,8% (Stats SA, 2016e:34). The statistical community survey highlighted that 50,1% of males attend school, compared to 49,9% of females (RSA, 2016d:40).

Perhaps the numbers reflected above align with selective access to education although it is enshrined in the Constitution, 1996, as a basic human right and should be accessible to all citizens, (see Chapter 1, Section1.6). Furthermore, the location of the institutions of higher learning are located in the KKD and the NMMD, the North West Province has only one university *viz*. the North-West University (NWU) with two campuses (Mahikeng and Potchefstroom) located in these districts (North-West University, 2022). It is therefore not surprising that these two districts (KKD and NMMD) report the highest levels of completed higher diplomas and bachelor's degrees (RSA, 2016d:40). It is, however, interesting to note that the level of educational attainment in the RLM, irrespective of this local municipality being in the NMMD (rating the second highest in educational achievement in the province), exhibits a low level of educational attainment (28%) as stated in Section 4.2.1.2. This reality again reiterates the greater concentration of socio-economic challenges in rural areas.

4.2.1.3. Health facilities

Health forms one of the three dimensions of poverty as expounded on in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1, and is, along with education, standard of living, and inequality, a contributory socio-economic factor that directly affects citizens' quality of live (Darin-Mattsson *et al.,* 2017:2; Niessen *et al.,* 2018:1). In 2014, the Minister of Health ratified health centres for approved medical services in four districts of the North West Province (RSA, 2013: 40). Table 4.1 below illustrates that every district municipality has its own hospital facility that provides health care services as stipulated in the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996 (RSA,1996:13). Furthermore, the appointment of health practitioners in the approved facilities with subsidiary clinics, and the health centres allowed to extend its services to the attached centres (RSA, 2013: 51). The General Household Survey (Stats SA, 2017b:23) revealed that 46,9% of the population indicated "very satisfied" with the health care facilities on a five-point scale.

Table 4.1: Approved health facilities in the North West Province

DISTRICT	FACILITY
Dr Kenneth Kaunda Health District	Matlosana Sub District / Klerksdorp / Tshepong Hospital Complex / Maquassi Hills Sub District* / Nic Bedenstein Hospital* Potchefstroom Sub District / Potchefstroom Hospital / Witrand Hospital / Venstersdorp Hospital*
Ngaka Modiri Molema Health District	Bophelong Hospital* Ditsobotla Sub District* Gelukspan Hospital* Gen De Lay Ray / Lehurutshe Hospital* Mafikeng / Ratau Sub District* Mafikeng Provincial*/Ottosdal Hospital Complex* Ramotshere Moiloa Sub District* Ratlou Sub District* Thusong Hospital Complex* Tswaing Sub District */ Sannieshof / Zeerust
Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati Health District	Bloemhof Hospital Bophirima Molopo Sub District* Bray / Ganyesa Hospital / Greater Taung Sub District* / Kagisano Sub District* / Lekwa Teemane District /Mamusa Sub-District / Naledi Sub District / Piet Plessis Hospital Complex* S Renecke Hospital* Taung District Hospital* Vryburg Hospital*
Bojanala Platinum Health District	Brits District Hospital Complex JS Tabane Provincial Tertiary Hospital Kgetleng River Sub District / Koster District Hospital* Madibeng Sub District Moretele Sub District Moses Kotane District Hospital* Moses Kotane Sub District* Rustenburg Sub District

*Medical facilities that receive rural allowances.

(**Source:** RSA, 2015c:185)

The allowances received by the medical facilities located in rural areas is an incentive to attract doctors to deliver the most needed health services in the poverty-stricken rural areas that lacks proper infrastructure (Stats SA, 2016d:42). The allowances paid

to doctors are, however, not effective since most of these facilities remain under-staffed and under-resourced.

In Chapter 3, Section 3.6.3 it was confirmed that the National Budget for health is the third highest allocation nationally with the same applying to the North West Province that allocated the second highest budget to the Provincial Department of Health, totalling R14.119 billion (North West Province Treasury, 2021b). Based on the above distribution of the health facilities in every district and local municipality (refer to Table 4.1 above) the government demonstrates its effort to implement the Health White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System in South Africa, 1997, as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.10, and ensure that the community accesses health facilities and services with ease and prioritises women who require specialised care. Despite the health facilities in each district and municipal area listed above, health services provision continues to elude residents of the areas as a number of people have express dissatisfaction with the health services (RSA, 2017b, 23).

4.2.1.4. Housing variables

In Chapter 3, Section 3.6.4, it was reported that, among others, the municipal mandate includes the provision of housing to the community. Housing variables include the type of building structure divided into, for example, a formal, traditional, informal dwelling, coupled within the locality (refer to Table 4.2 below). Several factors in this respect (type of accommodation; household income; and social security grant) are elaborated upon below.

4.2.1.4.1. Type of accommodation

The North West Province has the most informal settlement areas of which 8.1% of these households live without any form of income; 7.7% are classified as low-income earners; 7.5% comprises of the middle-income household; and only 3.8 % of the households are classified as upper income (Stats SA, 2011a:15; 18; 20; 39). Approximately 261 693 of the households benefit from a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) government-subsidised dwelling. The BPD was allocated 92 780 RDP houses; KKD, 90 533; NMMD, 48 824; while 29 556 was

allotted to RSMD (RSA, 2016d:44). A total population of 229 544 households live in informal dwellings (refer to Table 4.2 below). In this respect, Kay (2017:1) and SERI (2018:26) argue that it is likely that people resort to reside illegally in informal settlements with no basic infrastructure services to avoid paying for municipal services.

Table 4.2: Distribution of households by type of main dwelling and district municipalities

Districts	Formal dwelling	Traditional dwelling	Informal dwelling	Other	Total
Bojanala Platinum	431 721	5 583	163 532	10 126	610 962
Ngaka Modiri Molema	223 186	13 576	29 362	3 824	269 947
Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati	114 270	2 274	9 360	1 162	127 066
Dr Kenneth Kaunda	207 853	1 712	27 290	3 687	240 543

(**Source**: Stats SA, 2016d:42)

Irrespective of the type of dwellings, the total number of dwellings per district correlates with the population (reflected in Section 4.2.1.1). The BPD registered the highest population and RSMD the lowest population of 239 097 females and 224 718 males (see Section 4.2.1.1).

Based on observation of the dwellings in the rural areas, it is argued that most residents resort to residing in informal dwellings without proper infrastructure in the hope of not paying for municipal services. One of the reasons contributing to this choice of dwelling is likely the low household income of these residents, focussed upon in the next section.

4.2.1.4.2. Household income

Household income plays a prominent role in people's livelihood since it provides for basic needs (Horne, 2017:18; Mathebula *et al.,* 2017:2). People mostly get their

income from earning a salary, notwithstanding the socio-economic barriers that could affect employment. The Living Conditions of Households in South Africa, 2014/2015[4] reported that the average household income earned from employment amounts to R100 246 per annum, but when added to other incomes such as pension and family allowances, totalled R138 168 (RSA, 2016:202). The North West Province operates below the national average and has the second lowest household income nationally with an average of R64 177 per annum. However, when added to other income (e.g., social grants), it amounts to R89 926 (RSA, 2016:16). Certain households depend on social security grants as their sole household income that benefits the recipients and the entire family (Mathebula *et al.,* 2017:9; Chipfupa & Wale, 2020:10).

4.2.1.4.3. Social security grant

Social security grants in South Africa remains a right meant for qualifying citizens. The practice of social grants has revealed significant poverty reduction amongst the African community compared to other racial groups (Satumba, Bayat & Mohamed, 2017:46; Mtyingizane, 2018:15; Sebola, 2019:1).

According to a Social Grant Statistical Summary in South Africa, the North West Province has a social grant beneficiaries' population of 1 224 919 that includes the old age and war veteran's grant, disability grant, grant in aid, care dependency grant, foster child grant and child support grant (Stats SA, 2018b:1). As alluded to in Section 4.2.1.4.3 above, the social security grant is sometimes the sole income for some households (Mathebula *et al.,* 2017:9; Chipfupa & Wale, 2020:10).

The housing variables reviewed above revealed that approximately 261 693 households in the North West Province benefit from RDP dwellings with the NMMD and the RSMD respectively accounting for 48 824 and 29 556 of these Stats SA, 2016d:44). A total population of 229 544 households live in informal dwellings). In this respect, Kay (2017:1) and SERI (2018:26) argue that it is likely that people resort to

[4] On 26 March 2020 the President pronounced a country-wide lockdown that was necessitated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, Statistics South Africa was derailed from their five-year schedule of collecting and publicising the country's official and reliable statistics. Thus, Living Conditions of Households in South Africa, 2014/2015 is currently the latest released statistics by Statistics South Africa and was utilised for this study.

reside illegally in informal settlements with no basic infrastructure services to avoid paying for municipal services.

It was further revealed that the North West Province operates below the national household income average and has the second lowest household income nationally with an average of R64 177 per annum. However, when added to other income (e.g., social grants), it amounts to R89 926 (RSA, 2016:16). Certain households depend on the social security/grant as their sole household income that benefits the recipients and the entire family (Mathebula *et al.,* 2017:9; Chipfupa & Wale, 2020:10), as alluded to earlier in this section. The North West Province has a social grant beneficiaries' population of 1 224 919 Stats SA, 2018b:1). Regrettably, the social security grant is sometimes the sole income for some households (Mathebula *et al.,* 2017:9; Chipfupa & Wale, 2020:10).

In consideration of the aforementioned context of the North West Province, the following section focuses specifically on the context of the two local municipalities relevant to this study (RLM and GTLM). The intention with the contextualisation of these two municipalities is to emphasise the dire poverty experienced in these communities and relevant to this study, the poverty experienced by women in these jurisdictions.

4.3. LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Since the dawn of democracy, women have been considered as the marginalised group, making their plight for housing a fundamental primary concern for the poor, unemployed and women living in rural areas, as explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1 and Chapter 3, Section 3.6.4. It was detailed in Chapter 3, Section,3.6.4, that municipalities must use, for instance, a progressive housing plan that prioritises its allocation for the poor (RSA,1977:7). Moreover, the municipal responsibilities as contained in the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000, mandates municipalities to ensure that its communities' social and economic activities benefit its inhabitants (RSA, 2000e:1).

In pursuit of addressing the imbalances of the past, municipalities have a special financial allocation, termed the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) that supports service delivery as the fundamental responsibility of the municipality to serve its community (Kopung, Meyer, Lubbe & Klopper, 2016:115; Stats SA, 2018a:3; Majali, 2019:61; Mokgethi, 2021:57). However, from 2008 to 2013 municipalities battled to spend their MIG fund allocations (Majali, 2019:4). Furthermore, Makwetu (2018:8) and Maluleke (2020:34) report that municipalities underspend their grant allocation, negatively influencing service delivery. In the North West Province, of the R2.3 billion appropriated for infrastructure development, R194,8 million was unspent and returned to the Treasury (Makwetu, 2016:73). Irregular expenditure increased on an annual basis and reached the R3.99 billion mark as reported in the 2020/2021 Local Government Audit Outcome (Maluleke, 2020:76).

For municipalities to achieve its objectives, all the activities in the delivery chain must be aligned towards a common goal (Moyo, 2015:28). In this respect, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), a consultative strategic document, outlines the agreement between the community and the municipality on a programme of action (Annual budget Dr Ruth, 2017:26; Majam & Uwizeyimana, 2018:145; Majali, 2019:19; Aklilu & Makalela, 2020:3) pertaining to physical, social, economic and institutional development, as well as any initiative that promotes infrastructure (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2001:04; Dlamini & Reddy, 2018:7), as well as to utilise the budget appropriated for capital infrastructure projects and operational expenditure (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2001:5). As established in Section 4.3 and 4.3.1.2, municipalities find it difficult to implement the IDP. Studies conducted by Makalela (2017:14); and Aklilu and Makalela (2020:3) concluded that the IDP does not reveal details associated with the alleviation of poverty that should be one of the priorities identified by the municipalities' consultative process, attributing this incidence to failing to achieve the set targets, among others, to alleviate poverty amongst women.

The aforementioned failed implementation and the underspending of the MIG and municipal budgets are of great concern in consideration of the socio-economic destitution of the local communities in the North West Province, especially those in

rural areas. Subsequently, the net sections focus on the circumstances in the RLM and the GTLM specifically.

4.3.1.1. Ratlou Local Municipality

The RLM is one of the five municipalities in the NMMD as illustrated in Figure 4.1 above and is among the 12 poorest in the country (David *et al.*, 2018:10). The Community Survey 2016: Statistical Release (Stats SA, 2016d:iv) explains that a Category B4 municipality (such as the RLM) is generally rural and comprises of either one or two small towns. In this respect, the RLM comprises of 27 villages and does not have a township or small *dorpie* (NMMDM, 2019:22). Furthermore, the RLM experiences the highest levels of poverty in the North West Province; the highest unemployment rate in the province; and the lowest population compared to the four local municipalities of the NMMDM (North West Province, 2017:5; NMMDM, 2017:19).

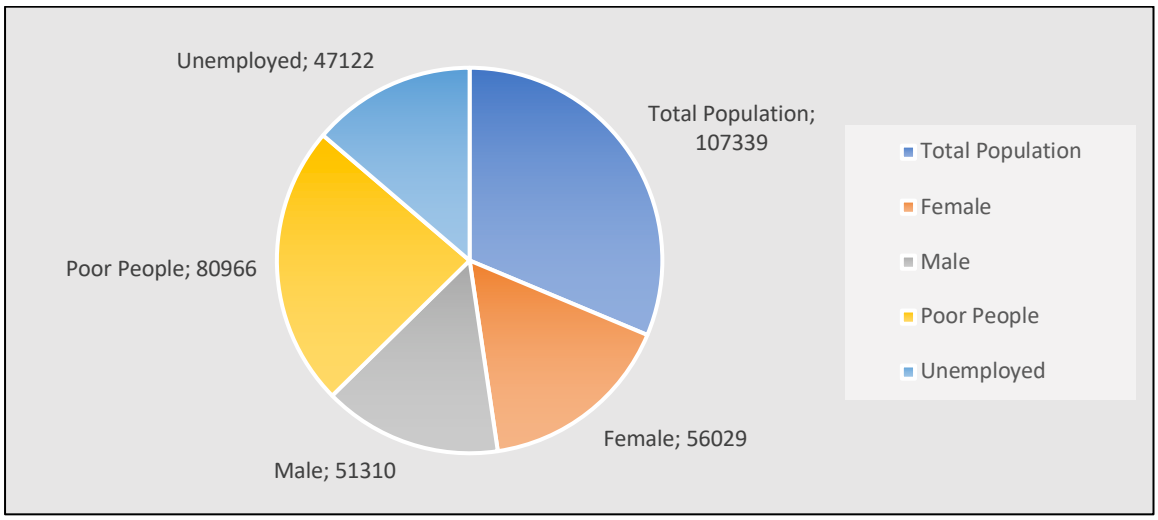
As stated in Section 4.2.1.1, the RLM reflecting the lowest population in the province could be due to migration to urban areas for better socio-economic circumstances. The RLM population of 107 339 experiences an alarming poverty rate of 75,43% which translates into 80 966 citizens living below the poverty line (Mbiakop, 2017:38); and an unemployment rate of 43,9% which translates into 47 122 unemployed inhabitants (Stats SA, 2011b:73; RLM IDP, 2016:13). The female population of the RLM is 56 029 compared to the male population of 51 310 (Ratlou Municipality, 2016:8).

According to the Community Survey 2016: Statistical Release (Stats SA, 2016d:13), the household poverty increased from 16, 6% in 2011 to 16,9% in 2016 (see Figure 4.2 below). It is argued that, possibly, not only the unemployed are poor, but the number is increased by the employed who are also poor n consideration of the parameters of absolute poverty. As delineated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1, absolute poverty refers to the deprivation of the basic needs such as shelter, water, health, sanitation, such as is the case with residents in the RLM. Moreover, it was also expressed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2 that poverty is multi-dimensional (with various contributing factors, for example, socio-economic conditions and geographical locale), influenced by the social, political, and economic environments where people experience severe financial constraints and live in dire socio-economic conditions.

Consequently, the poor citizens are unable to afford basic needs to meet social activity standards, often anticipated and acceptable to be part of a normal life for these citizens.

As also established in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, the country is experiencing a high unemployment rate from which the North West Province has not been spared (also see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3). Figure 4.2 below illustrates the unemployment numbers in the RLM. Evident from this illustration is that the entire population of the RLM is categorised as poor (56 029 women and 51 310 men).

Figure 4.2: Ratlou Local Municipality population



(**Source**: Stats SA, 2011d:32,73; Stats SA, 2016d:13)

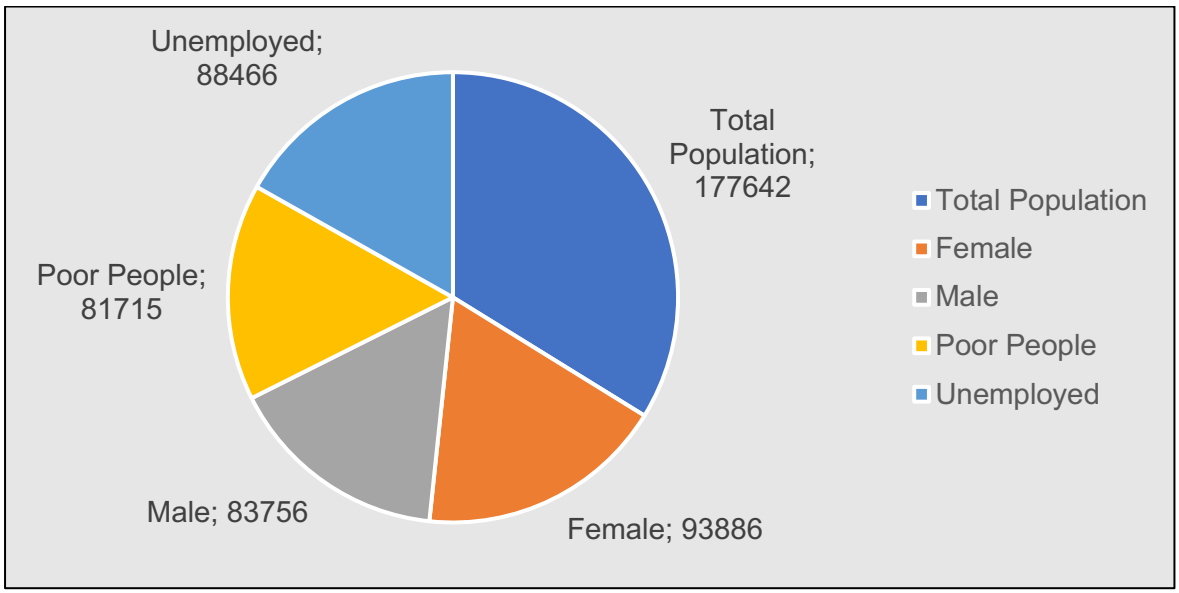
The alleviation of poverty is part of the primary functions of the RLM (RLM, 2016:18; Dlamini & Reddy, 2018:5). However, the identified aspects to alleviate poverty alleviation is written in a gender-neutral manner and could result in a previously disadvantaged group, in particular women, having to accept the same benefits as their male counterparts who might perhaps be better off. It was argued in Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3 that for the government to develop effective programmes to alleviate poverty amongst women, reports must be analysed according to gender to ensure that women are afforded opportunities that would place them on par with their male counterparts to realise equality (also presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1). Without targeting

women *per se*, they may continue to be the primary disadvantaged as a result of poverty. It could be inferred that allocating resources on an equal basis could disadvantage women since fairness plays a prominent role instead of basing the allocation on equity and targeting women who had been previously marginalised. This view is also supported by the principles expressed in Black Feminist Theory (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4), positing that black women suffer a triple jeopardy based on race, class, and gender.

4.3.1.2. Greater Taung Municipality

The GTLM forms part of the RSMD that includes four other local municipalities *viz.*, Naledi, Kagisano – Molopo, Mamusa and Lekwa-Teemane, illustrated in Figure 4.1 above. The GTLM comprises of 97 villages and four townships, and as such is categorised as a Category B4 municipality (GTLM, 2017:42; Luvhengo & Lekunze, 2017:603). The Census 2011 Municipal Report, North West (RSA, 2012b:73) revealed that the total population of the GTLM is 177 642 which comprises of 82 756 males and 93 886 females. According to the Census 2011 Municipal Report, North West (RSA, 2012b:73), the GTLM has an unemployment rate of 49.8% that translates into 88 466 unemployed people (see Figure 4.3 below). Lippman, Shade, El Ayadi, Gilvydis, Grignon, Liegler and Barnhart (2016:3) place the GTLM's poverty rate at 46% which translates into 81 715 residents who live below the poverty line (illustrated in Figure 4.3 below). Furthermore, it is possible that the high unemployment rate among the residents of the GTLM could translate into a higher number of poverty-stricken persons.

Figure 4. 3: Greater Taung Local Municipality population



(**Source:** Stats SA, 2011d:39, 73; RSA, 2016d:13; Lippman *et al.,* 2016:3)

The GTLM divides its integrated programmes into clusters to ensure effective alignment of relevant stakeholders' prioritised responsibilities as contained in the IDP (GTLM, 2017: 61). Policy must be applied to the identified problem (Schotte, Zizzamia, & Leibbrandt, 2022:215), and to achieve the envisaged results, the Social Cluster must work in a coordinated manner that should comprise of the Department of Social Development (DSD), the Department of Health (DoH), the Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Sport (DSAC) in the province. These clusters are assigned various responsibilities, for example, the poverty reduction and gender equity plan; health; and the HIV /AIDS plan and programme (Sambatha, 2022). However, at the time of submitting the GTLM's IDP, the poverty reduction and gender equity plan, as well as the HIV/AIDS plan programme, was outstanding (GTLM, 2017:62). Consequently, failure to plan and implement programmes or projects relevant to the alleviation of poverty might promote and sustain the perpetual life of poverty amongst residents of the GTLM and specifically relevant to this study, women in the GTLM. In acknowledging the failure to plan to alleviate poverty and gender equity, the GTLM perceives the local economic development (LED) plan as a vehicle to alleviate poverty and implement equity. However, it is claimed that the local LED plan would indirectly compensate for the

unplanned programmes (GTLM, 2017:93); thereby, failing to allocate the necessary funding to LED projects.

As is the case with the RLM, the GTLM's LED programmes also reveal gender neutral language, already indicated in the previous section as problematic as it does not specifically prioritise women as the marginalised group. It is therefore surprising that the GTLM acknowledges and includes sections of the NDP (RSA, 2011) in its IDP that highlight the plight of women in the rural areas but omits it in its LED. Furthermore, the GTLM promoted the NDP's recommendation to empower women through economic transformation and to alleviate poverty (GTLM, 2017:30). However, the municipality has failed to translate and implement the recommendation in their own local municipality. Moreover, specific activity plans to address these challenges are also contained in the SDGs, as delineated in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1; thereby, reiterating that it must be a priority.

In the Consolidated General Report on National and Provincial Audit Outcome, 2017/2018 the Auditor-General (AG) highlighted that the reported achievements were not reliable and failed to be supported by relevant source documents to ensure that the reports are credible (Makwetu, 2017:62). It is against this background that perhaps certain priorities such as poverty alleviation is not properly addressed since the performance indicators are not correctly structured in the activity plans. Thus, the President, in his address to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), stated that municipalities must employ skilled officials (Ramaphosa, 2018b:6). Moreover, Tshishonga (2021:32) asserts that unskilled municipal employees fail to perform their duties, which results in a negative impact on service delivery. Mdlongwa (2014:39) posits that a local municipality is at the heart of poor service delivery, while it is supposed to be central to the provision of effective and efficient services.

In consideration of the above reviewed on local municipalities, it is evident that municipalities find it difficult to implement the IDP despite the directives of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000, compelling municipalities to utilise the IDP as guide in delivering services to their communities. Moreover, studies conducted by Makalela (2017:14); and Aklilu and Makalela (2020:3) revealed that the IDPs of

municipalities do not contain details associated with the alleviation of poverty. In addition, the MIG that should be used as a financial avenue for municipalities to increase the social and economic in their jurisdictional areas and to address the imbalances of the past are not adequately spent on infrastructure. In addition, municipalities underspend their grant allocation, negatively influencing service delivery and irregular expenditure increase on an annual basis.

Evident from the contextualisation of the RLM is that it is the poorest municipality in the North West Province with 75,43% of its residents living below the poverty line. The residents in the RLM also experience a high unemployment rate. It was furthermore asserted that not only the unemployed, but also the employed can be considered as poor in consideration of the measurement of absolute poverty (explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1), stating that absolute poverty refers to the deprivation of the basic needs such as shelter, water, health, sanitation, which is the case with residents of the RLM. Moreover, the multi-dimensionality of poverty is evident in the RLM in respect to the residents' unemployment rate, their socio-economic conditions and geographical locale (in a rural area).

A further concern in both the RLM and the GTLM is the gender-neutral language used in these municipalities' official documents pertaining to poverty alleviation programmes. Since black women as the marginalised group experience triple jeopardy based on race, class, and gender, and taking in consideration the larger population of women than men in the jurisdictional area of the RLM, based on a feminist philosophical perspective, it is argued that specific reference should be made to women and the prioritisation of their poverty alleviation.

Regarding the review on the GTLM's IDP, it was revealed that its poverty reduction and gender equity plan, as well as the HIV/AIDS plan programme are outstanding. Consequently, failure to plan and implement programmes or projects relevant to the alleviation of poverty might promote and sustain the perpetual life of poverty amongst residents of the GTLM and specifically relevant to this study, women in the GTLM. It was further revealed that the GTLM's LED plan would indirectly compensate for the unplanned programmes (GTLM, 2017:93); thereby, failing to allocate the necessary funding to LED projects. In addition, the AG reported that the GTLM's achievements

were not reliable and failed to be supported by relevant source documents to ensure that the reports are credible (Makwetu, 2017:62).

It is against the aforementioned background that the study focuses its poverty alleviation programme for women in the North West Province specifically on the RLM and the GTLM. It is evident that these two local municipalities experience high rates of poverty, caused by a multi-dimensionality of factors. Subsequently, the next section reviews the causes and factors that contribute to poverty in the North West Province.

4.4. CAUSES AND FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO POVERTY: NORTH WEST PROVINCE

It was reported in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1 that poverty is characterised by socio-economic deprivation (SAHRC and UNICEF, 2014:37). It was also expressed that poverty-stricken areas such as the North West Province experiences high socio-economic challenges resulting in poverty, as alluded to in Section, 4.1. Furthermore, as stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, poverty encompasses the lack of financial resources coupled with deprivation of human dignity and humiliating treatment (Jannah *et al.*, 2021:27). The North West Province endures poverty irrespective of the government's intervention strategy to provide social grants (Noble, Zembe & Wright 2014:7) (also see Section 4.2.1.4.3). Poverty in the North West Province is an engraved product of the apartheid regime and former homeland system and continue to illustrate its persistence when compared to the progress registered by areas that were not part of the homelands (SHRC, 2014:7; Burger, Van der Berg, Van der Walt & Yu,2015:8; Nishimwe-Niyimbanira, 2016:218). Subsequently, the following sections highlight particular causes and factors, contributing to poverty in the North West Province.

4.4.1. Significance of the concept socio-economic

The concept *socio-economic* is defined for a clearer understanding thereof and perceived by various scholars, indicated in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: *Social* and *Economy* as concepts

Social as concept	Economy as concept
Social is derived from Roman's word socius, "a socius was a merchant cooperating with other merchant as a partner, fellow, or associate" (Harrington, 2005:2).	According to Mankiw, (2020:2) Economy is the way scarce resources are used as a produce of goods or services that ultimately benefit various people, thus critical to ensure that the resources are efficiently managed to satisfy people's expectations.
According to Collins English dictionary social relates to the society and its related shared activities	Economy is a carefully designed process that addresses production, distribution, and the utilization of good and services (Ariana & Mirabela, 2013:404).
Institutions could be regarded as social structures a base for the development of any society (Chimakonam, 2014:1).	Economy is a deliberate human driven activity with its own different behaviours focusing on scare resources for production, distribution, and the consumption of good and services (Rees, 2015:1).
Chemhuru (2017:505) looks at social as a binding pack depended on people agreement that results into an amicable relationship.	
Social is defined on individual actions and the effect of positively shared relationship with other people (Swedberg, 2018:23).	

(**Source:** Researcher's own)

From the above definitions it can be inferred that collaboration between the various stakeholders is fundamental in improving the *social* environment and demonstrates the need for cooperation. In South Africa, and particularly within the context of this study (alleviating the poverty of women in the North West Province), the aforementioned definitions imply that poverty alleviation needs a concerted effort between different and clearly identified stakeholders collaborating to achieve socio-economic upliftment and to ensure that resources should be deliberately targeted and managed by human resources to accomplish optimum production, goods and services and that resources are effectively, efficiently and economically used to realise poverty

alleviation. However, both the social and economic domains pose challenges to poverty alleviation, elaborated upon in the following sections.

4.4.2. Challenges related to social factors

With reference to the social factors reviewed below, attention has been given to utilise terminology correctly and avoid insensitive and emotive language when reference is made to black or white. In this respect, reference is made to black South African or white South African, as advised by Myburgh, Steyn and Hanneberg (2018:19).

4.4.2.1. Social justice

The stipulations of the Constitution,1996, to ensure equality and social justice for the South African citizenry was analysed in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1. Social justice depends on the social relationship between people and an institution, underpinned by fairness and equality (CFI, 2022). Relationships manifest itself in power relations that is either just or unjust for a non-discriminatory or discriminatory co-existence (Kgatla, 2016:3). A pact between leaders and the community builds a relationship to promote a just social relationship anchored on the mutual understanding of what constitutes justice and is morally beneficial (Vita, 2014:123). Furthermore, fair distribution of goods and services plays a fundamental role in social justice (Reisch, 2002:345). Deranty (2016:1) opines that "social justice is concerned more specifically with the just distribution of resources resulting from the economic, political and cultural organisation of the community". Social justice brings inequality to the fore to address the disparity either around rights, opportunities, or socio-economic inequalities (Director, n.d:10; Govender, 2016:255). It is against this background that the economic status and poverty of the RLM and the GTLM is characterised by a situation that defies social justice since the majority of both municipalities' population experience poverty and unemployment (see Figure 4.2 and 4.3 above).

4.4.2.2. Classism

Mukhuba (2016:7235) posits that patriarchy is the fulcrum of oppression, including class oppression, directed primarily at women who have less power than their male

counterparts (also see Chapter 3, Section 3.1). In classism the oppressed group loses everything they have or might have possessed to the oppressor who is more powerful than them (Bishop, 2020:1). Thus, the oppressed cannot avoid this symbiotic relationship and is forced to manoeuvre to survive without changing the situation (Collins, 2016:42), evident in both the RLM and the GTLM communities where inhabitants are surviving amid poverty and unemployment (see Figure 4.2 and 4.3 above).

Classism can be viewed as the by-product of apartheid that created a chasm between the citizens of the country – black South Africans and white South Africans (Masango & Mfene, 2017:596; Forster, 2018:77). Moreover, classism could be utilised to sustain oppressive tendencies by reinforcing a divide and regulating a strategy based on class, gender, or racial lines to perpetuate the oppressive *status quo* that deprives citizens from working as a team for their own economic benefit (Greenleaf, Ratts & Song, 2016:8). Furthermore, class influences the level of poverty. Citizens who occupy the lowest level of the class hierarchy suffer from the highest level of poverty and are deprived of a prolonged life expectancy (Blackburn, Jarman & Racko, 2016:10; Schotte *et al.,* 2022:221). It was argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.3. and 2.3.4.4 that class manifests itself amongst women. Due to the class stratification of domestic duties women spent most of their time engaging in domestic work and are deprived of life and economic opportunities of upliftment themselves from poverty. The women in rural areas are further influenced by class due to the lack of resources that see them missing out on school years and deprived of health services because of their grave socio-economic circumstances. The division is also revealed along racial lines where stark differences are noticed in the lives of black women, marginalised and discriminated by, among others, their white female counterparts (Effiong & Inyang, 2016:14).

4.4.2.3. Racism

It is important to understand that both class and race have a similar influence on women (Turok, 2021:72) and should be examined simultaneously without giving one more credence over the other (Jordan, 2014:26). It is argued that one of the greatest miscalculations committed by the post-apartheid dispensation is to ignore the

importance of enacted racism that could have led to legislative punishment for racial practices in South Africa. Moreover, it is practised ruthlessly without an established system to address it (Machaisa, 2017:30; Losavio, 2020:34). As argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4, from a Black Feminist Theory perspective, black women's self-identification of race and sexual orientation intensifies their oppression compared to their white counterparts. Both racism and sexism intersect for black women whereas white women only need to navigate sexism and black men are only exposed to racism. Smith (2015:3); and Aguilar, Pérez, Ananías, Mora and Blanco (2016:133) concur, stating that the combination of various inequality's inhibits access to opportunities for black women. Furthermore, Dill and Zinn (2016:323) refer to these injustices as organising tools used to stratify people in the distribution and level to qualify for social opportunity.

4.4.2.4. Tradition and culture

Tradition and culture are perceived as old practises initiated by a need at the time and continue to be practised, respected, preserved, and shared by generations that followed (see Chapter 2, Section 2.7. Under the guise of tradition, culture, and religion, women continue to endure discrimination (Sithole & Shai, 2016:113), often placing women on the peripheries of development (Hills, 2015:159). Men have the propensity to stifle the advancement of women by relegating them to domestic responsibilities (UN Women, 2015:41). This situation of trapping women in patriarchal traditions was explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.1. Radical Feminist Theory holds that the oppression of women is a result of the accepted patriarchal practices based on the oppression of women (Lewis, 2020:1). This is evidently an undeniable social situation for women in these circumstances and is detrimental to their growth.

Women's domestic responsibilities, often viewed as obligatory and natural in a patriarchal culture, carry no financial remuneration (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1). It is also argued that women's domestic responsibilities exclude them from social and economic activities. Social Exclusion Theory (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1) elucidates the relation between social exclusion and poverty. Social exclusion and poverty are occasionally referred to as inseparable twins since both are identified by social or economic marginalisation and share the same factor of exclusion that deprives people

from socio-economic participation (Levitas *et al.*, 2007:20). Donovan (2012:31) denotes that under Social Feminist Theory, women have the right to relinquish their socially constructed responsibilities of being home-bound to establish an avenue to operate in the public space.

Women, and mostly those in the rural areas, are trapped in societal values that makes them wholly reliant on their husbands and denies them independence, irrespective of the legislation to promote women's rights, as presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4. It appears that certain practices go against the human rights principles and women are denied the right to choose (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1).

4.4.2.5. Poorly located and inadequate infrastructure

The value and shortcomings of the various legislation and policies enacted by government to address adverse socio-economic challenges was reviewed in Chapter 3, Section 3.6. However, the government continues to experience challenges in implementing infrastructure, for instance, ineffective and overburdened health services; inadequate access to higher education for all citizens; water shortages; spatial challenges; and an energy crisis (RSA, 2011:3), to name a few. Unfortunately, the intervention strategies fail to contextualise the socio-economic challenges relevant to rural areas, for example, spatial settings and the transport infrastructure that has a direct impact on accessing health facilities (Gaede & Versteeg, 2011:105; Varela, Young, Mkandawire, Groen, Banza & Viste, 2019:5). The government's inability to adequately provide infrastructure is experienced by citizens in the form of poor basic service delivery, resulting in unabated under-development (Mlambo, 2018:63). Thus, the effect of deficient infrastructure is elaborated upon in the next sections, especially its effect on women, and more specifically, women in rural areas.

4.4.2.6. Inadequate health facilities

The majority of rural areas experience the consequences of oppressive, racist apartheid era policies that left long-lasting negative effects pertaining to, among others, infrastructure. For instance, poverty and the lack of income affects the health of communities negatively, primarily experienced by black people in the rural areas

(Vergunst, Swartz, Mji, MacLachlan & Mannan, 2015:2; Neely & Ponshunmugam, 2019:20), especially black women due to the dual oppression of race and gender, as explicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4. Furthermore, it is possible that the established health facilities in all the district municipalities and local municipalities in the North West Province, as illustrated in Table 4.1 above, fail some of the community members who are distant from the facilities or lack funds for transport to access health services (Neely & Ponshunmugam, 2019:28; UN, 2021a:14). Sewell and Desai (2016:21); and Pilane (2018:1) postulate that some of the patients are transported in wheelbarrows from the hospital. Thus, rendering health facilities inadequate as the community find it difficult to access the service. The problem of health facilities is further compounded by other socio-economic factors that result in poverty, such as water shortages, focused upon in the next section.

4.4.2.7. Lack of water system

Tshwene and Oladele (2016:74) suggest that the natural water supply in South Africa is not proportional to its needs. Smith and Stillman (2014:4); Asare *et al.* (2018:1); and Adisa *et al.* (2018:11) maintain that the North West Province is situated in semi-arid land with minimal rain. The Constitution, 1996, and the National Water Act (NWA) 36 of 1998 mandate the national government, as well as provincial governments and local municipalities to aid its citizens with accessing water (RSA,1998b:154; Pahlow, Snowball & Fraser, 2015:300; Ranngu & Mukonza, 2020:4).

Water and sanitation for the previously disadvantaged emerged as a fundamental priority in the democratic South Africa (Tempelhoff, 2017:200). Thus, the Constitution, 1996, stipulates proper basic service delivery to communities as one of the municipal objectives (RSA, 1996:88). However, as described in Section 4.3.1.2, the lack of competent well-capacitated and skilled human resources negatively influences municipal service delivery, for example, water and sanitation delivery, particularly in rural areas. Ineffective water and sanitation services to especially rural communities were also highlighted by Nkuna and Ngorima (2011:3); and the South African Human Rights Commission (2014:16). Furthermore, the focus on competency in local municipalities was still raised as a factor in the 2021 State of the Nation Address when the President asserted that municipal officials need to be recruited from well-

capacitated and competent people to enhance service delivery (Ramaphosa, 2021:14).

Water infrastructure might be developed in the rural areas; however, the challenge resides in the lack of a maintenance programme (Mothetha, Nkuna & Mema, 2013:1). The lack of maintenance was raised by the Auditor-General 2018-19 Local Municipal Audit as a significant concern (AG, 2019:23). A North West Province resident who testified at the South African Human Rights Commission's provincial hearing reported that R150 was paid for the installation of water meters, but that access thereto was not received (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2011:28; South African Human Rights Commission, 2014:53). A solution in this respect, proposed by Makale (2015:31); and Mlambo (2018:68) is that municipalities could design a package to attract qualified persons to deliver effective and efficient services, for example, water, sanitation, and electricity.

The burden of poverty for citizens in the rural communities of the North West Province increases as a result of the escalating prices for water, since, compared to the surrounding mining houses that could be perceived as wealthy, these citizens are unable to pay the increased prices (SHRC, 2014:7; NWP, 2019). Irrespective of this discrepancy between the rich and poor it could be argued that progress of access to water in the post-apartheid era has been registered but rural areas and urban informal settlements continue to suffer from the lack thereof (Hemson, 2016:25; Jegede & Shikwambane, 2021:3). Similarly, in the Category B4 municipalities which are mostly rural (including the RLM and the GTLM), only 6.8% have access to piped water compared to 62.6% of the metro municipalities (Stats SA, 2016f:33).

The RLM has a total population of 107 339 (see Figure 4.2 above) and established 29 120 accessing household water points as follows: 16 360 households are 200m closer to the water point; and 12 760 are located more than 200m away from the water point access. Notably from this breakdown is that there is no access to water inside the yard of any of the households (RLM [NW381], s.a). The GTLM has a total population of 177 643 (refer to Figure 4.3 above) and 2 678 household water points, and unlike the RLM, 639 households in the GTLM have access to water inside the resident's yards; 2 039 have access to water within a range of 200m from their

household; and no household accounts for water access for more than 200m from their homes (GTLM [NW394], s.a).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs asserts that water is part of the physiological needs that can be referred to as a basic need (Hopper, 2020:1; Numonjonovich, 2022:5). Failure to satisfy the need could lead to unpleasant behaviour, anger (Gepp & West, 2022). Therefore, it can be claimed that if water is not managed properly it can result in challenges with negative consequences on citizens' security and stability, both physically and psychologically (Tarantino, 2019:43).

The provision of water and sanitation is furthermore enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996, as a basic human right and subsequently, prioritised as one of the basic municipal services to be delivered to citizens (RSA, 1996:88). The above review, and especially the challenges endured by the inhabitants in the RLM and the GTLM in this respect, clearly illustrates that the government has not been effectively complying with this constitutional prescript.

4.4.2.8. Spatial challenges unique to rural areas

Space or an area is meaningless without people occupying it since it is the people who give meaning to an area (McDowell, 2018:184). As illustrated in Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3 respectively, the majority of residents in the RLM and the GTLM are poor and reside in rural areas that lack financial and physical resources. Therefore, due to their poor economic status, they give meaning to poverty in the area.

The spatial challenges created during the apartheid era due to a policy of separated development continue to create infrastructure challenges. As presented in Section 4.2, the former homelands (inclusive of the current North West Province that used to be the Bophuthatswana homeland) lacked basic amenities (Becker, 2017:30; Alexander*,* 2018:*4).* The inherited poor infrastructure is further exacerbated by the government's inability to adequately provide infrastructure and is experienced by citizens in the form of poor basic service delivery and under-development (Mlambo, 2018:63) – see Section 4.4.2.5. With the RLM (as the poorest municipality in the province) and the GTLM (as one of the poorest municipalities in the province) as Category B4

municipalities, the residents in these rural areas are arguably the most affected by inadequate infrastructure and an inherited and under-developed spatial area. Both the RLM and the GTLM experience transport challenges as alluded in Section 4.4.2.8, as well as water shortages, as stated in Section 4.4.2.7. Possibly other municipalities that are not categorised as B4 municipality have the same challenges but not at the magnitude experienced by B4 municipalities. It is therefore argued that rural areas experience unique spatial challenges.

4.4.2.9. Sub-standard road system

Proper and accessible roads form part of the rural municipalities' vast responsibilities of infrastructure development (National Treasury, 2011:209). However, most of the rural communities including the RLM and the GTLM respectively encounter the consequences of infrastructure inaccessibility, for example, good roads that are reliable and safe. In instances where safe and reliable roads exist, these are typically a distance removed from the residential areas (Marriah-Maharaj, 2022). Hence, these residents are forced to travel long distances on foot to access social amenities (Van Heerden, Burger, Coetsee, Mahlangu & Naudé*.,* 2015:174; Sewell & Desai, 2016:22). The poor state, and inaccessibility of roads thus results in a deprivation of transport, further exacerbated by infrequent service in sparsely populated areas (UN,2021a:18). This situation could be attributed to the lack of planning by the government (Mtizi, 2017:821). As highlighted in Section 4.4.2.6, the ill are often transported in wheelbarrows to the hospitals due to the infrequent availability of transport.

4.4.2.10. Lack of electricity

Despite the national energy crisis that has riddled South Africa for the past decade, with escalating challenges since 2019, citizens in the rural areas have experienced electricity challenges for years, independent of the national energy crisis. Whereas citizens across South Africa experience load shedding, the challenges of rural citizens also relate to a lack of household infrastructure. A high number of citizens who live in rural areas and informal settlements do not have access to electricity (Jamal, 2015:60; Longe, 2021:1).

The North West Province in among the provinces with a low energy rate of 38% (Vermaak, 2014:141). A total of 80.9% of the population is connected to the main supply energy (Stats SA, 2017b :32); while the community rates their energy supply as “good” on a five-point scale (Stats SA, 2017b:34). However, 12,7% of the households in the North West Province is not connected to electricity (Stats SA, 2017b:32). This presents a state of inequality and socio-economic challenges especially for the poverty-stricken rural areas of the RLM and the GTLM. The total population of the RLM is 107 339 (see Figure 4.2 above) and electricity is only provided to 27 050 households (RLM [NW381]). A total of 8 414 qualify for free basic services that has been outsourced (RLM [NW381]). It could be assumed that 80 966 of the poor in these municipal areas live without electricity due to their financial circumstances. The GTLM accounts for a total population of 177 643 – refer to Figure 4.3 above. Like the RLM, the GTLM has also outsourced electricity provision. Electricity is provided to 36 883 households while 13 471 qualify for free basic services (GTLM [NW394]). It is possible that 88 466 people cannot afford electricity because of their poor financial status.

Assuming that the lack of electricity fails to create a conducive environment for women in both the RLM and the GTLM to access information and communication technology as guided by the fifth SDG goal, stating the need to achieve gender equality and to empower women (UN, 2015b:1), it should be noted that such devices require electricity to function and the lack thereof turns socio-economic challenges into a reality that promotes poverty which is prevalent amongst women, as stated throughout this thesis.

The review on the social challenges experienced in the North West Province, and particularly in the jurisdictional areas of the RLM and the GTLM, revealed several obstacles to flourish, including the following:

- The still unattainable goal of social justice.
- The continued prevalence of classism and racism, especially among black women who are exposed to both these categories of discrimination.

- The practices of tradition and culture as remnants of a patriarchal system that often places women on the peripheries of development.
- Poorly located and inadequate infrastructure that, combine with the social challenges are inherited from the apartheid era and further exacerbated by the government's inability to provide adequate infrastructure to rural communities. These infrastructure challenges include insufficient water systems, inadequate electricity provision, and sub-standard road and transport services in the rural areas.
- Inadequate health facilities, depriving especially residents in the rural areas from effectively experiencing this constitutional right.

In addition to the social challenges the RLM and the GTLM also experience economic challenges. Social and economic challenges are mutually dependent and especially relevant in the context of poverty alleviation.

4.4.3. Economic challenges

Central to the definitions of the concept economic (refer to Table 4.3 above), Hamann and Horn (2015:55) suggest that the focus on policy formulation has to shift from race to concentrate on socio-economic inequalities to alleviate poverty in areas with a high number of black Africans, for example, the North West Province. In the current democracy, economic benefits continue to evade the previously disadvantaged group, as was argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2 and is also alluded to by Jaichand (2017:26). Both the RLM and the GTLM are previously disadvantaged areas and have the highest poverty rates in the North West Province. Thus, these communities fail to benefit from state-provided economic opportunities. Most relevant to this study is that the high levels of socio-economic deprivation among women in the North West Province, combined with the apparent slow pace to alleviate poverty, as well as failure to formulate and implement policies, result in women forgoing the benefit of their basic human rights, as alluded to in Chapter 1, Section 1.1. This view is supported by Quan-Baffour (2012:97); and Amusan and Ngoh (2016:7239) who confirm that African women are deprived of benefits to self-enhance due to the social and economic structure.

4.4.3.1. Unemployment

Unemployment is often regarded as the primary cause of poverty and perceived as the key driver of socio-economic challenges by the government (Goldblatt & McLean, 2011:247; Burger & Von Fintel, 2014:36). Hence, the implementation of the labour-intensive programme titled Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP), aimed at creating employment and develop skills (Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, 2017:9). In addition, all three spheres of government are expected to create employment when implementing large and small projects to reduce unemployment (RSA, 2016:124).

Citizens residing in townships and rural areas continue to endure personal poverty and unemployment, irrespective of the established poverty alleviation policies (UN Women, 2022). Anand, Kothari, and Kumar (2016:17) argue that the highest unemployment rate in South Africa is among the youth, black citizens, and women. The unemployment rate among women in South Africa is 28.8% compared to 25.1% for men. In addition, the unemployment rate of black women specifically comprises 32.6% of the entire national unemployment rate, the highest of any group in the country (Stats SA 2018c: 25). A similar situation is noticed in the North West Province. In the two municipalities that is focussed upon in this study (RLM and GTLM) it appears that the high level of unemployment amongst women makes them more vulnerable to socio-economic challenges and subsequently, poverty.

It was argued in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 that unemployment forms part of the characteristics that result in the inception of poverty. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey reflects North West Province as part of the six provinces where the unemployment rate increased in the first quarter of 2021 (RSA, 2021d:13).

It is evident that the unemployment rate, both nationally and provincially is higher among women than men, logically implying that women subsequently experience more considerable levels of poverty than men. With the focus of this study on the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, it is apparent that

unemployment is a primary phenomenon that needs to receive attention in a quest to alleviate the poverty of women.

In Chapter 3, Section 3.6.7 it was articulated that women's domestic responsibilities deprive them the opportunity of attending school to achieve the requisite skills that would allow them entry into better paying formal employment instead of settling for the low wage earned by domestic workers (RSA, 2016:90). Education as variable to poverty is thus focused upon in the next section.

4.4.3.2. Education

Regardless of the education legislation, outlined in Chapter 3, sections 3.6.2, 3.6.7 and 3.6.11, women in the North West Province, and in particular women in rural areas, find themselves in an undesirable position of helplessness and illiteracy due to the socio-economic barriers. As stated in Section 4.2.1.2, only 4.6% of the population in the 20-year and older age category obtained qualifications from the institutions of higher learning. Hence, a large number of citizens in the North West Province particularly women from rural areas lack the requisite qualifications to enter the employment market and bridge the inequality gap.

While it is true that the processes to enhance the empowerment of women are noticeable in the upper echelons of government institutions (Union, 2020:1). It could be argued that the number of women making progress in the corporate world and the political sphere demonstrate progress in minute quantitative terms (Mashaba, 2014:46; Dimitrova-Grajzl and Obasanjo, 2019:8) but does not reduce the inequality gap since senior positions are limited and only a few women occupy those (Union, 2020:20).

4.4.3.3. Income

Income was reviewed in Section 4.2.1.4.2 under the heading *Household income* as part of the profile of the North West Province. The North West Province has the second lowest household income in the country, amounting to an average of R86 926 per annum (Stats SA, 2016a:16). With additional income (e.g., social grants) the average

household income is increases to R89 926 per annum (RSA, 2016:16). From these statistics it can be inferred that the citizens in North West Province are plagued by socio-economic challenges as a result of a low household income, associated with poverty. The high unemployment rate in the RLM and the GTLM (refer to Figure 4.2 and 4.3 above) could be a contributory factor in the North West Province's annual income status, compared to other provinces.

The review on the economic challenges experienced in the North West Province revealed two primary obstacles to prosperity experienced by these communities, including the following: (1) unemployment as one of the primary causes of poverty. The unemployment rate among women is especially concerning, being the highest of any group in the country; (2) the low level of household income, the second lowest in the country. The high unemployment rate in the RLM and the GTLM could be a contributory factor in the low household income rate; and (3) education, with women the least educated.

In consideration of the grave poverty experienced in the communities of the RLM and the GTLM, it is argued that the socio-economic challenges significantly contribute to the poor living standard of residents in these communities. As highlighted throughout this study, considering the focus of this research, women as the marginalised group more intensively experience these challenges due to their unique circumstances, as well as historic patriarchal discriminatory practices.

4.5. POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

In Chapter 3, Section 3.2, it was revealed that government realises the need for its entire population to live in a country free of poverty, inequality, and unemployment through the formulation of legislation and policies to realise a just society although the set target of 2030 is distant for citizens who currently live in poverty (Govender, 2016:256). Munoz Boudet *et al.* (2018;21 state that the envisaged progress to alleviate poverty amongst women is not expected. The indication is that poverty is going to be on the increase as opposed to the anticipated reduction (World Bank, 2018:1). Consequently, poverty remains a challenge in South Africa and particularly in rural areas. Conversely, if education is coupled with good policy, mining, and the reduction

of corruption, the 2030 mission to alleviate poverty could turn into a reality (World Bank, 2018:1). It was highlighted in Section 4.2.1.1, that mining is the primary economic activity in the North West Province. The North West Province supports the reduction of poverty through education and sound policies and subsequently allocates education and sport development a share of R16.183 billion from the Provincial budget (FEED, 2018b:17). This is an example to encourage access to education which is a key priority to alleviate poverty (FEED, 2018a:xxii). The increase is consistent and prevalent in the 2021/2022 North West Provincial budget speech. A total of R18 001 billion was allocated to education which was the highest budget in the province. This reconfirmed the efforts to utilise education to alleviate poverty (North West Province Treasury, 2021b).

It was asserted in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.4; and Section 3.6 that the NDP (RSA, 2011) and the MTSF (2019 – 2024) respectively aim to combat poverty and the negative prevalence of the socio-economic factors that affect citizens. This would be executed by increasing and sustaining socio-economic development for all the citizens. Therefore, some of the North West Province's poverty alleviation strategies include, but are not limited to the Rebranding, Repositioning and Renewing (RRR) and the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) elaborated upon in the next sections.

4.5.1. Rebranding, Repositioning and Renewing (RRR)

In giving effect to the NDP (RSA, 2011), which is envisaged to reduce inequity and poverty, the North West Province launched the Rebranding, Repositioning and Renewing *(*RRR) strategy (Mahumapelo, 2016:5; Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development, 2017:1). The RRR strategy seeks to initiate a process of a radical socio-economic programme (FEED, 2018a:xix**)** to address poverty, inequality, and unemployment by stimulating an encompassing economic growth in the province; and to pursue cooperate governance and promote effective and efficient service delivery. Economic growth is impeded by a myriad of socio-economic challenges that besets the rural areas, as presented in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3. Furthermore, the RRR strategy strives to leverage from the gains of the past

administration, improve the identified gap by intensifying community engagements to address service delivery protests (FEED, 2018a:xxxii).

In pursuit of delivering the aims of the NDP (RSA, 2011) to alleviate poverty, as mentioned in Section 4.6, the implementation of the RRR strategy is anchored in five pillars and geared towards changing the socio-economic circumstances of the citizens of the North West Province, including the alleviation of poverty (FEED, 2018b:10). The following five pillars are utilised to realise socio-economic transformation (Mahumapelo, 2016:5; Department of Rural Environment and Agricultural Development (NWP), 2018:1).

- ACT (Agriculture, Culture & Tourism).
- VTSD (Villages, Township and Small *Dorpies* [small towns]).
- RHR (Reconciliation, Healing and Renewal).
- *Setsokotsane* (comprehensive and integrated service delivery campaign).
- *Saamtrek Saamwerk* (pulling together and working together), which calls for unity of purpose above race divisions.

All the above-mentioned pillars aim to confront poverty distinctively. Firstly, ACT is the pillar assigned the major responsibility to grow the economy of the province particularly in the rural areas (FEED, 2018a:ix). Secondly, mandated to develop poverty alleviation programmes to address inequality and unemployment in the VTSD areas to ensure that a minimum of 70% of the department's allocated budget is spent and directed towards such areas to stimulate and improve the economic activities of these areas (Mahumapelo, 2018: 13-14). The focus on economy was also established in Chapter 1, Section 1.2, by acknowledging that the growth of the economy is another strategy used to alleviate poverty and finally eradicate it.

Lastly, the RHR strategy, *Setsokotsane* and *SaamTrek SaamWerk* pillar's aim is to build a just and democratic nation that respects human rights; a strategy used to bring services to the doorstep of the community, and forge partnerships with internal and external stakeholders (FEED, 2016:1; Mahumapelo, 2018:14 – 15). It is against this background that provincial departments enter partnerships to deliver their

programmes that ought to have a strong focus on the alleviation of poverty. If the strategy is implemented properly, it has the propensity to enhance the socio-economic circumstances of the community and, particularly, the poor residents of the RLM and the GTLM (see Figure 4.2 and 4.3 respectively) who are the worst affected by poverty in the province.

The 2014 State of the Province address by the Premier revealed that for the province to realise the implementation of the RRR strategy, the entire community needs to work in unison and leverage from the collective strength that, if channelled properly, would promote the oneness of the province (Mahumapelo, 2014:5). Again, in the 2015 State of the Province address, the RRR was referred to as a tool that the North West Province uses to alleviate poverty, inequality, and to implement the NDP's (RSA, 2011) objectives (Mahumapelo, 2015: 20). The primary concerns of the five pillars (ACT, VTSD, RHR, *Setsokotsane* and *Saamtrek Saamwerk*) are poverty alleviation and economic growth and encompasses the entire populace of the North West Province.

The strategies, however, do not take cognisance that women are in the majority and experience poverty more severely. Furthermore, the broad implementation of the strategies ignores the importance of moving away from gender neutral programmes, alluded to in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, that in most instances intensifies the inequality between men and women and ignores the plight of women.

If the North West Province is serious about alleviating poverty amongst women, perhaps it should liken women empowerment to Indian positive discrimination where previously disadvantaged people who were deliberately side-lined gained an advantage over those who benefited during their time of the struggle (Palakkappillil, 2014:45). Thus, women in the North West Province as the marginalised group should be prioritised in all the poverty alleviation strategies. For example, the Department of Education should utilise the Teacher Development Programme to empower female teachers to realise gender equity in the institutions (North West Province Treasury, 2021:2). The North West Provincial Development Plan reiterates the importance to establish access to education for women to realise women empowerment (North West Province, 2013:31) and further target the alleviation of the poverty rate to 0%,

unemployment to 0% by 2030, and raise *per capita* income from R67 000 to R120 000 (North West Province, 2013:7).

According to Bokone Bophirima Provincial Government (2018:1), 11 Provincial Government Departments operate in the North West Province. All the departments carry the mandate to ensure that service delivery programmes include the RRR strategy and the five pillars (FEED, 2018a:xxii). Department of Social Development (DSD), the Department of Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development (DREAD), and the Department of Local Government and Human Settlements (DLGHS) are three provincial departments that form part of this study as illustrated in Table 1.1. The DREAD forms part of the ACT pillar.

4.5.2. Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP)

Pursuant to upholding the Constitution, 1996, and improving the socio-economic circumstances of citizens in rural areas by resuscitating their economies, industrialising, and reducing rural to urban migration, the Cabinet in 2009 approved the CRDP (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2009:1). The focus was on partnership between the community and departments, access to basic needs, social cohesion among community organisations and affording people the opportunity to fashion their own destiny (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2009:1). The community plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the CRDP. This conviction is held by Govender (2016:256) who states that the community ought to be at the centre of their own development, also encouraged by the IDP and stated in Section 4.3.

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform plays a primary and overarching role in all provisional CRDPs. In the North West Province, the READ leads and directs the CRDP in partnership with other provincial departments and is supplemented by other stakeholders (Moleme, 2018:8). The focus is on Agri-parks for Rural Economic Transformation and the CRDP divisions (Mahumapelo, 2016:5; FEED, 2018a:xxiv**).** The CRDP identifies rural sites which are in dire need of economic enhancement. Ward 1 in the RLM and Ward 14 in the GTLM forms part of the CRDP

sites (Moleme, 2018:23). Hence, this confirms that the two municipalities experience high levels of poverty, as stated in Section 4.3.1.1 and Section 4.3.1.2 respectively.

The above review revealed that the North West Province's poverty alleviation initiatives include the RRR strategy and the CRDP. The RRR strategy seeks to initiate a process of a radical socio-economic programme (Moeletsi & Marx, 2017:3) to address poverty, inequality, and unemployment by stimulating an encompassing economic growth in the province; and to pursue cooperate governance and promote effective and efficient service delivery. In pursuit of delivering the aims of the NDP (RSA, 2011) to alleviate poverty the implementation of the RRR strategy is anchored in five pillars and geared towards changing the socio-economic circumstances of the citizens of the North West Province: (1) ACT (Agriculture, Culture & Tourism); (2) VTSD (Villages, Township and Small *Dorpies*); (3) RHR (Reconciliation, Healing and Renewal); (4) *Setsokotsane* (comprehensive and integrated service delivery campaign); and (5) *Saamtrek Saamwerk* call for unity of purpose above race divisions. All five pillars aim to confront poverty distinctively. The aforementioned strategies, however, do not take cognisance that women are in the majority and experience poverty more severely. Furthermore, the broad implementation of the strategies ignores the importance of moving away from gender neutral programmes, alluded to in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, that in most instances intensifies the inequality between men and women and ignores the plight of women.

The focus of the CRDP is on partnership between the community and departments, access to basic needs, social cohesion among community organisations and affording people the opportunity to fashion their own destiny (RSA, 2009:1). Furthermore, the CRDP identifies rural sites which are in dire need of economic enhancement.

4.6. CONCLUSION

The chapter provided a profile of the North West Province, particularly reviewing the socio-economic challenges experienced in the province and relevant to the poverty alleviation of women. These challenges include the North West Province's high unemployment rate amounts, a high percentage of citizens in the province living below the poverty line, and a high percentage of households living in informal dwellings. In

this respect, it was argued that it is likely that people resort to reside illegally in informal settlements with no basic infrastructure services to avoid paying for municipal services. It was further revealed that the North West Province operates below the national average household income and has the second lowest household income nationally. Certain households depend on the social security/grant as their sole household income that benefits the recipients and the entire family.

It became evident that local municipalities in South Africa find it difficult to implement their IDPs, despite the directives of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000, compelling municipalities to utilise the IDP as guide in delivering services to their communities. Moreover, it was revealed that the IDPs of municipalities do not contain details associated with the alleviation of poverty. In addition, the MIG that should be used as a financial avenue for municipalities to increase the social and economic in their jurisdictional areas and to address the imbalances of the past are not adequately spent on infrastructure. In addition, municipalities underspend their grant allocation, negatively influencing service delivery and irregular expenditure increase on an annual basis.

It furthermore became evident that the RLM is the poorest municipality in the North West Province. A concern in both the RLM and the GTLM is the gender-neutral language used in these municipalities' official documents pertaining to poverty alleviation programmes. Since black women as the marginalised group experience triple jeopardy based on race, class, and gender, and taking in consideration the larger population of women than men in the jurisdictional area of the RLM, based on a feminist philosophical perspective, it is argued that specific reference should be made to women and the prioritisation of their poverty alleviation.

Regarding the review on the GTLM's IDP, it was revealed that its poverty reduction and gender equity plan, as well as the HIV/AIDS plan programme are outstanding. Consequently, failure to plan and implement programmes or projects relevant to the alleviation of poverty might promote and sustain the perpetual life of poverty amongst residents of the GTLM and specifically relevant to this study, women in the GTLM. It was further revealed that the GTLM's LED plan would indirectly compensate for the unplanned programmes (GTLM, 2017:93); thereby, failing to allocate the necessary

funding to LED projects. In addition, the AG reported that the GTLM's achievements were not reliable and failed to be supported by relevant source documents to ensure that the reports are credible.

The review on the social challenges experienced in the North West Province, and particularly in the jurisdictional areas of the RLM and the GTLM, revealed several obstacles to flourish, including the following: the still unattainable goal of social justice; the continued prevalence of classism and racism; traditional and cultural practices as remnants of a patriarchal system; poorly located and inadequate infrastructure; and inadequate health facilities. In addition to the social challenges the RLM and the GTLM also experience economic challenges. The review on the economic challenges experienced in the North West Province revealed two primary obstacles to prosperity experienced by these communities, including the following: (1) unemployment as one of the primary causes of poverty; (2) the low level of household income; and (3) education.

The North West Province's poverty alleviation initiatives include the RRR strategy and the CRDP. The RRR strategy seeks to initiate a process of a radical socio-economic programme to address poverty, inequality, and unemployment by stimulating an encompassing economic growth in the province; and to pursue cooperate governance and promote effective and efficient service delivery. In pursuit of delivering the aims of the NDP (RSA, 2011) to alleviate poverty the implementation of the RRR strategy is anchored in five pillars and geared towards changing the socio-economic circumstances of the citizens of the North West Province: (1) ACT (Agriculture, Culture & Tourism); (2) VTSD (Villages, Township and Small *Dorpies*); (3) RHR (Reconciliation, Healing and Renewal); (4) *Setsokotsane* (comprehensive and integrated service delivery campaign); and (5) *Saamtrek Saamwerk* call for unity of purpose above race divisions. All five pillars aim to confront poverty distinctively. The strategies, however, do not take cognisance that women are in the majority and experience poverty more severely. The focus of the CRDP is on partnership between the community and departments, access to basic needs, social cohesion among community organisations and affording people the opportunity to fashion their own destiny. Furthermore, the CRDP identifies rural sites which are in dire need of economic enhancement.

It is against the background established in this chapter that a poverty alleviation programme for women in the North West Province should be prioritised. The next chapter present and interpret the results obtained from the empirical investigation and develop the implementation framework for poverty alleviation in the North West Province.

CHAPTER 5: A CONCEPTUAL POLICY IMPEMENTATION FRAMEWORK FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION OF WOMEN IN SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and interprets the empirical findings of the study. The results obtained from the empirical investigation are underpinned, analysed, and expounded on by the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2 (Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; Individualistic; Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory), as well as the statutory and regulatory framework established in Chapter 3, most significantly, the Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011). The socio-economic factors and causes that contribute towards poverty levels amongst women in the North West Province (reviewed in Chapter 4) and, particularly the socio-economic circumstances affecting the RLM and the GTLM rural areas are also considered in the interpretation of the empirical results.

The chapter commences with a review of the research methodology used for the empirical investigation, followed by the empirical results. The primary findings of the study are presented, thenceforward the components significant for inclusion in the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West province, as derived from the empirical results, are propounded and substantiated. Finally, the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province is presented.

5.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology followed in the study, as explicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.6, is restated in the sections below to reiterate the framework and process followed towards the ensuing results. Additionally, the verification of data, the validity of the results, and the reliability/dependability of the results are clarified.

5.2.1. Research approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is focused on studying *how* a set of laws and policies are implemented (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:582; Harvey, 2021:7). In this respect, the study focused on how the legislation and policies pertaining to the alleviation of poverty among women should be implemented and how a policy implementation framework (subsequently developed in this study) can assist to alleviate poverty and empower women in the North West Province.

Qualitative research also puts emphasis on *why* a phenomenon occurs and studies the related components such as the process, the causes, and the social relationship (Dworkin, 2012:1319; Williams & Moser, 2019:45; Busetto *et al.*, 2020:1). In this respect, the study investigated the causes of poverty, particularly as explained by Feminist theories. The study also considered the role of socio-economic circumstances in causing and exacerbating poverty among women in the North West Province.

Not only one aspect influences qualitative research, but several issues are of concern, for instance, each individual researcher holds a particular view of reality, clarifying the purpose of the world and their specific role in the world, known as their ontological perspective, the nature of the knowledge and its access thereof (epistemology), and the participants' diversity, beliefs, experiences, and knowledge (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014:2; Mohajan, 2018:7). In contemplating the social reality, this study adopted a constructivist ontology. Constructivism subscribes to the supposition that research focuses on the construction of meanings, emerging from people's interaction with the world (Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016:2). Constructivists reject the notion of the world as an objective reality by ascribing value to the perceptions and actions of social role-players to create social phenomena (Adom *et al*., 2016:3). Thus, as opposed to believing in absolute truths as the only way to obtain knowledge, constructivists hold the view that meanings do not exist before a mind engages them.

This study focused on the prevailing phenomenon of poverty, with its primary objective to develop a poverty alleviation framework for women in the North West Province.

Bearing in mind the constructivist approach adopted in this study, the research, through a rigorous theoretical analysis, explored the multi-dimensional nature of poverty as social reality. It is argued that poverty cannot be objectively viewed from a single perspective. Thus, value was be placed on the differing views on poverty held by social role-players (individuals, communities and policy makers). These views were analysed and interpreted to construct meaning to poverty in the context of the broader South African society and in particular, the North West Province.

Since constructivism aligns with an interpretivist epistemology, the study subscribed to an interpretivist philosophy. Thanh and Thanh (2014:24); and Frechette *et al.* (2020:11) state that interpretivist research conclusions are based on the information gathered from participants, explaining their experiences; thus, giving credence that the researcher's views of the world is through the participants' eyes. Furthermore, the interpretive approach allows the researcher to present their own interpretations (Reiners, 2012:2; Collins & Stockton, 2018:9). Interpretive research is subjective and reflects on "soft" data such as "experiences, perceptions, opinions, values, meanings, and beliefs, things that are not directly accessible or sometimes not even evident on the surface" (Richards and Morse, 2013:42). Thus, Reiners (2012:2); and Qutoshi, (2018:215) denote that interpretivism seeks to understand the meaning of the phenomenon.

In addition to the results obtained through the empirical investigation, the researcher also considered the theories, legislation and policies pertaining to poverty, poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women in the development of the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. These were also be interpreted by the researcher. Since interpretive research is subjective, the researcher explored and analysed the participant's experiences, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs on poverty and the poverty alleviation of women. Allowing the participants to express their views freely and comfortably may allowed for insights that may not have emerged otherwise.

Based on the qualitative research approach followed in the study, the phenomenon of poverty will be investigated in-depth to consider why poverty occurs; how it materialises in the lives of women; and which socio-economic challenges are

experienced by women, especially those residing in rural areas, and contribute to their poverty.

5.2.2. Data collection, population and sampling

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the SMS members from three provincial departments in the North West Province *viz*., the DSD; the DREAD; and the DLGHS, as specified in Chapter 1, Table 1.1. The initially identified 15 respondents participated in the semi-structured interviews, with an additional participant that was also interviewed, bringing the total to 16 participants. Six (6) SMS members from the DSD were interviewed instead of five. The high number of responses from the DSD could be attributed to the size of the department and the large number of senior managers. The DREAD is the department with the least number of SMS members of which five (5) was interviewed. Five (5) SMS members of the DLGHS also participated in the study. The participants were selected to participate in the study using the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is directed by the decision made by the researcher regarding who are best suited and relevant for the purpose of the study (Sharma, 2017:751). Through purposive sampling the researcher deliberately targets participants to the study who are familiar with the topic of the research that is undertaken (Orcher, 2014:62).

The senior managers from the provincial DSD, DREAD and DLGHS were purposefully selected for the sample since they possess the required knowledge on the poverty levels of women in the North West Province. These senior managers are also custodians of the policies and programmes implemented for the poverty alleviation of women in the Province and in particular those for the RLM and the GTLM. Therefore, the uniqueness of their positions, knowledge and experience made them suitable as participants for this study.

5.2.3. Data analysis

The study made use of thematic analysis. All the responses from the interviews with the SMS members were written down and audio recorded to gather relevant information, which was read and re-read, and listened to on several occasions to

acquire an in-depth understanding. The data was furthermore subjected to coding and grouped according to identified themes to assist in the thematic analysis of the results. Ongoing analysis was conducted to refine the specifics of each theme before the final analysis commenced.

5.2.4. Data verification

The verification of data is the process that is used to determine the correctness and the flaws identified in the collected data for verification in the study (Jambwa, 2003:27; Morckel, 2016:3). Data collection and processing is intertwined with the verification and validation of data (Martin, Hoff, Gard, Gregosky, Jones, Kirkwood & Willott-Moore, 2008:38). Qualitative analysis presents the description as seen by the eyes of different observers (Person, Ian & Dey, 1993:37; Vosloo, 2014:358).

The researcher approached the phenomenon of poverty and the interviews with the participants objectively to ensure that all the information they share are included in the presentation and interpretation of the empirical results and that no preconceived notions influenced the results or the reporting thereof. Thus, no results were be anticipated.

5.2.5. Validity

Larroulet Philippi (2021:153) explains that each data collection tool used in research depends on its population and the purpose it is intended to perform. When the data collection instruments used in the research measure what it was intended to evaluate and do so accurately, the results of a study can be regarded as valid (Larroulet Philippi, 2021:153). When valid research results are produced, the researcher can draw certain deductions and conclusions from the findings (Vermeulen, 2011:198). In this study, the semi-structured interviews as data collection method have been consistently applied in the same manner and the same questions have been posed to all the participants.

5.2.6. Reliability / Dependability

The results of a study can be regarded as reliable when it is consistent and meets the criteria of achieving the same results if performed in other studies at a different place by a different person (Nayak & Singh,2021:102). However, in interpretive research, reference is rather made to the dependability of the results, since, unlike quantitative studies, experiments are not repeated with interpretive qualitative research; and the context in which the research is conducted is neither fixed nor stable (Mohajan, 2017:58-59). Dependability could be inferred as the audit trail and realised when it is apparent that the findings emerge in the manner the researcher documented and presented data thorough descriptions that reveal detailed analysis (Gasson,2004:94; Korstjens & Moser,2018:122).

The results of this study can be regarded as dependable since the researcher approached the phenomenon of poverty and the interviews with the participants objectively to ensure that all the information they share are included in the presentation and interpretation of the empirical results and that no preconceived notions influenced the results or the reporting thereof. Thus, no results were anticipated, and no results were disregarded.

5.3. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The eight (8) open-ended questions posed to the SMS members who participated in the study aimed to acquire detailed knowledge and the understanding of the SMS members on the poverty levels experienced by women in the North West Province, the factors contributing towards their poverty, and potential solutions to their poverty alleviation. The questions afforded the SMS members the opportunity to provide answers based on their knowledge on, as well as their experience and understanding of the topic. The answers provided by the SMS members assisted in giving meaning and legitimacy to particular issues and assisted in the development of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. Subsequently, the participants' responses; a summary pertaining to the most significant results obtained on each question; and the researcher's interpretation of the results obtained at each question are presented below.

5.3.1. Question one: What are the factors that contribute to poverty among women in the North West Province?

The first question endeavoured to establish the origin and extent of poverty, factors that contribute towards poverty among women in the North West Province, as well as to identify and understand these factors. Furthermore, the question aimed to establish which factors could empower decision-makers on broader issues of poverty in their quest to alleviate poverty amongst women in the North West Province, more so in the rural areas; and to identify specific socio-economic poverty related factors to target, prioritise, and address poverty adequately.

5.3.1.1. Feedback summary on Question one

A range of responses were extracted from Question 1 and eight themes emerged during the analysis of the responses. The themes were classified as follows:

- Lack of education, illiteracy, and lack of skill
- Unemployment, lack of opportunities
- Household responsibilities
- Gender discrimination
- Lack of financial power
- Spatial segregation/ rural areas
- Substance abuse
- High rate of childbearing

The eight themes emerging from the responses to Question 1 relate to socio-economic challenges faced by women in the North West Province. Each of these themes are elaborated upon below by means of a feedback summary and the researcher's analysis on the results, organised by theme.

5.3.1.1.1. Feedback summary: lack of education, illiteracy, and lack of skill

A connection between the responses pertaining to the lack of education, skills, and illiteracy could be established and were therefore grouped together under one theme. The majority of interviewees (88%) stated that the lack of education, lack of skill and illiteracy are primary factors that contribute towards poverty among women in the North West Province.

An interviewee pointed out that illiteracy, emanating from the lack of education, is an aspect that renders women unemployable. It was further stated that women in the rural areas in the North West Province lack the requisite skills that provide access to employment opportunities. For example, the agriculture sector is the primary employer in the rural areas, but most women fail to enter the industry because they are ill-equipped to access this employment market because of their lack of relevant skills. During the interviews, the participants also highlighted that women do not have the required skills to start their own business to liberate themselves from poverty.

5.3.1.1.1.1. Researcher's interpretation: lack of education, skills, and illiteracy

Throughout the interviews the lack of education and illiteracy were recurrent factors as significant causes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province. Bergen (2018:3); and Ramirez and Rodriguez (2019:9) concur with this notion, stating that the lack of education is amongst the most fundamental causes of poverty. Women have been classified as a marginalised group since the advent of democracy, alluded to in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1 and Section 2.3.4; Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.1; and Chapter 4, Section 4.6.1, with no immediate signs of significant improvement. Furthermore, the IPPF (2017:23); and Dar and Mir (2019:226) argue that marginalised people are deprived of benefits such as education, employment, and broader participation in the community because of discrimination pertaining to race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation, to name a few.

Social Exclusion Theory (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1) revealed that exclusion finds its character in the deliberate imposition of failure to be part of activities that ultimately bear a direct negative influence on an individual's life (Gordon, 2006:31). Furthermore,

social exclusion can be equated to poverty due to the working class forgoing the opportunity of self-development, usually giving rise to poverty (Sameti *et al.*, 2012:46; Luna, 2016:78; Littlewood, 2017:58). In this respect, social exclusion and poverty are occasionally referred to as inseparable twins since both are identified by social or economic marginalisation and share the same factor of exclusion that deprives people from socio-economic participation (Levitas *et al.*, 2007:20). The lack of education among women in rural areas, causing the lack of skills and illiteracy, clearly exclude them from employment opportunities and optimally participating in the economic environment. The fundamentals of Social Exclusion Theory were therefore considered in the development of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

Also relating to social exclusion, Onano (2020) posits that girls in the rural areas are disadvantaged and do not enjoy the same benefits of education as their peers in the urban areas. Only a few girls in the rural areas enrol for basic education but fail to complete their schooling while others do not even have the opportunity to attend school (Onano, 2020). In Chapter 2 (see Figure 2.1 and Section, 2.2.2), education, health, and the standard of living were presented as the three dimensions of poverty.

Furthermore, education is an empowerment agent to emancipate women, enhance their self-realisation, and a process to develop authority, reinforced by knowledge to make strategic decisions that would benefit everybody, including the community (Kapur, 2019:15; Onyido & Osigwe, 2019:7; Shetty & Hans 2019:228; Tagar, Abro, Chandani, Khoso & Sohoo 2019:96). Nonetheless, as highlighted in Section 5.3.1.1.1, women in rural areas often fail to access government opportunities because they lack knowledge and are uneducated (also see Chapter 3, Section 3.6.3 and Chapter 4, Section 4.5.1.6). Hence, illiteracy deprives women of the opportunity to comprehend necessary information to, *inter alia*, alleviate poverty (Kosec & Wantchekon, 2020:2).

As posited in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3 and Chapter 4, Section 4.6, education is an indispensable investment for lifelong intervention to alleviate poverty and to engage in socially and economically beneficial activities. This is supplemented by the fourth SDG goal that advocates for inclusive and quality education, as well as affording access to opportunities (Osman, Ladhani, Findlater & McKay, 2017:27).

5.3.1.1.2. Feedback summary: unemployment and lack of opportunities

Several interviewees (43%) reported that unemployment is a factor that results in poverty but was not mentioned as frequently as a lack of education. One interviewee held that unemployment is the main driver of poverty and posited that the difficulty is to identify which factor between education and skills development takes precedence when addressing unemployment. Another interviewee stated that the lack of opportunities is a factor that also results in the poverty that is rife in the rural areas. It was mentioned that even skilled women suffer from acquiring employment because of the lack of opportunities in rural areas. For example, an interviewee held that educated people in rural areas migrate to urban areas in pursuit of better opportunities.

5.3.1.1.2.1. Researcher's interpretation: unemployment and lack of opportunities

As postulated in Section 5.3.1.1.2, unemployment results in poverty that is promoted by the lack of education and skills development, (also referred to in Section 5.3.1.1.1, and explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1). Furthermore, Singh and Singh (2018:1045) consider education and unemployment as interdependent and co-existing an argues that, when action is taken and education is advanced, unemployment is likely to reveal signs of reduction. An interviewee reported that the "*key driver for poverty is unemployment as it starts with education or skills development or whatever you classify as education*". Several authors support the view that unemployment is the consequence of the lack of education (Dixit, Tiwari, Gupta, Singh & Gupta, 2008:150; Isakova & Nazarbekova, 2011:15; Aden, 2017:19; Mpendulo, & Mang'unyi, 2018:97). Also, in this instance Social Exclusion Theory (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1) is relevant, since it is aligned to social injustice where the non-participation of a selected number of citizens in mainstream activities is beyond their control. In this case, women are excluded from economic activities due to their unemployment.

It was revealed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1 that the unemployment rate is high amongst women and is coupled by the lack of opportunities in the rural areas that also exacerbates poverty. In the address by the President on National Women's Day, 2019, in Vryburg, it was stated that women experience the highest level of poverty because

of abnormal levels of unemployment and that those that are employed are affected by unacceptable remuneration packages (Ramaphosa, 2019:3). As expressed by one of the interviewees, "*even educated women in the rural areas remain unemployed due to the lack of opportunities*". This notion is supported by research confirming this view and stating that the educated are forced to migrate from the rural areas to places where their skills sets are required (Todes & Turok, 2018:14; Kwenda, Benhura & Mudiriza, 2020:3). In Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1.1, it was confirmed that the country's population is influenced by people who migrate from poverty-stricken areas to places with better social and economic opportunities. Poverty-stricken areas place pressure on the government to adhere to the eighth SDG goal that focuses on providing every person with the ability to access decent and productive employment; as well as giving people the opportunity to transcend from poverty (Franco, Chatterji, Derbyshire & Tracey, 2019:112).

Included in the causes of unemployment is domestic responsibilities, borne solely by women (Banerjee, 2017:69; Sengupta, Scahdeva, Chigateri, Zaidi & Chopra, 2017:2; International Labour Organization, 2018:8; Skariah, 2018:16) which contributes indirectly towards poverty, as argued in Chapter 4, Section 4.1. Subsequently, domestic responsibilities as one of the factors contributing to the multi-dimensionality of poverty are analysed in the following section.

5.3.1.1.3. Feedback summary: household responsibilities

An interviewee stated that:

> "*The North West Province is rural, and women are not educated, but besides, it is believed that the woman's place is in the kitchen.*"

Another interviewee held that women are perceived as housekeepers and are expected to manage and carry the entire household duties by themselves. It was mentioned that household responsibilities place a burden on women and most importantly on single or divorced women.

5.3.1.1.3.1. Researcher's interpretation: household responsibilities

In their account on the factors that result in poverty, household responsibilities were not accentuated as a strong factor by most of the respondents. However, based on empirical research, it is highlighted as a factor that contributes towards poverty amongst women by various scholars (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018:8; Bimrose, 2019:378). The lack of underscoring this factor could be because household responsibilities are perceived as invisible work (Kaplan, Sabbah-Karkabi & Herzog, 2020:17).

Greyling and Rossouw (2019:13) believe that women spend most of their time discharging domestic responsibilities that limits their opportunities (Ferrant, Pesando & Nowacka,2014:5; Ameratunga Kring, 2017:11; Fooks, 2018:3). It is a full-time job without being able to enjoy social or economic activities (Elson, 2017:3; O'Neill, Vargas & Chopra., 2017:1; Vargas & Chopra, 2017:1). Furthermore, it was stated in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3.2 that the historical construct along gender lines illustrates household responsibilities as an acceptable phenomenon solely dedicated for women to discharge (Cheteni *et al.*, 2019:5), regardless of it being undervalued and unpaid (Ferrant *et al.*, 2014:5; Benjamin, 2018:1; Deshpande & Kabeer, 2019:4; Nehring, De la, & Paula, 2019:51; Jabeen, Haq, Jameel, Muhammad Asif, Hwang & Jabeen, 2020:17); thereby, depriving them of the capacity to afford the basic needs, as presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.

Social Feminist Theory (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.3) uses a social lens to identify the lack of equality between men and women in social and economic reproduction (Jackson & Jones, 1998:12; Armstrong, 2020:4-5). It is evident that women are denied being socially active and economically productive if they are expected to be involved in household responsibilities on a full-time basis. Social Feminist Theory further confirms that patriarchal practices (e.g., expecting women to be solely responsible for household responsibilities) result in inequality (Effiong & Inyang,2016:12). This confirms the need for the empowerment of women and the effective implementation of legislation and policies such as the Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000; the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000; and the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013, to provide women with the necessary skills to access the employment market and to eradicate all forms of

discrimination against women. In this respect, Donovan (2012:31) denotes that under Social Feminist Theory, women have the right to relinquish their socially constructed responsibilities of being home-bound to establish an avenue to operate in the public space. The social feminists' perception is that economic equality provides women freedom and independence to discharge their domestic responsibilities effectively because the drivers of this chore are financial in nature (Lipschultz, 1989:136).

Domestic responsibilities cascade from mothers to daughters since girls are socialised into household duties at an early age (Bruckauf & Rees, 2017:1; Kapur, 2019:4; Blum, Boyden, Erulkar, Kabiru & Wilopo, 2019:691). In certain instances, the eldest daughter in the family is forced to drop out of school due to a myriad of reasons but primarily to assume the domestic responsibility, for example, caring for their siblings as alluded to in Chapter 1, Section 1.2, to which Hu, (2018:25); Yasin and Aslam (2018:7); and Thaba-Nkadimene, Molotja and Mafumo. (2019:73) concur. In Section 5.2.1.1.1.1 it was stated that the lack of education and unemployment causes poverty. These two factors are compounded by household responsibilities which deepens poverty amongst women and illustrates gender discrimination as discussed in the next section.

5.3.1.1.4. Feedback summary: gender discrimination

Gender discrimination also emerged among the interviewees (43%) as a factor that causes poverty. It was reported that women are subservient to men. A respondent postulated that "*women go through their lives in the cage of men and refuse to break away; and allow men to decide for them"*. During the interviews reference was made that women offer themselves to men; stay with abusive partners; and turn into victims of abuse because of limited opportunities. Furthermore, their children join generational poverty (circle of poverty) defined by a lifetime deprivation that arises from discrimination. One participant held that there is distinct discrimination in job opportunities, stating that employment that pay well are secured for men while women are left with poorer paying jobs, if they qualify.

5.3.1.1.4.1. Researcher's interpretation: gender discrimination

Gender discrimination is among the factors that contribute towards poverty amongst women and holds that they experience discrimination even in the private space of their homes and in the community (Bird, 2017:15). The discrimination of women manifests itself early in the girl's life and continues to present in various areas of their lives (Hada, 2019:3). Gender discrimination is further exacerbated by unpaid household responsibilities which are discriminatory in nature (Milazzo & Goldstein, 2019:38). Also in this instance, the premises of Social Feminist Theory (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.3) are relevant and proved to be correct, since it confirms and outlies the lack of equality between men and women (Jackson & Jones, 1998:12; Armstrong, 2020:4-5).

According to Burchi, Malerba and Rippin (2019:37), poverty in Sub-Saharan African countries continues to pose a challenge despite the established poverty alleviation intervention strategies such as the USA's Foreign Assistance Act, 1961, presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1.2; and the EU's foreign aid programmes, reviewed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2. Moreover, women in the Sub-Saharan region are the poorest in the world, among others, because of gender discrimination, including South Africa (Asongu, Efobi, Tanankem & Osabuohien, 2019:4; Ozurumba, Inemesit, Ugwuoke & Echem, 2020:7). The aforementioned reality reiterates the need for the empowerment of women to assist with their poverty alleviation and once again calls for the need to implement legislation and policies related to their empowerment.

Relevant to the results obtained from this question is Radical Feminist Theory (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.1), seeking to promote equality for women (similar to Social Feminist Theory, but with the distinction that the primary focus of Radical Feminist Theory is based on discrimination that is practised specifically by men on the social front). Thus, Radical Feminist Theory further holds that the oppression of women is a result of the accepted patriarchal practices based on the oppression of women with the sole purpose of benefitting men (Lewis, 2020:1). Storey (2015:135) asserts that men is given power to dominate women as well as push them into subordination, and thereby justify and reinforce a domineering behaviour of men over women. According to Hooks (2000:84), Radical Feminist Theory seeks to change the acceptable *status quo* of the power domination from one gender over the other. The radical action of

women in 1969's anti-inauguration rally in Washington, DC (USA), where feminists took to the stage with the hope of presenting their views but were denied the opportunity, accentuated their demand to be heard; eradicate male supremacy; and denounce insubordinate treatment (Donovan, 2012:139).

Additionally, Black Feminism Theory, finds its basis in the promotion of equality. However, race is brought to the fore, and the theory's focus is predominantly on black women. This theory confirms the need for intersectionality when addressing the plight of black women who suffer inequities. Furthermore, as explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4, Black Feminist Theory posits that poverty-related factors encountered by black women contributes to the inception of triple oppression (gender, race, and class) (Rohwerder, 2016:42). These circumstances generally affect black women over and above their biological make-up that could be perceived as discriminatory and deprives them of social and economic opportunities. Based on the insights provided through of Social Feminist Theory, Radical Feminist Theory and Black Feminist Theory, the tenets of all three these theories were utilised in the development of the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

The gender discrimination enablers find expression in factors that result in poverty and could be associated with the lack of education amongst women (Section 5.3.1.1.1.1); high incidences of unemployment, and a lack of opportunities (Section 5.3.1.1.2.1); and the significant household responsibilities, solely assigned to women (Section 5.3.1.1.3.1). All these poverty-related factors develop and preserve discrimination with a devastating effect that is more pronounced amongst women and disproportionately felt by them compared to men. Furthermore, both tradition and culture make women subjects of men and perpetuates gender discrimination (Aziz & Moussa, 2015:10) which intensifies poverty amongst women (see Chapter 2, Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.4; and Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.4).

As argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.2 (Liberal Feminist Theory), women do not always liberate themselves from the bondage of inequality, but often allow practices of inequality or comply with gender differentiated behaviour that advance discrimination. The intention of Liberal Feminist Theory is to accomplish total equality

between women and men. However, it should be considered that total emancipation could become difficult for women due to the lack of authority and the right to craft their desired destiny (Baehr, 2013:1). As stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3, power is pivotal to access resources. It could be assumed that the deprivation of women calls for government intervention as formulators of legislation and policies to address poverty and enhance empowerment amongst women. According to Lewis (2020:1), Liberal Feminist Theory intends to promote gender equality in all public spaces, gain the same benefits accorded to men in the workplace, and educational settings for women.

As explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.8, discrimination could be addressed indirectly by confronting gender inequality through the fifth SDG goal to encourage the entire world to work toward gender equality (UN Women, s.a:20 -21). However, Enyew and Mihrete (2018:64) opine that governments invest much in this regard but fail to realise its success notwithstanding mechanisms such as the USA's Foreign Assistance Act,1961 (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1.2) and foreign aid provided by the EU (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2).

Ilesanmi (2018:5); and Dimitrova-Grajzl and Obasanjo (2019:23) maintain that equal representation and equal numbers used to address discrimination does not necessarily equate to influence and power but could be numbers that represent gender discrimination, as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.1.6. If equal representation of numbers is to be utilised as a tool to combat discrimination, it should be coupled with making decisions and the power to implement these to address gender discrimination experienced by women (Milazzo & Goldstein, 2019:55). The UNDP (2019:5) concurs that inequality is not simply dependent on the number average but, more importantly, touches on facets that affect areas of human development. Akala (2018:228) argues that underscoring factors which discriminate women provides policymakers a perspective to critically manage challenges amongst women more than relating to the number representation.

It should be noted that the basis of discrimination is both wealth and power, irrespective of which of the two supersedes the other (Harvey & Bourhis, 2012:35; Scott-Villiers & Oosterom, 2016:89). It is also stated in this section that women lack

power and not overlooking the lack of financial power. The latter is discussed in the next section.

5.3.1.1.5. Feedback summary: lack of financial power

A small number of the respondents (22%) suggested that the lack of financial power also featured as a factor that results in poverty amongst women. One of the participants explained that women experience unfair treatment in certain government projects such as the allocation of RDP houses since they are not afforded the same opportunity as their male counterparts. Moreover, bigger projects are preserved for men while women are assigned smaller projects. An example of a response is: "*a woman will be allocated 50 government RDP houses to build in a scattered rural area*, *but the distances between villages in the rural areas are difficult and expensive to travel due to the bad roads. This is the first cost driver that limits profit and inhibits their financial power before they even start building the houses whilst on the other hand, men receive a much bigger allocation*".

5.3.1.1.5.1. Researcher's interpretation: lack of financial power

It is argued that if men are allocated more houses to build, compared to women, the financial returns will also be unequal, and the economic benefit aligned to those who acquire a higher allocation. The practise of side-lining women deprives them equal access to economic activities and denies them the opportunity to advance their financial situation. The lack of women's financial power is demonstrated by Coffey *et al.* (2020:21) who posit that the wealth of the world's 22 richest billionaires in the world is equal the total wealth of the entire population of women in Africa.

The imbalance of wealth distribution demonstrates financial inequality that emanates from the lack of equal access to opportunities between males and females (Jayachandran, 2019:1; Risse, 2019:14). It was mentioned in Section 5.2.1.1.5.1 that access to financial power could liberate women from domestic duties which deprives them the prospect of engaging in economic opportunities. Culcasi (2019:469) concurs that money could be an outlet for women to abandon selected domestic

responsibilities and to engage in other money generating activities to build financial power.

5.3.1.1.6. Feedback summary: spatial segregation in rural areas

A low number of interviewees (22%) revealed that spatial segregation in rural areas contributes towards poverty. It was asserted that the pre-1994 spatial segregation policy located city centres a distance from the rural areas; thus, access to resources is challenging.

5.3.1.1.6.1. Researcher's interpretation: spatial segregation and rural areas

The respondents identified spatial segregation in rural areas as a factor that results in poverty and deprives the rural areas of proper access to infrastructure / physical resources. This view is supported by Zwane (2018:69); and Kwenda *et al.* (2020:4). In this respect, Structural Theory (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2) perceives poverty as temporary and the migration therefrom is dependent on the removal of impeding structural barriers that requires a collaborative effort to eradicate, since some of the structural barriers are designed as such that the poor on their own would fail to remove it. However, as was argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1, women need to manage their household responsibilities and continue to look after their children, along the removal of structural barriers. Structural Theory predicts that there is a correlation between the life of people who struggle and the system that denies them the opportunity to move out of poverty (Brady, 2006:154).

Added to the spatial segregation challenge identified in rural areas, it was posited in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.5 that the poorly and inadequate road system is a contributory factor to unabated under-development. Moreover, it was highlighted in Section 5.2.1.1.5 that rural areas are sparsely populated and travelling on the roads between these areas is expensive and unsafe because of the spatial segregation inherited from the apartheid era, further exacerbated by the democratic government's inability to develop adequate infrastructure (Todes & Turok, 2018:8). It is against this background that Fox, Wiggins, Lundi and Mdee (2018:107) maintain that the enhancement of spatial segregation in rural areas is slow. In addition, the material to build houses is

typically sourced from the city centre that, in most instances, is situated far from the rural areas (Iimi, Ahmed, Anderson, Diehl, Maiyo, Peralta-Quirós & Rao, 2016:2; Bertolini, 2019:2); thereby, escalating the delivery cost to the rural areas (ASSAF, 2016:13).

5.3.1.1.7. Feedback summary: substance abuse

Substance abuse was not frequently articulated in the interviews as a cause for poverty. However, it was highlighted that the high rate of alcohol abuse amongst women results in unemployment, and that this behaviour could lead to an unhealthy mother-child relationship since often, money that could contribute towards nutritious food is spent on alcohol. Another interviewee held that substance abuse leads to theft.

5.3.1.1.7.1. Researcher's interpretation: substance abuse

From the participants' responses, substance abuse emerged as a subtle factor but is nonetheless considered important since it includes factors that contribute towards poverty. Perhaps women use substance as another outlet from poverty. Too much alcohol abuse could result in risky behaviour such as unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancies NIDA (2020:14). People who abuse substances are also risking the transmission of the substance to the unborn child (Arpa, 2017:7).

5.3.1.1.8. Feedback summary: high rate of childbearing

Few respondents (6%) indicated that the high rate of childbearing is also a factor that results in poverty amongst women. It was highlighted that family planning is either ignored or non-existent. During the interviews, reference was made to the high birth rate as a result of unemployment in poverty-stricken areas where women resort to joining the sex worker industry to earn a living.

5.3.1.1.8.1. Researcher's interpretation: the high rate of childbearing

It should be reiterated that not one exclusive factor, but a multifaceted intertwined set of factors result in poverty amongst women; thereby, revealing the multi-

dimensionality of poverty (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2). Moreover, circumstances differ from one woman to another. In selected instances, poverty could force women to resort to any means to alleviate poverty (Letlape & Dube, 2019:123), for example, to join the sex work industry to earn a living to meet the needs of their family (Ngadhi, 2018:18). This could lead to unwanted pregnancies and a high rate of childbearing (Adeniyi, Ajayi, Moyaki, Ter Goon, Avramovic & Lambert, 2018:2; Ranganathan, Heise, MacPhail, Stöckl, Silverwood, Kahn, Selin, Gómez-Olivé, Watts & Pettifor, 2018:2; UNAID, 2018:6).

The high rate of childbearing amongst poor women instantaneously pushes the newborn baby into poverty (UNDP, 2019:5) which could be perceived as the inception of a cycle of poverty (Hall, Weissman & Shepherd, 2019:139). Mohamoud, Kirby and Ehrenthal (2019:10) postulate that child mortality is high in the rural areas because of the social challenges prevalent in teen pregnancies and certain challenges experienced in the rural areas, such as a lack of safety (Sychareun, Vongxay, Houaboun, Thammavongsa, Phummavongsa, Chaleunvong & Durham, 2018:2).

The results obtained from Question 1 revealed that several factors cause poverty and are co-dependent on each other. Gender discrimination (Section 5.3.1.1.4) could result in the lack of education / illiteracy, coupled with poor skills (Section 5.2.1.1.1). For example, the lack of education increases the likelihood of unemployment and obstruct opportunities (Section 5.3.1.1.2); thereby, giving rise to the lack of financial power that could force women into substance abuse and ultimately the high rate of childbirth (Plagerson & Mthembu, 2019:8).

All the factors associated with poverty, emerging from the responses to Question 1, are socio-economic in nature. It is evident that the poverty in rural areas will continue unabated, should these socio-economic factors not be addressed. In several instances, it was highlighted that, neither the current national legislation and policies, nor foreign aid could alleviate poverty effectively or empower women sufficiently, especially those residing in rural areas.

In Chapter 3, Section 3.6.7 it was mentioned that the Skills Development Act, 1998, underscores the enhancement of skills of the employed whilst ignoring the

unemployed. The effort of up-skilling should also be directed to the areas that has a high birthrate due to unemployment and are poverty. The poverty alleviation implementation framework envisages to target the socio-economic challenges such as the high poverty rate and particularly poverty in the RLM and the GTLM with a high rate of poverty and unemployment, as presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.1 and Section 4.3.1.2.

5.3.2. Question two: Which income level and/or standard of living is categorised as poor?

This question sought to establish how people construct the category of a poor level of income and/or the standard of living with the intention to understand whether it is commensurate to basic needs. Furthermore, the question was framed to identify and comprehend the poor standard of living with the aim to include guidelines in the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province that can assist the government with the enhancement of the standard of living of the poor.

5.3.2.1. Feedback summary: Question two

A respondent suggested that the national minimum wage of R3 500.00 per month (as recommended by the government) is insufficient for living expenses in the prevailing economic climate. The respondent further postulated that the cost of living is high, since children's needs are expensive, for example, technological apparatus such as mobile phones require data that is expensive in South Africa. The national minimum wage of R3 500.00 per month for a household is furthermore also inadequate due to significant monthly financial obligations that include paying rent and purchasing food. Another participant reported that a poor standard of living is anything less than the national minimum wage of R3 500.00 per month and that it should be coupled with free RDP houses, free basic services (water and electricity) from the municipality, and free health services. Another respondent held that anything less than R4 500.00 per month is regarded as poor. A participant suggested that R14.00 per day is poor, while another expressed that R5 000.00 per month per the household of five people is insufficient.

A respondent held that poverty can be cited when one does not have access to basic services, regarded as the lowest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, constituting clothing, food, water, and housing. Another interviewee suggested that the lack of food is a primary indicator of a poor standard of living. Another interviewee contended that if one does not have dignified shelter; go to bed without food; and is unaware whether one will have access to food and water to survive, it implies a poor standard of living. Moreover, the lack of funds to buy basic needs such as bread or soap compounds the situation.

One interviewee stated that those without homes are forced to occupy a small house with the extended family which also illustrates a poor standard of living. It was also mentioned that an example of a poor standard of living is a two-bedroom house occupied by a family with children. The parents sleep in one bedroom while the children share one bedroom, irrespective of the gender which could have a negative effect later in life. Furthermore, a house without electricity was also mentioned as an example of poor living conditions. It was also held by the interviewees that a poor standard of living constitutes living in any informal structure that does not have a bare minimum of a bed, chairs, or a means to make fire to cook. One interviewee attributed a poor standard of living to the lack of proper and adequate shelter without clean running water, sanitation, and electricity. Furthermore, the interviewee stated that if a person does not own an asset such as a shelter or livestock to generate money, the standard of living is categorised as poor.

An interviewee held that unskilled women who are forced to work on the farms or as domestic workers in two or more houses illustrate a poor standard of living. Furthermore, a girl who drops out of primary school after the death of her father to help her mother support the family was also regarded as poor, as articulated by one interviewee:

> *"A child-headed household is where they have to take care of their siblings, provide proper food for them to eat and to ensure that they go to school."*

Another interviewee said that a poor standard of living is when children are unable to attend school and if they do, they do so on an empty stomach because there is no food in the household.

5.3.2.2. Researcher's interpretation: Question two

The interviewees' responses to Question 2 revealed a variety of perspectives on a standard of living that can be regarded as poor. This array of responses is not surprising, since poverty is subjective (Chamhuri *et al.*, 2012:80; Bhalla & Addae-Korankye, 2014:149; Lapeyre, 2016:xvii; Goswami & Majum, 2017:78; Osinski, 2021:22), as detailed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1. However, although the interviewees responses were subjective and differentiated, it demonstrated a similar understanding, with all the responses linked to various features pertaining to basic needs, namely: food; shelter; access to schooling; and clothing, as illustrated in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1, and relates to the ten indicators of the standard of living.

The national minimum wage of R3 500.00 per month (Aflagah, 2020:9) for a family is considered an adequate sum by the government to cover the basic monthly needs. However, Aguilar and Sumner (2020:22) argue that in rural areas, most of the households are occupied by extended families. Thus, a set minimum wage of R3 500.00 per month is inadequate for the upkeep of a family in the rural areas. According to Hall and Mokomane (2018:35), an extended family could constitute of parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, and cousins taking into consideration that the cost of the basic needs for a family of four amounts to R5 544.00 per month (Isaacs, 2016:22; Konopelko, 2016:3). WITS (2020) contends that the average monthly grocery cost for one person is approximately R2 000.00 – R4 000.00, excluding electricity, water, and rent. It is against this background that the categorisation of the income level could possibly be dependent on the size of a family and the set standard of basic needs (Kneebone & Wilkins, 2019:3; Mishi, Sikhunyana, Ngonyama & Sibanda, 2020:5).

Government underscores monetary poverty by measuring the income level (Buheji, 2019:109; OPHI, 2019:11), as stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2. The income level measure has its own limitations and might present flaws in its determination (Saad

Filho, 2016:72). Some respondents held that the standard of living is not reliant on the government's categorisation of a poor income level. On the other hand, some of the respondents (29%) held that poverty is dependent on the government's recommended minimum wage based on the set norms and standards (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2). This perspective perceives poverty as relative poverty that is quantitative in nature (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2). Relative poverty is objective since its definition is in relation to norms or standards set by a community or society in proximity or in the same locality (Gordon, 2006:31). As argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2, absolute poverty (the non-availability of resources to access basic needs) is more relevant than relative poverty in the South African context if one considers specific communities. Given the dire needs and socio-economic circumstances experienced in rural areas, large components of the South African society clearly experience absolute poverty. This notion is especially true when the circumstances of the residents in the RLM and the GTLM are considered.

The standard of living amongst women in the rural areas is mostly referred to as poor (Ahmed, 2016:34; Fox *et al.*, 2018:31). They suffer from both economic and asset poverty, and lack the capacity to generate their own income, as alluded to in Section 5.3.1.1.5.1. Furthermore, they are uneducated, unskilled, and generally unemployed (Wang,Hatlebakk, Tønnessen, Mæstad & Telle,2019:18; Thaba-Nkadimene *et al.*, 2019:78; Zizzamia & Ranchhod, 2019:20). As indicated in Section 5.3.1.1.1.1, if employed, women in rural areas work on farms or as domestic workers since they are unskilled. In most instances, this industry underpays its employees and fails to adhere to the government's set minimum wage of R3 500.00 per month (Abdool & Fakir, 2017:7; Devereux, 2019:10).

Another attribute used to explain the poor standard of living is a lack of housing. In Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1, it was reported that the government has made concerted efforts to ensure that women are not deprived of housing. Khan, Rehman and Haq (2015:93) affirm that "poverty is a multi-dimensional concept. It is hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see the doctor, not having access to school, not knowing how to read, not having a job, fear for the future living even for one day, losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water, powerless, lack of representation and freedom" (also presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.3). These

poverty-related concepts are interrelated and mutually reinforces each other, as well as disregards the human rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, 1996. Nonetheless, a significant number of the interviewees (71%) revealed that the above-mentioned multiple factors are a result of poverty amongst women and defines their poor standard of living in the rural areas.

5.3.3. Question three: What is the relationship between rural areas and poverty among women in the North West Province?

The question endeavoured to investigate the relationship between the rural areas and poverty, as well as its effects experienced by the women residing in rural areas in the North West Province.

5.3.3.1. Feedback summary: Question three

One interviewee stated that rural areas are generally disadvantaged and characterised by a lack of basic needs, natural resources, education, and the non-existence of Information Communication Technology (ICT). Some of the interviewees (43%) argued that the lack of social amenities such as clinics and schools make poverty a reality in rural areas. These interviewees also alluded to the fact that, in some instances, children cannot complete matric due to the long distances they have to travel to schools. It was furthermore mentioned that there is a high correlation between poverty and the rural areas that are characterised by poor infrastructure; a lack of development; and poor transport systems, illustrated by the poor condition of roads which are also partly to blame for the taxis and buses being unable to access rural areas. A participant commenting on the poor condition of the roads stated that "*women travel long distances to access spaza shops*[5] *just to buy basic supplies*". Another respondent held that small scale businesses such as spaza shops and

[5] Spaza shops could be referred to as convenience stores located within the vicinity and provides limited stock that in certain instances fails to meet the needs of a healthy body (Onagbiye, Lungiswa & Thandi, 2020:45). According to Gastrow (2018:4), "Spaza shops are small informal grocery shops that operate in low-income neighbourhoods and supply residents with basic food and household items such as bread, milk, canned goods and soft drinks".

subsistence farming are a norm in rural areas and are usually a distance from amenities. The lack of economic opportunities gives rise to extreme low economic growth that indirectly promotes poverty.

A participant reported that rural areas "*experience limitations in terms of human and infrastructure development that deprives them of jobs and opportunities to sell their labour for income*". Shopping malls create employment in urban areas which are not prevalent in rural areas. It was also mentioned that women lack entrepreneurial skills. Skills like farming are non-existent among women and if land is availed, the skills deficiency deprives them the opportunity to work the land (also see Section 5.3.1.1.1 above). The interviewees opined that, even if women had access to land, they would fail to empower themselves due to the lack of skill, while one respondent suggested that "*women in rural areas are lazy and not prepared to do things for themselves, because they succumb to pre-determined circumstances*".

Although water is the basic element for agriculture, most rural areas lack access to clean running water and electricity. A participant suggested that agriculture used to be the largest employer, but the drought has resulted in farmers struggling, leaving many citizens in rural areas unemployed. Another respondent stated that the NMMD and the RSMD are water scarce districts and experience severe droughts that leave the community without clean running water. Hence, these residents are dependent on water tankers.

It was asserted that most of the rural areas are managed by tribal authorities with male dominated structures and women are denied land ownership to empower themselves, sustain their livelihood, and alleviate poverty. Currently, traditional leaders are not helpful compared to decades ago when a community would have a designated farm to feed the poor.

A participant reported that illiteracy and ignorance in rural areas erode knowledge and disrespect human rights. The interviewees further asserted that poverty results in poor citizens settling for any circumstances; farm workers are paid below the government minimum wage; and those who reside on farms must pay the farm owners rent for staying on the farm.

5.3.3.2. Researcher's interpretation: Question three

As established in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1; and Section 2.7 (also see Section 5.3.1.1.4 above), women are marginalised and discriminated against. However, discrimination and poverty are more pronounced among women in the rural areas (Hurlbut, 2018:41; Laborde Debucquet & Martin, 2018:336; Burchi *et al.*, 2019:1; Cheteni *et al.*, 2019:4), not disregarding the reality of poverty being rife among the entire population in rural areas, irrespective of gender.

Rural areas experience multi-dimensional poverty (Bird, 2019:2) that constitutes education, health, and the standard of living, as illustrated in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1; and expounded upon in Chapter 2, Section 2.2 (also see Section 5.3.5.2 above). Most of the groceries in the rural areas are bought from the spaza shops which are in proximity but have limited stock (Tengeh & Mukwarami, 2017:64), and, in addition, are unreasonably expensive (RSA, 2021:3). In Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1, the 10 food basket items with nutritional value were listed – grain products; meat; fish; poultry and their products; fruit and vegetables; dairy products and eggs; oils and fats; and beverages and miscellaneous – and in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1 the three dimensions of poverty were detailed: (1) education, (2) health and (3) standard of living. The lack of food in the rural areas' spaza shops could compromise the most needed food nutrients for a healthy body, which possibly creates a fertile ground to breed and compromise the second dimension of poverty (health). This could be a contributory factor to lifestyle diseases identified amongst black women.

The third dimension in the MPI is the standard of living which, amongst its indicators, constitutes electricity and sanitation (also see Chapter 2, Figure 2.1). These are scarce commodities in the rural areas that demonstrate the relationship between rural areas and poverty, especially among women, since these scarce commodities directly affect women's domestic responsibilities and the provision for their children. Numerous citizens in the rural areas of the North West Province still live without electricity (Stats SA, 2017b:32) (also see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.3). Furthermore, as revealed in Section 5.3.3.1, the rural areas experience water shortages, compelling residents to buy water due to the lack of proper infrastructure (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.5; and Section 5.3.1.1.6.1 of this chapter), with water also being expensive in the rural areas

(SHRC, 2014:7; NWP, 2019). The challenges associated with water shortages in the rural areas were also articulated in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.5. Water shortages in the rural areas are further compounded by droughts (Campos, Villani, Davis, & Takagi, 2018:36; Bertolini, 2019:2). As established in Section 5.3.3.1, drought experienced in the RSMD and the NMMD makes life more difficult for women to execute their domestic responsibilities that requires water. The lack thereof deepens poverty amongst women in rural areas since they cannot wash, which, in some instances, affect their health; and they may have to travel long distances to fetch water, exposing them to crime.

The NMMD and the RSMD includes the RLM and the GTLM respectively, with both of these municipalities reflecting the highest poverty rates in the North West Province (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.1; and Section 4.3.1.2). The female population in these two municipalities is higher than that of the male population, with a higher unemployment rate and poverty rate (refer to Chapter 4, Figure 4. 2 and 4. 3 respectively).

The MPI illustrated in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1, reflected education as the first dimension of poverty. As established and presented in several sections of this thesis, the lack of education among women residing in rural areas is rife and of great concern (Gumede, 2021:2). In this respect, women are faced with various challenges, for example, the travelling of long distances in unsafe areas to access schooling (see Chapter 3, Section 3.6.2; Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.9; and Section 5.3.3.2 in this chapter). Buheji (2019:110); and Aguilar and Sumner (2020:2) concur that education and infrastructure are prominent factors of poverty in rural areas that in most instances tends to intersect as the reason for poverty amongst women. Female children are sometimes forced to abandon school at an early age to assume household duties, as mentioned in Section 5.3.2.1. The lack of education is evidently an identified factor of poverty, that could confirm the relationship between the rural areas and poverty amongst women in the North West Province. Furthermore, the relationship between rural areas and poverty is demonstrated by the domestic responsibilities that takes up most of the women's time and assigned solely to women, especially in the rural areas (Dutta, 2016:87; Connelly & Kongar, 2017:12; Despotovic, Joksimovic & Jovanovic, 2019:93). It must be borne in mind that a woman's domestic responsibilities carry no salary (Zwane,

2018:62), as alluded to in several instances (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1; Chapter 4, Section 4.4.5.1.1; and Section 5.3.1.1.3.1).

Since the inception of the homelands during the apartheid era, (which in the post-1994 dispensation constitute mostly rural areas), it is not surprising that most rural areas are degraded and occasionally operate under traditional leadership, underpinned by cultural and traditional principles. Moreover, land ownership amongst women is still a challenge (Thobejane & Nyathi, 2018:11500; Gouws, 2019:449; Khuzwayo, Chipungu, Magidimisha & Lewis, 2019:38). However, in the 2019 Women's Day address, the President stated that the national land reform programme should ensure that discrimination against women is corrected, and that women should be afforded the same right as men to access land (Ramaphosa, 2019:4). The patriarchal tendencies, under the guise of tradition and culture, elucidated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4, deprive women of social and economic opportunities (Nkala, Baloyi & Khumalolo, 2018:3) and keep them suppressed, denied of opportunities, as well as powerless and poor (Enyew & Mihrete, 2018:60; Thaba-Nkadimene *et al.*, 2019:85). Tradition and culture confirm the relationship between rural areas and poverty amongst women in the North West Province.

As alluded to, women in the rural areas are generally unskilled and find difficulty in securing employment or to work the land should it be availed to them (Thaba-Nkadimene *et al.*, 2019:78) (see Section 5.3.1.1.1.1). The lack of skills exacerbates the poverty of women residing in rural areas. In Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2 and 2.5.3, it was stated that economic growth, in most instances, eludes the poor and benefits the rich, since some of the factors that cause poverty is common amongst women in the rural areas such as the lack of education, illiteracy, and lack of skills (see Section 5.3.1.1.1.1). Furthermore, the lack of opportunities (see Section 5.3.1.1.2.1) is a factor that excludes women from economic activities and results in poverty. In addition, the spatial segregation of rural areas results in low economic activity (see Section 5.3.1.1.6.1) and is demonstrated by the distance and expenses that residents need to incur to travel within and between the rural areas and shopping malls where economic activities are prevalent (Kwenda *et al.*, 2020:6).

Women constitute 70% of the world's poor, as alluded to in Chapter 2, Section 2.4. The three dimensions of poverty, illustrated in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1, and highlighted in this chapter are the general lack of education among women in the rural areas; poor health; and a poor standard of living. Consequently, these circumstances are substantiated between rural areas and poverty among women in the North West Province. The deprivation alluded to in Section 5.2.2.1, and Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1, classifies these circumstances as absolute poverty because the inhabitants can only afford the bare minimum.

It is improbable to conclusively state that women are lazy, as postulated by a respondent, since women operate in a hostile environment, also explicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3. This view is complemented by Son (2017:2) who rejects laziness as a reason for poverty. Secondly, as stated in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3, women are denied opportunities to develop themselves and most of their time is assigned to a myriad of intensive household responsibilities that do not generate income, as alluded to in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3.1 and Section 4.5.1.1. However, women demonstrate commitment towards their domestic duties (Kapur, 2019:10; Kaplan *et al.*, 2020:17), especially those in the poor rural areas. The perception that women is lazy implies that they experience poverty as an error of their own and their failure to act against it. This view is expressed through Individualistic Theory, postulating that poverty is caused by individual deficiencies and the lack of a concerted effort to overcome poverty (Kura *et al.*, 2020:49). As presented in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3, for political conservatives, poverty is self-inflicting and characterised by laziness and a lack of intellectual capacity which impedes the ability to make correct choices; hence, perpetuating a life of poverty (Bradshaw, 2007:6). However, Zwolinski (2015:10) highlights that the inception of poverty is sometimes attributed to the situation beyond people's control. It is, however, acknowledged in this chapter that poverty could, in some instances, also be attributed to bad choices and reckless behaviour. Brand, De Beer, De Villiers, and Van Marle (2013:273-274) contend that "what determines access to basic resources, that can assist in poverty alleviation, is economic and political power; any response to poverty must therefore engage power". It is necessary to reiterate, as argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3, that the inception of poverty is not solely individually based, since access to economic and political power depends on the government creating a conducive environment for every person to participate fairly and equally. It appears

that strong intellectual abilities, capacity, and skills are worthless if the playing field is skewed.

According to the study of Savadogo, Souarès, Sié, Parmar, Bibeau and Sauerborn (2015:4), “poverty is scarcity of basic needs, vulnerability, deprivation of capacities, powerlessness, voicelessness, indecent living conditions, and absence of social capital and community networks for support in times of need”. Women in rural areas are exposed to all the abovementioned factors and daily shoulder the burden of poverty. Consequently, the relationship between rural areas and poverty is prevalent amongst women in the North West Province and displayed by the lack of development that is promoted by the multi-dimensional socio-economic factors. As presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.7, there are those who cannot access education because of cultural and traditional beliefs. The Adult Basic Education and Training, 2000, should assist women in this regard to correct these social injustices. Relevant to the discrimination experienced by women regarding the lack of opportunities, compared to men, Radical Feminist Theory holds that women must confront patriarchy and change the traditional dictates of insubordination and prioritise their own development over and above the historic system of the family.

5.3.4. Question four: What are the socio-economic results of poverty among women in the North West Province?

This question endeavoured to establish the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province and reveal the effects it has on women, to understand and provide guidance to alleviate poverty and enhance their socio-economic circumstances.

5.3.4.1. Feedback summary: Question four

An interviewee declared the following when asked about the socio-economic outcomes of poverty:

> *“Women daily see poverty, and they smell it every day, they share the little they have. Even if men see it, they shut it off, if a man earns hundred*

rand and knows that it is not enough, he gives it to her, and the women is the one facing it. With the little money given to them it makes them to fall deeper into poverty."

It was asserted by two interviewees that poverty is harsher in rural areas which, in most instances, affects women who have a social and economic responsibility towards a very large family, leaving them unable to support their families. A participant held that women are unable to provide housing for their children; they live in shacks with no access to basics needs, clothing and food for their children.

The interviewees (71%) further suggested that the socio-economic consequences of poverty amongst women reflects their vulnerability to the social ills. Women tend to resort to selling themselves for financial gain and accept anything that will earn them a sum of money, even engaging in unprotected sex. Furthermore, women subject themselves to abusive marriages and agree to be a second wife while others settle for surrogacy for financial benefits. A respondent held that the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province is prevalent amongst female children who utilise any means to fend for themselves – young girls leave school early, that is, before the official knock-off time and utilise the free time to engage in sexual relationships with older men. In a prior section of this chapter, it was asserted that young girls fall pregnant, give birth, leave the new-born with their grandparents, and move to, for instance, Johannesburg in pursuit of a better life and opportunities. Regarding the incidence of teenage pregnancies as a socio-economic outcome of poverty, the RLM was utilised as a case to establish the large number of teenage pregnancies which force girls to leave school and thereby contribute towards the moral degeneration of the community. The moral teachings that were previously anchored on religious education is no longer part of the school's curriculum because learners follow a multiplicity of religions.

It was mentioned that young children go through multiple pregnancies to acquire higher child support grant. They become dependent on the government social grant that eventually becomes their sole monthly income.

It was also mentioned that the socio-economic outcome of poverty is detected in gender discrimination because of a lack of funds, land, and a deprivation of fair opportunities for women. Furthermore, poverty marginalises women; erodes their confidence; and instils self-doubt. An interviewee stated that, due to poverty, women have trouble to acquire a job in the construction industry because men tend to avoid them; are impatient with them; and doubt their capabilities to deliver. It was mentioned that the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province emanate from the home. An interviewee affirmed that the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province is illustrated in the government's appointments of the executive and at the SMS level. Most institutions' top structures comprise primarily of males who make decisions.

It was also revealed that the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province is evident because they rely on social events such as weddings and funerals to acquire food handouts while others resort to open a street vendor business. It was also stated that crime is part of the socio-economic outcome of poverty amongst women in the North West Province. Hunger, due to poverty, often culminates in theft to survive. This could be a by-product of the lack of empowerment, education, and awareness.

5.3.4.2. Researcher's interpretation: Question four

The notions on the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province, as expressed by the interviewees, include the causes and factors of poverty identified in Section 5.3.1.1. The causes of poverty were discussed in detail in Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.2, 4.4.2.3 and 4.4.3.1.

Social Exclusion Theory (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1) shows that social exclusion does not exclusively cover the economic section of life, but other substantive facets that promote inequality and are political and cultural in nature (Levitas *et al*., 2007:9). The factors could either be individual in nature or embedded in institutions. Consequently, these factors contribute towards the exclusion of women from the socio-economic environment. As already established, social exclusion and poverty are interdependent since both are identified by social or economic marginalisation and

share the same factor of exclusion which deprives people from socio-economic participation, irrespective of whether they are interested in participation or not (Levitas *et al.*, 2007:20).

As illustrated in Chapter 4, Table 4.2, several citizens in the North West Province still reside in traditional and informal dwellings due to poverty; and women's domestic responsibilities are more difficult to execute because of the lack of infrastructure in the rural areas (Lazarte, 2017:3). It was explained in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.5, and also stated in Section 5.2.1.1.6.1, that this situation indirectly forms part of the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province. The socio-economic results of poverty are hard to overcome and complex for women in the rural areas who find themselves in a patriarchal culture that considers them as subservient to men; and forces them to succumb to oppressive cultural and traditional expectations (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5 and Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.2). This is confirmation that in certain traditional or informal settlements, the areas of concern highlighted by Radical Feminist Theory (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.1) are still prevalent.

The socio-economic results of poverty encapsulate discrimination (Peterman, 2018:1288) and originates from within the family, extends externally in the community and resonate more amongst women (Lesetedi, 2018:206). Girls, and not boys, perform domestic work early in life, as reported in Section 5.3.1.1.3.2 and Section 5.3.4.1. In the work environment it is evident that men occupy a high number of leadership positions (Player, De Moura, Leite, Abrams & Tresh, 2019:3; Siemiatycki, 2019:393). The recruitment process guides the appointment for any advertised position including senior managers, while all such positions use a set of requirements to fill the vacancy (Azmy, 2018:13). The human resource policies dictate that positions must be filled by capable persons who have the capacity to deliver on the set strategic objectives (Vitanski, 2019:345). Due to the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province, they tend to fail to meet the necessary requirements to occupy a senior position because they are generally unqualified due to the lack of education, skills, and illiteracy (Section 5.3.1.1.1.1). Therefore, they fail to acquire the capacity which would make them eligible to apply and be appointed in the advertised senior positions.

In certain instances, women are forced to resort to making degrading and inhumane choices due to the increased level of unemployment and lack of opportunities (see Section 5.3.1.1.2.1). This has a clear and direct effect as well as inextricably contributes towards the cause and the effect of increased poverty (Ndaguba & Hanyane, 2019:10). In contrast, the Department of Women's mandate is to ensure the realisation of socio-economic empowerment of women and gender equality (DWYPD, 2022:10), as outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.13. The socio-economic outcomes of poverty are diverse and in certain instances intertwined (Benkhaled, 2019:67).

Poverty also results in teenage girls' transactional relationships with older men for survival (Mampane, 2018:2; Tau, 2019) and often their behaviour is risky because they are forced to engage in unprotected sex. Consequently, HIV and AIDS can be contracted. This irrational behaviour results in dropping out of school due to an unwanted pregnancy (Raymond & Lesego, 2017:465; Odeyemi, Samuel, Ndege, Mutambayi, Azeez & Oyelana 2018:2). Moreover, they possess a low level of education as stated in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1.2, and supported by Kassa, Arowojolu, Odukogbe and Yalew (2018:14).

Teenage pregnancy could form part of the socio-economic outcomes of poverty amongst women in the North West Province. Sychareun *et al.* (2018:5) argue that teenagers who drop out of school early forfeit future socio-economic opportunities which are meant to improve their lives. Pregnancy is a health challenging process and worse for most of the young girls who live in rural areas and grow up in poverty (UN Women, 2019:8). Consequently, they are dependent on free health services availed in the health facility in every district municipality (refer to Chapter 4, Table 4.1). However, the social dynamics such as spatial segregation, outlined in Section 5.3.1.1.6.1, confirmed that not everybody resides close to a health facility. It was confirmed in Chapter 4, Section, 4.4.2.6 that some people require transport to access the health care facility. These people are poor and unable to afford transport; notwithstanding the bad inaccessible roads in the rural areas (Caldwell, Ford, Wallace, Wang & Takahashi, 2016:3), as explained in Chapter 4, Section, 4.4.2.9. This could be a contributory factor why the community's health satisfaction rate seldom reaches 50%, as reflected in Chapter 4, Section, 4.2.1.3.

The low levels of income discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1.4.2; unemployment illustrated in Chapter 4, Figure 4.2 and 4.3; and the listed factors associated with poverty (Section 5.2.1.1) illustrate the socio-economic results of poverty and the persistent challenges related to social factors, reviewed in Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.2, 4.4.2.3 and 4.4.2.4; persistent economic challenges, mentioned in Chapters 4, sections 4.4.3.1 and 4.4.3.2; triple challenge of race, gender and class faced by black women, explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4; as well as the geographical layout of rural areas (Section 5.3.1.1.6.1), presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.3. All of the above-mentioned factors intensify poverty and illustrate the socio-economic results thereof amongst women in the North West Province. It is evident that poverty emanates from a multiplicity of factors and therefore requires a multi-dimensional approach.

Irrespective of the social grant that benefits approximately 1,224,919 people, as asserted in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1.4.3, and supplemented by legislation and policies formulated to alleviate poverty amongst women, as articulated in Chapter 3, Section 3.6, as well as the South African statutory and regulatory instruments to empower women, presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.6, the socio-economic results of poverty amongst women in the North West Province is indicative of the prevalent poverty including the variety of associated factors, revealed in Section 5.3.1.1.

5.3.5. Question five: Which legislation and/or policy are in place to alleviate poverty among women and how successful are they?

The question endeavoured to establish whether there is legislation and/or policies to alleviate poverty amongst women and determine the successes or failures and hence, express reasons.

5.3.5.1. Feedback summary: Question five

It was mentioned that the Constitution, 1996, informs all the policies, and the Bill of Rights demands access to basic services. Furthermore, the interviewees mentioned that several policies provide measures and mechanisms for social welfare, including the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000, and

the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013. The interviewees also referred to the NDP (RSA, 2011) that outlines efforts to alleviate poverty and promote equality by 2030. The South African School Act, 1996, pertaining to education provision was also mentioned. An interviewee stated that legislation and policies are broad and non-discriminatory such as the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Act, 2004, that targets everybody eligible for a social grant. Another participant mentioned that the fundamental priority of the DREAD's food security policy is food production; its implementation promotes integration with other relevant departments providing for various mandates; its partnership with the Department of Health ensures that food given to the community has proper nutritional value, whilst the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme provide social assistance, identifies poverty-stricken families and those who qualify for social assistance.

Another respondent stated that the school policy provides for scholars' transport and food nutrition schemes; while another stated that, after a pregnant learner gives birth, she is allowed to return to school. However, the teachers are unprepared for the return of the teenage mother and are not capacitated to manage such situations. Furthermore, teachers are expected to cater for the psychological state of the teenage mother who had just given birth. The school does not make provision for the newborn baby who is left at home in the care of parents or grandparents who must face the burden to access Early Childhood Development (ECD) for the baby. This indirectly places pressure on the school-going teenage mother with the father being unaffected.

An interviewee stated that policies exist, but achievement of the set objectives is slow. Implementation appears easier than it is. Another respondent said that policies are successful to some extent. She claimed that an impact is made depending on how these policies are implemented. Another participant reported that policy resources are not available. She stated that legislation with good intentions is in place, but the lack of resources and skills impedes the implementation process. Furthermore, the lack of willingness amongst both officials and recipients is another policy implementation challenge and results in its failure. An interviewee stated that the administrators who administer these policies are not implementing these effectively, because the policies have not achieved the intended objectives. For example, the Agrarian allocation of

farms did not benefit the targeted group because those in charge failed to execute their responsibilities properly.

A respondent said that policies are in place, however, people do not have the skills to implement and render these unsuccessful. Furthermore, the government prioritises women but progress in this area is slow, because they are largely inactive in economic activities. One interviewee stated that:

> "*We have the likes of BBBEEE where women receive special points, and affirmative action, yet women are still poor."*

Another said that most policies, for example, the Beijing Platform of Action, 1995, provides women the rights but does not alleviate poverty; they do not prioritise women; merely provide statistics; and are not enforced. Furthermore, the interviewees also referred to the fact that the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, 2012, is not reaching its objectives. One interviewee stated that, *the question is that, if it is difficult to implement the gender equality policy in government departments, how can it be possible to achieve equality through the policy implementation process for the community?*

Furthermore, the participants indicated that, in certain instances, officials are deceitful. They register 'non-existent' recipients for the monthly grant. An interviewee alleged that the social grant system creates dependency and argued that it is better to educate people instead. Girls who have one child should be identified and enrolled in the school before they bear another child. It was mentioned that a child grant creates a situation where women deliberately fall pregnant to increase their child support grant. A respondent stated that if grant money is converted into skills development programmes, people could become independent, because currently, social grants have resulted in dependency due to the millions of Rand directed to the community. Furthermore, the interviewees opined that the SASSA grant programme is not benefiting the community as envisaged and is not linked to the principle of development.

It was mentioned that the recipients are kept in the grant system instead of developing their skills or establish projects for them to create an avenue or a withdrawal plan that would reduce the number of grant recipients. It was suggested that if the RLM receives approximately R11 million in grant money per month, it would benefit women if they possessed skills and strategies to tap into the grant funds and alleviate poverty. Unfortunately, the money is directed at big businesses. It was also reported that, if R7m of the grant is monthly paid to a local municipality, it would merely enrich a few, for example, the "Mashononisa"[6] and in most instances the status of the majority, particularly women remain unaffected.

5.3.5.2. Researcher's interpretation: Question five

The government has implemented legislation and policies to alleviate poverty amongst women, although these remain ineffective (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018:119). The Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996) was prioritised by the interviewees as the most relevant to the poverty alleviation of women. It was highlighted in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1 that all legislation and policies are aligned to sections of the Bill of Rights, for example, legislation and policies pertaining to equality, access to education, housing, and water, to name a few, which all contain significant elements to alleviate poverty. Legislation that acknowledges the significance to empower women and subsequently alleviate poverty amongst women is prevalent at various levels: relevant international regulatory legislation and policies (Chapter 3, Section 3.2); foreign aid (Chapter 3, Section 3.3); continental legislation, policies to alleviate poverty amongst women (Chapter 3, Section 3.4); and national tools presented under the South African statutory and regulatory framework to alleviate poverty and empower women (Chapter 3, Sections 3.6 and Section 3.7 respectively).

The international statutory regulatory legislation directs funds towards the alleviation of poverty and acknowledges the plight amongst women in Africa. Hence, policies have been formulated to support the alleviation of poverty amongst African women,

[6] Mashonisa is a money laundering scheme because its operations are illegal and fail to observe the prescripts of the National Credit Act, 2005.

presented in Chapter 3 under the USA (Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.1); the EU (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2); the UK (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.1); and France (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.2). However, despite the promulgation of multiple legislation and policies, the success to alleviate poverty amongst women is slow and if there is any registered progress, it has not been fully realised (Connelly & Kongar, 2017:11). The Continental Constitutive Act, 2000, of the AU promotes social and economic emancipation for all AU members, as alluded to in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, while the Constitution, 1996, underpins all South African legislation and policies, including those that address the alleviation of poverty amongst women, as articulated in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1.

As asserted in Section 5.3.5.1, the BBBEE Act, 2013, the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, 1995; and Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, 2012, are sound on paper but failed during the implementation phase (Gyimah-Brempong & UN, 2007:17). Roodt (2018:12) describes one of the policies that was implemented to address poverty as: “BEE as it is currently constituted has failed ordinary South Africans”. Despite the legislation and policies, women continue to experience multiple challenges because of poverty, as discussed in Chapter 4 (Sections 4.4.2.1), including social justice (Section 4.4.2.4); tradition and culture (Section 4.4.2.5); poorly located and inadequate infrastructure (Section 4.4.2.5); and a high unemployment rate (Section 4.4.3.1). Furthermore, as argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1, political and cultural exclusion are other extenuating factors that affect women and defeat the objectives of the policies. However, departments ought to supplement each other and work together to address the identified factors which contributes towards poverty amongst women to address the dimensions of poverty as identified in their mission statements (refer to Table 5.1 below). Government departments are clustered in accordance with their mandates to ensure proper coordination of service delivery (RSA, 2020b).

Table 5.1: Departmental mission statements

Department	Mission	Poverty Dimension
Education	"To protect and promote the right of every LEARNER to quality, equitable, culture-based, and complete basic education where: Teachers facilitate learning and constantly nurture every learner…" Department of Education (NWP, 2019:5).	Education
Department of Health	"To render accessible, equitable and integrated quality health" (RSA, 2019b:5)	Health
Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development	"Work together with our partners to provide sustainable agricultural, environmental management and comprehensive integrated rural development" (Department of Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development (NWP, 2018:554).	
Department of Social Development	"To create a caring and self-reliant society by building conscious and capable citizens through the provision of integrated social development services" (Department of Social Development (NWP), 2017:17)	Standard of living

(**Source:** Researcher's own)

Government poverty alleviation policies are designed to target the causes of poverty, for example, generating income opportunities and availing basic services to all citizens (Pettinger, 2019), as well as taking cognisance of and prioritise factors to formulate policy (Sauer, 2018:11). Table 5.1 above illustrates the identified departments that address the components of poverty to promote the alleviation of poverty of women in the North West Province. Their mission is derived from relevant policies. It is argued that these departments should support each other and collaborate to alleviate poverty to ensure that the socio-economic barriers that affect women are abolished through the implementation of relevant policies. The Department of Health works towards enhancing the health of the community while the DREAD is open to partnership with other departments.

Wang *et al*. (2019:16) posit that regardless of the three dimensions of poverty, illustrated in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1, the level of suffering within the same marginalised group differs, that is, certain groups suffer more due to alternative factors (Chimakonam, 2019:141) (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4). Therefore, programmes as directed by legislation and policies cannot be a one-size-fits-all since it might fail to achieve the set objectives and minimise the efforts of poverty alleviation policies, as explicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.5. For successful implementation, legislation and policies should address a specific problem (Howes, Wortley, Potts, Dedekorkut-Howes, Serrao-Neumann, Davidson & Nunn, 2017:11). Furthermore, the IPPF (2017:5) states that inequality is not homogenous because not all are affected in the same manner. According to Corus, Saatcioglu, Kaufman-Scarborough, Blocker, Upadhyaya and Appau (2016:218); and the Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2019:13), policies that target the disadvantaged tend to fail some of the beneficiaries who experience multi-dimensional poverty. Amongst women, the latter could emanate from the multiple experienced poverty factors, for example, lack of education and skills, and illiteracy (Section 5.3.1.1.1.1); unemployment and lack of opportunities (Section 5.2.1.1.2.1); household responsibilities (Section 5.3.1.1.3.1); gender discrimination (Section 5.2.1.1.4.1); lack of financial power (Section 5.3.1.1.5.1); spatial segregation and rural areas (Section 5.2.1.1.6.1); substance abuse (Section 5.3.1.1.7.1); and the high rate of child bearing (Section 5.3.1.1.8.1).

In implementing policies, further delineation within the marginalised group to alleviate poverty might be crucial. For example, a strategy like India's positive discrimination to improve the socio- economic status of women (Bhat & Deshpande, 2019:19) which is a deliberate strategy to further segregate the marginalised group and pay more attention to the most marginalised (Vitanski, 2019:348), could be implemented. Government policies and programmes are well-constructed to enhance the lives of the people but fail because the implementation phase is impeded by various factors to achieve the government goals (Ajulor, 2018:1502).

As mentioned in Section 5.2.5.1, legislation and policies exist in small pockets and should be consolidated; provide focus, as well as streamlined for proper coordination and successful implementation. The constitutional and developmental rights directed through Section 29, Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996, mandates that all citizens

have the right to basic education, including adult basic education and further education. Thus, the South African School Act 84 of 1996 (Chapter 3, Section 3.6.3) seeks to ensure that education is uniform and accessible for the entire populace. However, the Act does not make provision for the teenage mother's baby once the mother gives birth after being pregnant. As stated in Section 5.3.5.1, the newborn is placed at the ECD facility which is detached from the school. Placing ECD within the school could have the potential of improving the performance of the mother at school. The mother will be stress free during class knowing that the baby is well cared for and in the same vicinity.

If the food security policy is implemented whilst the beneficiaries, for instance, do not have water, electricity, reside in a shack, and cannot afford to take the children to school, it is highly likely that the effort is unsuccessful; because only one poverty dimension is addressed by one policy while the others are implemented at a later stage (Burchi *et al.*, 2019:1). Therefore, addressing one poverty factor does not alleviate poverty since other poverty enhancing factors are still in existence. Another example is shared in Section 5.2.5.1, explaining that a teenage mother was given the opportunity to resume schooling, but the school environment was not conducive for her emotional and psychological state (Karimi, 2015:40). Thus, the policy to accept the child to continue her schooling must be reviewed and amended. In certain instances, policies fail to address the root cause of the problem; however, this was never mentioned by any of the interviewees (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4). Therefore, it could be argued that formulated legislation and policies are in place to alleviate poverty amongst women but should be properly aligned through an implementation framework that could address all the poverty enhancing factors affecting women.

Women ought to be recognised as the key stakeholders in policies. Moreover, women should perform a participatory role to ensure the successful implementation thereof (Plagerson & Mthembu, 2019:70). The participation of women in the policy implementation phase is fundamental because they possess the living experience of poverty (Banerjee, 2017:64; Hudson *et al.*, 2019:7; Thaba-Nkadimene *et al.*, 2019:71). It can be assumed that they are committed to ensure that policies succeed for their own benefit. A participant stated that the failure of a policy could be apportioned to the implementation phase which resides with both incompetent officials and the targeted

policy beneficiaries. For example, Tapscott (2017:73); and Zwane (2018:52) state that RDP houses is a good policy targeted to serve the previously disadvantaged, as reflected in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4; as well as build houses for persons who earn less than R3 500 (Amoah, Kajimo-Shakantu & Van Shalkwyk, 2019:1). However, in certain instances after the poor are allocated ownership of the RDP houses, they rent these and return to their original shelter or sell the house (Mashwama, Thwala & Aigbavboa, 2018:1699). Conversely, the programme revealed corruption (Manomano, 2019:71). Selected government officials accepted bribes and manipulated the allocation processes and procedures to acquire an RDP house (Rich, 2017:376). Corruption undermines the allocation procedures and renders the legislation and/or policy to alleviate poverty amongst women as a failure.

Another example is that SASSA's social grant policy is sound, aimed to alleviate poverty (ASSAF, 2016:66; Nehring *et al.*, 2019:39; Salahuddin, Vink, Ralph & Gow, 2019:2) and the programme forms part of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme's mandate that is responsible for the implementation thereof (Muzamhindo, 2016:53). However, it is believed that the programme lacks efficiency because of fraudulent activities amongst the officials (Vally, 2016:975). A respondent held that the human element creeps in and unethical practises destroy the policy objectives (Muzamhindo, 2016:56). Makinde (2017:15) concurs that this behaviour demonstrates ethical violation that inhibits effective policy implementation. The irregular disbursement of grants demonstrates the lack of commitment by SASSA officials and compromises the effectivity of the policy (Nombembe, 2019:2) (see Section 5.3.5.1). Therefore, despite legislation and policies to support women, as explained in detail in Chapter 3, Sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6; ineffective policy implementation persists. It can be inferred that the implementation phase as stated in Section 5.2.5.1, inhibits the legislation and/or policy to alleviate poverty amongst women.

5.3.6. Question six: Which poverty alleviation strategies are in place in the Province/District and how successful are they?

This question endeavoured to establish whether poverty alleviation strategies have been implemented in the Province/District and the level of success to achieve the set

objectives, with women as the primary focus. Effort is also made to determine whether the policies require improvement if ineffective.

5.3.6.1. Feedback summary: Question six

It has been mentioned that the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is a good strategy to enhance poverty alleviation. Employees in the programme are paid a stipend. The programme targets women and youth, with each intake being a step towards observing the stipulated 55% allocation to females. The programme reduces the number of unemployed who tend to loiter as well as inhibit crime. An interviewee reported that in Vryburg, people who were perceived as thugs were employed in this programme and subsequently the area noticed a decrease in petty criminal activities. Another stated that the results of the EPWP reflected an immediate relief of small basic needs; however, poverty alleviation is a long-term strategy in a form of full-time employment and not a one-or two-year stipend contractual one. The wealthy perceive this stipend as insignificant, while the poor appreciate it because it makes a difference in their lives.

The Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) in the form of food security programme is a poverty alleviation strategy of the DREAD. The food security strategy is two-fold: firstly, it is a short-term food security strategy. A household is allocated 10 goats, a boar and indigenous chickens which lay eggs; and secondly, as a long-term strategy, fallow land is brought back into production with the focus on crops, sunflowers, and maize farming. The National Department of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry is the primary funder of the project which is also supplemented by the provincial departments. The CASP is a partner in this strategy because it profiles families to identify those who are destitute.

Competition is another strategy used to alleviate poverty. The Department of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry's Female Entrepreneur competition helps women to grow from subsistence farming into mainstream farming. The Female Farmers Awards Investors Seminar are arranged to train and empower female farmers. During the training they interact and learn from each other. It was stated that the Women in Agriculture Rural Development (WARP) project is implemented from the district level

and culminates at the national sphere to acknowledge and streamline female farmers. It was also mentioned that family mentorship programmes should be advocated; while ageing farmers should be encouraged to inspire and systematically introduce their daughters to manage the business with a view to ultimately take over. Furthermore, the district identifies and supports young women between the ages of 20 – 21 years and trains them to become farmers.

The CASP encourages women to register Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) since it would qualify them to access a stipend and empowerment programmes. It was highlighted that cooperatives such as the vegetable production is also a strategy used to alleviate poverty that differs from the NGOs because it generates a profit. The CASP's core mandate is not food production but partnership with the DREAD that has the requisite vegetable production skills to sustain the project. It was also asserted that cooperatives have the potential to grow into small businesses but find it difficult to penetrate the market because they must compete with big farmers. Furthermore, social cooperative entrepreneurship development in the district is a business venture/strategy that underscores the empowerment of women and, in certain instances, starts a *stokvel*[7]. For example, it starts an income generating project by manufacturing uniforms. Unfortunately, cooperatives are disregarded when big tenders are advertised, and established businesses are prioritised. Hence, female cooperatives are ignored, disempowered, resulting in a failure to grow.

The Social Relief of Distress (SRD) is another strategy for food production. The Community Nutrition and Development/Distribution Centres (CNDC) operate as soup kitchens. However, these are not only used to feed the poor but to also incorporate women empowerment programmes and survival skills such as sewing. For example, SASSA contracted a sewing cooperative to produce school uniforms that was distributed for social relief. The CASP, in consultation with the local municipality, develops an indigent register and profiles and assesses a family. The register is used

[7] A group of people making a monthly contribution of a certain amount; part of it is saved and shared equally amongst the members of the group at the end of the year but occasionally a portion of it is given to individual members on a rotational basis (NASASA, 2020; Masoga & Shokane, 2019:3).

to recommend food parcels for poor families and in case of a death in an indigent household, the family is assisted to arrange the funeral. Furthermore, the local municipality provides free basic services such as electricity, water and sanitation that assists but does not serve the purpose effectively because the provision is at the minimum level. It was reported that the provision of a grant at a basic level such as child, old age, foster care, vulnerability and disability, is also a strategy to alleviate poverty.

The South African Women in Construction (SAWIC) is a national project and mandates that women be allocated work in construction projects. The SAWIC is represented in all provinces and acquires an allocation to up-skill women in construction. An incubation programme of professional consultants is appointed to guide and empower women through courses such as project management and work on a construction site.

5.3.6.2. Researcher's interpretation: Question six

Several poverty alleviation strategies are directed specifically towards women as mentioned in Section 5.3.6.1, but the level of success is unsatisfactory. The EPWP is a national poverty alleviation strategy, implemented provincially and executed in all the four districts of the North West Province. It appears to alleviate poverty, as articulated in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3.1. The EPWP's recruitment process underscores the appointment of women followed by youth and the physically challenged (Department of Public Works & Infrastructure, 2021:7). The CASP is one of several strategy's that the DREAD utilises to alleviate poverty. It appears to be efficient because it enhances the lives of the farmers' infrastructure and livestock. However, in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries presentation, there was no specific mention of dedicated funds allocated to the poverty alleviation programmes for women (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2019:34). Women were coupled with other groups which is part of the broader target group (Joala, 2018:25).

It was highlighted in Section 5.3.6.1, that competitions are arranged exclusively for women, for example, the WARP that caters only for women and is directed towards their empowerment which takes a form of a poverty alleviation strategy (Nadim &

Nurlukman, 2018:155). For these types of competitions to benefit women, the qualifying criteria should be strictly based on gender and should not target all the marginalised groups (Anderson, Reynolds, Biscaye, Patwardhan & Schmidt, 2021:194; Women's Economic Empowerment, s.a). Both age and gender are the qualifying criteria used to recruit young female farmers to join mainstream farming. This process illustrates the characteristics to empower women and alleviate poverty.

The government's operations are based on the Constitution, 1996 and dictates that all "citizens are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship" (RSA,1996:3). Prioritising marginalised groups to alleviate poverty is a strategy to fast-track poverty (ASSAF, 2016:44; Ramaphosa, 2020a). The strategies to prioritise women was highlighted in Section 5.3.6.1. The SAWIC protects and support women by setting a gender target to build houses. The CASP encourages women to establish NPO's and NGO's. The social grant programme also caters for every person and does not only prioritise women, as stated in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1.4.3. In implementing the approved IDP strategy in the RLM and the GTLM, the programmes to alleviate poverty amongst women is secondary and not prioritised, as stated in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.2.

The 2018-2019 Consolidated General Report on Local Government Audit Outcome confirmed that policies and strategies are not implemented as envisaged. The two municipalities which were identified as experiencing extreme poverty in the province (refer to Chapter 4, Figure 4.2; and Figure 4.3) continues to receive poor audit outcomes. The RLM received a disclaimer with findings and the GTLM audit could not be finalised as stipulated in the legislation (RSA, 2018i:122). Lefuwa (2017:44) concluded that, like policies, the problem associated with strategies to achieve its goal is embedded in its implementation. However, failure to implement strategies does not only reside with the government (see Section 5.2.6.1). The community is also an enabler of the poverty alleviation strategy process which could also result in its failure, for example, the delivery of RDP houses (see Section 5.3.5.2). Furthermore, as stated in Section 5.3.6.1, established businesses tend to compete with small businesses instead of complementing them to ensure the cooperatives sustainability as envisaged to alleviate poverty (Mitchell, 2016:13). Well-coordinated strategies have the potential to alleviate poverty, explained in detail in Section 5.3.6.1, while it was acknowledged

in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.4 that partnerships among women themselves could be a strategy to alleviate poverty.

As argued in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, women are generally poor and as such must be regarded as key strategic partners in the poverty alleviation process. Nkemnyi, Fombu, Kwobenyi and Mumbang (2017:231) posit that poverty alleviation strategies are dependent on a multiplicity of role players including women who are afforded ownership and accountability because of their lifelong experience of poverty, as expounded upon in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.4. Furthermore, to ensure that empowerment prevails amongst women, as stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1. It could be assumed that, for the success of efficient poverty alleviation strategies in the Province/District, the marginalised population should be differentiated to avoid weakening the significance assigned to alleviate poverty, as mentioned in Section 5.2.5.2.

An interviewee mentioned that the war rooms and *Setsokotsane* projects cannot be referred to as poverty alleviation strategies but should be perceived as coordinating programmes. These are mechanisms that endeavour to streamline programmes but are separately developed and initiated by independent departments to deliver on their mandates. As confirmed in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.1, the primary objective of *Setsokotsane* is to make services more accessible to citizens. The departments come together under one roof and deliver separate programmes but not specifically to alleviate poverty amongst women.

It was established in this section that poverty alleviation strategies are in place in the Province/District and challenges that disrupt the success was also expressed. The focus need not be placed on the development of strategies since it is evidenced above that the Province and districts do not have a shortage of strategies to alleviate poverty. The focus should therefore rather be place on the implementation of strategies.

5.3.7. Question seven: Are any of the following poverty alleviation strategies applied to alleviate poverty among women in the North West Province?

- **Micro-financing**

- **Education to teach women who live in poverty to save**
- **Inclusive development for economic growth**
- **Self-help group strategy**

The question endeavoured to establish if any of the above-mentioned poverty alleviation strategies for women in the North West Province is applied.

5.3.7.1. Feedback summary: Question seven

The interviewees (72%) responded positively to the question. However, different terms were used when addressing micro-financing but with the same meaning attached to it.

- **Micro-financing**

A respondent held that bank loans is a form of micro-financing, over and above a national programme called NURTURE. Through NURTURE an institution enters into a cession agreement with the building contractors before it lends the money. The contractor does not receive start-up cash or capital to buy supplies but provides a list of the required building material and submits it to the institution. The material is purchased as per the request and delivered to the building site. After the project is completed, the contractor invoices the department for payment, which is made directly to NURTURE's account, that in turn deducts the expenses that was utilised to purchase and deliver the building material to the site. A minimal interest is added, and the remainder paid over to the contractor.

The interviewees opined that CASP operates on a similar basis through the provision of grants. If the grant is approved, the recipients are provided support until they are able to manage their businesses on their own. A participant asserted that funding or start-up funds in the CASP targets registered NPOs and cooperatives. Furthermore, CASP avails funds to manage an early childhood development institution. Older persons and the disability centres also benefit from these funds in the form of *per capita* funding. Payment is made monthly, and the calculation is based on the

attendance of people per day. Furthermore, the funding is availed to those with a common cause. A social club was funded with sewing machines and the material to sew whilst another group established a bead work project.

Micro-financing could therefore take the shape of a normal project driven by a department mandate in collaboration with the organisation's entities of commonalities (NPOs or NGOs). After a project is approved, payment is released in tranches, and based on the progress registered as per the project, assessment is conducted by CASP.

- **Education to teach women who live in poverty to save**

Most of the interviewees (93%) revealed that the saving strategy is non-existent in their departments. An interviewee said that the problem with saving is that people live from hand to mouth and do not have surplus money to save. However, most of them belong to a *stokvel* to which they make a monthly financial contribution and thereby save indirectly.

- **Inclusive development for economic growth**

The response rate was poor with only a 21% response rate from the participants. Those that responded to the questions indicated that government departments advertise various service tenders, open to anybody to apply. The tenders are not specifically directed at women, such as the cleaning and security services open bid in local government. These are open to any person and adjudicated fairly. The winning bidder, through the services they provide, are paid. This payment contributes towards the economic growth since they utilise some of the money to purchase equipment to sustain the business. The winners in the Women in Agriculture Rural Development competitions such as farm workers, subsistence producers, the formal market, and exporters are acknowledged with a cash prize of R125 000 and infrastructure prizes that range from R500 000 – R1M. The prize money is reinvested into their businesses and thereby support economic growth.

- **Self-help group strategy**

A response rate of 64% was noted in this question. One interviewee stated that a group of pensioners started an economic empowerment programme with a life cycle of twelve (12) months from January to December. This initiative originated from a community-based old age service club programme that comprised of a self-help group of thirty (30) people. The project is run in partnership with Age in Action[8] and is utilised to augment the elders' grant that, in most instances, is inadequate to sustain their needs, household requirements and maintain grandchildren (most pensioners in the rural areas are primary caretakers of their grandchildren). The DSD provides a start-up fund of between R20 000 and R50 000 which qualify organised groups to start an income generating project. The pensioners' economic empowerment programme involved the following:

- Buy, sell blankets, and reinvest the money in the service club account.
- Pay the *Mashonisa* debt incurred by members.
- Utilise money in the savings to buy groceries for elders if a need arises before they receive their monthly grant. Members are borrowed money to buy groceries and are not given cash on hand. A grocery list is submitted, and the goods are purchased on their behalf and delivered to them. At the end of the month, they reimburse the club which includes a minimal interest compared to the exorbitant interest they would have accumulated by borrowing from the *Mashonisas*.
- Support family members in bereavement.
- Establish food gardens and a school uniform project and acquire a tender from the Department of Education. The money generated from sewing the uniforms is used for other social and economic needs.
- Composite interest is shared at the end of the year.

[8] "Age in Action" is an NGO formed in 1956 under the banner of the South African Council of the Age and works toward protecting and promoting the wellbeing of the elderly (Webmaster, 2011:1).

The administrator compromised the project by misusing the self-help group's funds and thereby destroyed the self-help group. An interviewee stated that self-help groups, that are formed in response to an advertised funding project, generally fails because their main objective is to access the advertised funds. Furthermore, they lack the financial acumen to sustain the self-help group. On the contrary most existing self-help groups that apply for advertised funds can sustain themselves because they have a clear vision and mission of how to grow their money and sustain the self-help group. For example, a vegetable producer's self-help group secures preferential prices at the markets.

5.3.7.2. Researcher's interpretation: Question seven

It appears that the provincial departments package **micro-financing** differently; however, the financial support is availed by departments. The funding is designed for specific mandates, and terms utilised for micro-financing could be grants or start-up funds. Selected departments use the funds to target NGO's whilst others direct it to projects to generate income for the empowerment of women. However, these funds are all guided towards poverty alleviation (Dessalegn, 2018:11; Afrin & Ahmed, 2019:25; Singh, & Chudasama, 2020:2) since poverty alleviation is part of the mandate and responsibility of the government (ASSAF, 2016:8; Fransman & Yu, 2019:1; Haurovi, 2019:447). Micro-financing as poverty alleviation strategy was reviewed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1 as a process used to uplift the poor through the provision of and access to funding for those whose financial standings made it impossible to acquire money from a bank (Kamaluddin, Hadi, Alam & Adil, 2015:2; Banerjee & Jackson, 2017:6; Sheikh & Zahra, 2020:72; Singh & Prakalpong, 2020: 6731). It was mentioned in Section 5.2.7.1 that micro-financing can be granted in monetary terms or, for example, the procurement of tools for a trade, for instance, a sewing-machine to start such business.

The R50 000.00 allocated as a start-up fund by the DSD could be termed micro-financing since it is used to elevate people from poverty and provide an empowerment opportunity to build financial capacity (Mueller, 2019:2; Ranganathan, Stern, Knight, Muvhango, Molebatsi, Polzer-Ngwato, Lees & Stöckl, 2021:14). If properly managed and implemented, as indicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1, the misuse of funds

mentioned in Section 5.2.7.1, could be avoided. Furthermore, GCBF (2014:75); Kamaluddin, Hadi, Alam and Adil (2015:6); and Miah and Chowdhury (2019:22) posit that beneficiaries need to be trained in micro-financing so that they are aware of how to utilise the funds (Greyling & Rossouw, 2019:13).

The problem with applying for funding as mentioned by an interviewee is that, in most instances, it benefits the same people annually at the expense of the majority. Consistently funding the same people defeats the object of alleviating poverty amongst women. If the same woman or the same group benefits annually, poverty will persist and promote inequality that contributes towards the slow pace of alleviating inequality, as outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1.2. Eradicating inequality is also envisaged in the NDP (RSA, 2011), alluded to in Chapter 2, Section 2.2. The benefits of poverty alleviation programmes elude most women (David, 2019:231).

The following legislation are put in place to alleviate poverty and in particular amongst women, although these fail to achieve the envisaged objectives since the lack of education among women in rural areas make the understanding of the Acts impossible at the worst and challenging at the best: Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 (Chapter 3, Section 3.6.5); Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (Chapter 3); and Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000 (Chapter 3, Section 3.7.1).

All the respondents (100%) agreed that **saving** is not used as a poverty alleviation strategy. Saving tends to be impossible amongst the poor because (James, 2022:212). Cornwall (2017:7) confirms that if women who experience poverty receive money, it is utilised for basic needs and primarily for the bare minimum and immediate necessities, as alluded to in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2. The poor in most instances do not have a disposable income and savings is secondary (Makgele & Chikwekwete, 2019:18). However, *stokvel*, as mentioned in Section 5.2.6.1, could be perceived as an indirect method of saving because each participant makes a monthly financial contribution and enjoys the benefits at the end of the set period (Steinert, Movsisyan, Zenker, Filipiak & Shenderovich, 2016:1; Consult, 2018:5). It should be noted that saving through *stokvel* is made possible by a DSD-funded project.

The role of **inclusive development for economic growth** as a poverty alleviation strategy was not presented convincingly by the participants (Section 5.3.7.1). The pensioners' empowerment group programme contributes towards economic growth since they buy and sell blankets, although on a small scale. Small cooperatives compete with big businesses, and the inclusive development for economic growth amongst women is lacking due to the difficulty to uplift each other and being denied the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the economy, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Sections 2.5.3 (also see Section 5.3.6.1).

It is concurred that the **self-help group strategy** is geared towards a common goal to help each other. This strategy was supported in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.4, because it promotes teamwork and collective effort towards achieving the common goal, which is the alleviation of poverty and economic empowerment, also alluded to in Section 5.3.6.1. Furthermore, Masoga and Shokane (2019:7) agree that the self-help group strategy affords women the opportunity to lend money from the group's savings as demonstrated in the economic empowerment group where members can borrow money, but repayments must be made at the end of the month. Consequently, women do not have to resort to moneylenders to whom they eventually become indebted for life (Thapa, 2021:1405). Furthermore, the self-help group's monthly contribution is a strategy to educate women on the importance of saving (Thapa, 2021:1406).

It is argued that people with the same objective group themselves together for empowerment purposes with the purpose of benefitting all group members and draw strength from each other (Nadim & Nurlukman, 2018:153; Ngomane & Sebola, 2019:131). As an example, albeit not in South Africa, the Major of South Bend Indiana (USA) demonstrated that 1 000 decapitated homes were repaired in 1 000 days after consulting and acquiring a commitment from the community to work as a group towards a common goal (Mercer, 2017:1). In could also be beneficial to assign an official to provide support and monitor a self-help group (Kumar, Raghunathan, Arrieta, Jilani, Chakrabarti, Menon & Quisumbing, 2019:41), which could assist in sustaining the self-help group, as reviewed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.4. On the contrary, an interviewee held that the mentor of the self-help group could sometimes be the downfall of the project because fraudulent activities are generally prevalent where money is involved (Muzamhindo, 2016:22). However, it is difficult to not have a human

element that can provide guidance in this type of self-help group strategy (Mueller, 2019:6).

Based on the above, some of the identified poverty alleviation strategies are embedded in government programmes but emerge as a by-product of the primary programme. The financial benefits enjoyed by the NGOs from government funding helps them to participate in self-help groups where they organise themselves into *stokvels* and contribute a set a monthly amount towards savings. The money that exchanges hands when they buy and sell goods impacts on the inclusive development of the economic growth although on a very small scale. Therefore, micro-financing, saving, self-help groups and inclusive development for economic growth takes place within the North West Province programmes, to a greater or a lesser degree. It is argued that these strategies, could however be more effectively organise to reap optimal benefits and is therefore included in the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

5.3.8. Question eight: Which strategies can be put in place to reduce poverty among women in the North West Province and to improve their socio-economic circumstances?

This question sought to establish which strategies can be implemented to alleviate poverty amongst women in the North West Province and subsequently enhance their socio-economic circumstances.

5.3.8.1. Feedback summary: Question eight

The interviewees' responses to this question are categorised and presented in no particular order. Their responses regarding strategies that can be put in place to reduce poverty among women in the North West Province and to improve their socio-economic circumstances included: IDP; empowerment; the prioritisation of the education of women; education; job opportunities; and government structures.

- **Integrated Development Plan**

The IDP brings all the national and provincial departments, as well as the local municipalities together to inhibit operations and work from a uniform plan to enhance service delivery. One interviewee reported that a mutually agreed upon district document could be another strategy so that the district sector departmental officials can be held accountable for activities included in its approved plan. Another interviewee held that the challenge is the failure to develop a common well-thought plan to address issues such as double dipping. For example, one person will apply for financial assistance from a provincial department and re-apply for the same project from a national department. Subsequently, funds could be approved by both departments for the same project; thus, defeating the purpose of the strategy of alleviating poverty.

- **Empowerment**

An interviewee posited that women should be holistically empowered, and empowerment should not only be directed towards economic empowerment, but physical and mental empowerment should also be included. Women should also be mentored so that they can play a prominent role in the community. Another interviewee confirmed this view, stating that not only financial empowerment should be underscored, but the concentration should also be inclusive of psychological skills and other aspects. Furthermore, it was mentioned that the development of policies specifically for women could be another poverty alleviation strategy to enhance their socio-economic circumstances.

An interviewee stated that the establishment of women cooperatives does not require formal education and that women should be encouraged to establish a business. Furthermore, it was opined that every department should design a start-up capital support programme, especially in the agriculture sector where one hectare of land could be availed to a household for farming. Another participant suggested that access to production resources for women can also be a strategy to alleviate poverty and the negative socio-economic circumstances they face on a daily basis.

- **Prioritisation of education among women**

A respondent held that women should be prioritised in all big construction projects because they are reliable in leadership positions. Furthermore, funding must be pre-determined for women and the score card should provide them with preferences. It is mentioned that a woman centred approach is another strategy to enhance women's socio-economic circumstances. They should be prioritised throughout the year, and their plight should not only be highlighted during Women's Month. Women should be capacitated to establish women NPI/self-help groups through government intervention and the provision of relevant resources. A participant held that women form part of the previously disadvantaged group which includes the youth and the physically challenged. This implies that women are not prioritised but form part of the other marginalised groups.

- **Education**

It was mentioned that the primary approach should be to ensure that every woman goes to school and is supported and encouraged to enrol at technical schools. A respondent indicated that every child must belong to an ECD centre. Research has revealed that children who start school at ECD centres remain in school and complete matric with improved literacy.

A participant stated that basic and tertiary education should be accentuated for women in rural areas and categorised according to their strength from primary school up to tertiary level. Women with an artistic strength must be channelled in relevant streams instead of categorising everyone in the same stream, for example, mathematics and science which might not be compatible for all.

- **Job opportunities**

A respondent held that the importation of products from abroad should be avoided, and government should encourage locally produced goods to create job opportunities. Factories should be established closer to rural areas to create employment, and in

that way, government goods and services would be sourced from the local factories to address the socio-economic circumstances that advances poverty.

- **Government structures**

It was reported that a bloated government structure compromises policy implementation, because by the time policies are cascaded to the municipal level from the provincial and national spheres, it has already lost its aim. To expedite policy implementation, it is critical to limit government bureaucracy. Furthermore, avoiding or correcting political dynamics where people are not employed by virtue of their capacity or skills but because of the cadre deployment system, the level of understanding of such a person, in most instances does not fit the post but compromises policy implementation. Another perception was that the five (5) years government term for ministers is also a reason for concern because during that term, some departments do not complete the entire term with one political head but have up to three or more political heads who initiate their own vision and mission. Consequently, selected programmes are left incomplete that compromises continuity and fragments communities' trust. Hence the community is left frustrated because amendments to policy effects their socio-economic circumstances.

5.3.8.2. Researcher's interpretation: question eight

The various poverty alleviation strategies identified in Section 5.3.8.1 is dependent on a concerted and interrelated effort by institutions as mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.5. Meth (2019:144) concurs that the alleviation of poverty requires a comprehensive integrated approach to be effective. It was explained in Section 5.3.8.1 that a single department cannot alleviate poverty, which is a diverse phenomenon that requires various strategies to address women's socio-economic circumstances (Singh & Chudasama, 2020:18). Furthermore, as supported in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, poverty cannot be alleviated by a single approach but needs a multipronged one, aligned to socio-economic factors linked to the onset of poverty.

The IDP was reiterated as a strategy to alleviate poverty amongst women in the North West Province and to enhance their socio-economic circumstances. Explicated in

Chapter 4, Section 4.3, was that the IDP as a strategy that is already in place, directed towards the alleviation of poverty as well as improving socio-economic challenges through the integration of services. However, it seems that the IDP does not achieve the set objectives, as argued in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.2. If its guidelines are not given proper direction and attention it is destined to fail to achieve the set objectives, as articulated in Chapter 4, Section 4.3. Khan and Khandaker (2016:539) postulate that policy implementation that lacks proper direction and guidelines is a challenge. As highlighted in Section 5.3.8.1, strategies are in place, but the implementation thereof fails (RSA, 2012:33; Meth, 2019:149). In this respect, Saaverda (2017:1) concludes that the proof of public policy is specifically in the implementation phase. Public administration is the delivery of services to the community and should ensure the implementation of government policies (Chopra, 2020:156).

It is perhaps necessary to reiterate that a single policy cannot address the complexity of poverty. Various departments with specific mandates should integrate and target socio-economics challenges reciprocally to enhance service delivery (RSA, 2020b:1) and simultaneously alleviate the causes of poverty (ASSAF, 2016:51) to ensure that the deprived are elevated to a level of better quality, as argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.2. However, a poverty alleviation framework for women in the rural areas should be biased towards women whose poverty level is predominantly higher compared to men (Maja & Oluwatayo, 2018:14; Adefisoye & Adefisoye, 2020:20; Kapur, s.a:7). Several strategies which could alleviate poverty have been implemented in the North West Province and were presented in Section 5.3.8.1.

The **primary findings from the empirical investigation** revealed that the level of poverty in the rural areas is extremely high and it was identified that women experience disproportionate levels of poverty compared to their male counterparts. The results obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the SMS members of the provincial DSD, DREAD and DLGHS also revealed an array of **socio-economic circumstances** that cause and/or escalate poverty among women in the North West Province, including, culture and tradition; gender-based discrimination; lack of education, illiteracy and a lack of skills; inadequate water and electricity provision; sub-standard public health facilities; unpaid domestic responsibilities; lack of financial power; high rate of child bearing; low household income; and the high unemployment

rate. **Education** is perceived as a primary tool to alleviate poverty among women. The high unemployment rate among women in the province can to a great extend be attributed to their lack of education, lack of skills and illiteracy. Occasionally women forego opportunities or empowerment projects because they are illiterate and do not comprehend, for instance, the tender processes, while in other instances it inhibits employment since they lack the requisite qualifications for employment opportunities.

It was further revealed that the **legislation and policies** that acknowledge the significance to empower women and subsequently alleviate poverty among women are prevalent at various levels, including international regulatory legislation and policies (UN); international foreign aid (UN, USA, UK, EU); continental legislation (AU); regional legislation (SADC); national legislation and policies to alleviate poverty amongst women; and national tools and mechanisms to alleviate poverty and empower women. However, these remain ineffective and fail during the implementation phase.

The ineffective implementation of legislation and policies is demonstrated by several municipalities' non-adherence to sections of the **IDP**. The IDPs of municipalities are directed towards the alleviation of poverty as well as improving socio-economic challenges through the integration of services. However, it seems that the IDPs does not achieve the set objectives. The impression is created that departments and municipalities, in some instances, deviate from their set strategic plans. Furthermore, it is asserted that legislation and policies exist in small pockets and should be consolidated, provide focus, and should be streamlined for proper coordination and successful implementation. Moreover, women ought to be recognised as the key stakeholders in policies. In this respect, it was argued that women should perform a participatory role to ensure the successful implementation of legislation and policies. The participation of women in the policy implementation phase therefore emerged as fundamental since they possess the living experience of poverty and would be committed to ensure that policies succeed for their own benefit.

The empirical results further revealed that the provincial departments are mutually exclusive and implement policies independently to address socio-economic challenges to alleviate poverty. In certain instances, various departments tend to

target the same group in the same area. It is argued that the **provincial departments** involved in the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province should collaborate to alleviate poverty to ensure that the socio-economic barriers that affect women are abolished through the implementation of relevant policies. It is further argued that the poverty alleviation programmes in a particular district should be implemented from one district's coordinated and consolidated plan with input from all the departments involved.

Some of the identified **poverty alleviation strategies** are embedded in government programmes but emerge as a by-product of the primary programme. The financial benefits enjoyed by the NGOs from government funding assist them to participate in self-help groups where they organise themselves into *stokvels* and contribute a set monthly amount towards savings. The money that exchanges hands when they buy and sell goods influences the inclusive development of the economic growth, although on a small scale. Therefore, micro-financing, saving (indirectly through the *stokvels*), self-help groups and inclusive development for economic growth takes place within the North West Province programmes, to a greater or a lesser degree. It is argued that these strategies, could however be more effectively organise to reap optimal benefits and is therefore included in the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

The aforementioned empirical results reiterate the need for a policy implementation framework for women in the North West Province. In the development of the implementation framework, not only the results obtained through the empirical investigation were considered, but also the results obtained through the literature review (theoretical framework), established in Chapter 2 of the study. Several correlations between the empirical results and the theoretical framework could be drawn:

- **Social Exclusion Theory –** the theory was found to be relevant to lack of education, skills, and illiteracy; lack of opportunities; and the socio-economic results of poverty among women in the North West Province.

- **Structural Theory –** the structural barriers that impede progress can be removed but for poor women it is challenging to move away from their homes. More importantly, the RLM and the GTLM areas are both rural and extremely poor and lack physical and economic resources.
- **Individualistic Theory –** the basis of the theory is that people's decision and/or action are the main course of poverty. As mentioned, the RLM and the GTLM are in areas that are plagued by extreme poverty with limited opportunities for a better life. It is therefore argued that the community cannot be held responsible for poverty caused by, amongst others, a lack of opportunities.
- **Social Feminist Theory –** the theory is rooted in class, sexism and racism that are socially constructed and compounding the challenge of inequality that is mostly experienced by women in the North West Province.
- **Radical Feminist Theory –** the existence of the theory is founded in patriarchy that promotes the perception that women are inferior to men and are expected to take instruction from. The perception is seemingly still in existence in the rural areas that are under the leadership of traditional leaders. Both the RLM and the GTLM have villages that are under the leadership of traditional leaders.
- **Black Feminist Theory –** additional to social and gender inequality, the theory introduces race inequality that intersects and compounds the challenges experienced by black women. They experience the same challenges as white women but additionally contend with the challenges experienced by black males.

In consideration of the primary findings of the empirical investigation and the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of the study, a conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province has been developed. The framework is presented in the next section.

5.4. A CONCEPTUAL POLICY IMLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION OF WOMEN IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

As presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.5 and Chapter 3, Section 3.2, a framework is a path towards realising an outcome (UN, 2017:51; McKillop *et al.,* 2017:7). Grant and

Osanloo (2014:12); and Mehta (2014:5) perceive a framework as a guide that is people-centred and based on tested constructs intending to address the identified set of objectives. The study adopted a Feminist theoretical framework to explain the influence of poverty on women and to broaden the knowledge of the study. Although poverty is a global phenomenon that affects the entire global population, women tend to be the most affected (Setiawan, 2018:25). Thus, a thorough understanding of the variables that promotes poverty among women forms a fundamental construct in implementing the process of poverty alleviation.

An implementation framework's goal is to realise both the set objectives and the outcomes. Hirsch (2017:1) claims that an implementation framework, seeks to initiate a systematic change to a problem that has been identified. Meyers *et al*. (2012:4); and Albers *et al.* (2017:100) explain that the implementation framework process constitutes a direction that explains the processes, procedures, responsibilities, and resources for implementing a designed plan to realise desired results intended to address the concerns of the end users. Additionally, implementation takes the relevant construct that forms part of the framework, coupled with both the relevant internal and external factors in the process, into account (Moullin *et al*., 2015:9; Sidney, 2017:51**).** Nilsen (2015:5) explains that it is important to have comprehensive knowledge and a clear understanding of the contributors to a phenomenon, prior to the development of an implementation framework.

In view of the explanation above, as well as the description by Birkland (2015:8), that policy is a consulted and agreed upon direction between the government and its citizens, designed to address an identified problem, Ward *et al*. (2016:43) maintain that policy consists of a dual responsibility, namely, that of solving problems and attracting external stakeholders to form part of the process and identify with the same believes. Therefore, according to a definition provided by Black's Law Dictionary (2022:1), a policy framework is "the set of guidelines, as well as long-term goals which are taken into account when policies are being made". Policy formulation is a precursor to policy implementation, since the initial reasons that necessitated the policy formulation should be satisfied through the implementation process (Masango & Mfene, 2015:626; Sidney, 2017:43; Hutahaean et al., 2020:396).

The policy implementation framework developed in this study is focused on the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, and indirectly, the empowerment of women. It is argued that women should play a critical role in their poverty alleviation and therefore, a central role in the empowerment of fellow women. Policy is a document that needs cooperative effort from its inception, with everyone affected taking part in its design and agreeing on its implementation (Gumede, 2017:4; Holmes, 2021:11). The inclusion of citizens in the policy-making processes (in this case, women in the North West Province), supports government in realising their responsibilities towards its citizenry. A government's responsibility is not directed towards merely doing things for the community (Mothepu *et al.*, 2015:903; Lendel, 2019:32; Lember *et al.*, 2022:1), but partnering with them to allow them the opportunity of getting involved in addressing their own challenges, as stipulated in the NDP (RSA, 2011:14).

It was established that policy implementation is a concern, since the implementation of policies fail to achieve success that alleviate poverty amongst women. As reported in Chapter 1, Section 1.6 and above, a policy is meant to address the identified problems and details its elements. The start of the policy formulation is the identification of the problem. Policies in the public sector enables the government to support political purposes by responding to the ever-changing environment and direct the administration of institution (Palaopa, 2013:4). Challenges associated with the implementation phase can be attributed to various factors (Ahmed & Dantata, 2016:61). Consequently, the focus narrows in the policy implementation phase and the role played by women because the study identified no inadequacies in the policies and strategies except failure to effectively implement policies and strategies.

It doesn't matter how sound and well-crafted a policy is; if the implementation phase misses the direction, the policies are insignificant and loses its credibility (Khan, 2016:3). During 2009 Landsberg (2009:2) analysed the effectiveness of government policies for the prior fifteen years of democracy and established that although policies are well-crafted, the implementation thereof fell short and compromised the achievement of the set objectives. Makinde (2017:11); and Cele (2020) hold that the lack of implementation counteracts the achievement of the set objectives of any plan. It is in this respect that the study argues that it is crucial to include women as the

affected party in the formulation and most importantly in the implementation of policies which specifically targets the alleviation of poverty amongst women. It is reiterated that the implementation of policy is an inclusive process that must include the targeted group which has first-hand experience and could inform the direction of the implementation phase to ensure that the goals are achieved (Do, Nguyen & Luu, 2015:83; Mthembu, Embankment & Mutambara, 2018:5; Hudson *et al.*, 2019:12;). Akindola and Ehinomen (2018:12); Shetty and Hans (2019b:66) concurs, stating that the driving force behind the alleviation of poverty amongst women is women themselves, who in most cases have the inherent experience of living in poverty (Bradshaw, Chant & Linneker, 2017:24; Afolabi, 2019:3) – also see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.1. The role of women is therefore paramount in the provision of in-depth insight of what needs to be done and how things should work for them, as argued in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.1.

The failure to assign clear responsibility and accountability to women as the beneficiaries for whom the poverty alleviation and empowerment programmes are intended is a persistent and constant phenomenon (Yang, 2019:11). Moyo (2013:5393); and Ilesanmi (2018:1) raise the concern that the inclusion of women in the entire policy formulation process is insignificant while the exclusion of women can be equated to a non-priority (Nehring *et al.*, 2019:52). This intensifies the problem to alleviate poverty and traps women in unbearable socio-economics circumstances (Madlalate, 2019:205).

It is established that new strategies need not be established to alleviate poverty amongst women in the North West Province. The major outstanding requirement is to improve the implementation process of existing strategies. The policy implementation framework that involves women as the targeted group with clear roles, responsibility, and accountability to the targeted group may significantly assist in the alleviation of their poverty. Thus, the tenets of the following theories were included in the development of the implementation framework:

- **Social Exclusion Theory** fundamentals were considered in the development of the implementation for the poverty alleviation implementation framework of women in the North West Province, since women, as the marginalised group are

more affected by poverty and therefore often excluded from social and economic activities. The framework focuses on factors that cause social exclusion for women, for instance, a lack of education.

- **Structural Theory** is another theory that was considered in the development of the implementation for the poverty alleviation framework of women in the North West Province. The framework focuses on ensuring that barriers that impede women's efforts to move away from poverty are addressed such as assisting them to overcome structural social and economic barriers.
- **Individualistic Theory** is considered in the development of the implementation for the poverty alleviation framework of women in the North West Province since the framework addresses the lack of opportunities that denies them a better life.
- **Social Feminist Theory** reflects on the inequality that manifests as class, sexism, and racism. The policy implementation framework includes these factors as primary focus.
- **Radical Feminist Theory** is founded in patriarchy. The policy implementation framework contributes towards building equality by treating everyone with respect and dignity.
- **Black Feminist Theory** is considered in the framework provide opportunities for women irrespective of their colour.

The inclusion of women as partners in the implementation framework is firstly aimed at including them in social and economic activities that will free them from their domestic responsibilities; secondly, to empower women and prepare them for employment opportunities; and thirdly, unlike the domestic duties that women perform without any form of payment, the implementation framework makes provision for the creation of remunerative employment and the reduction of the unemployment rate (as envisaged by the SDGs (UN, 2015) and the NDP [RSA, 2011]). The envisaged benefits of the implementation of the framework are layered since, not only women will enjoy the benefits of employment, but their entire families as their children are equally affected by their poverty. Fourthly, the poverty implementation framework inversely reduces inequality since women will have the opportunity to participate, transform their social and economic standing and combat poverty.

The policy implementation framework has been developed in line with the tenets of implementation science. Implementation science bridges the knowledge-to-action divide (Westerlund, Nilsen & Sundberg, 2019:333). The fundamental goal of implementation science is to achieve positive, effective changes in the real world (Proctor, Enola, Landsverk, Aarons, Chambers, Glisson & Mittman, 2009:3; Moir, 2018:7), in this instance, these changes pertain to the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, particularly those residing in rural areas. In addition, implementation science aims to build on past experiences to avoid prior mistakes and achieve long-term results (Ghate, 2016:815). The policy implementation framework addresses these errors through, for instance, the active inclusion of women in addressing their own poverty.

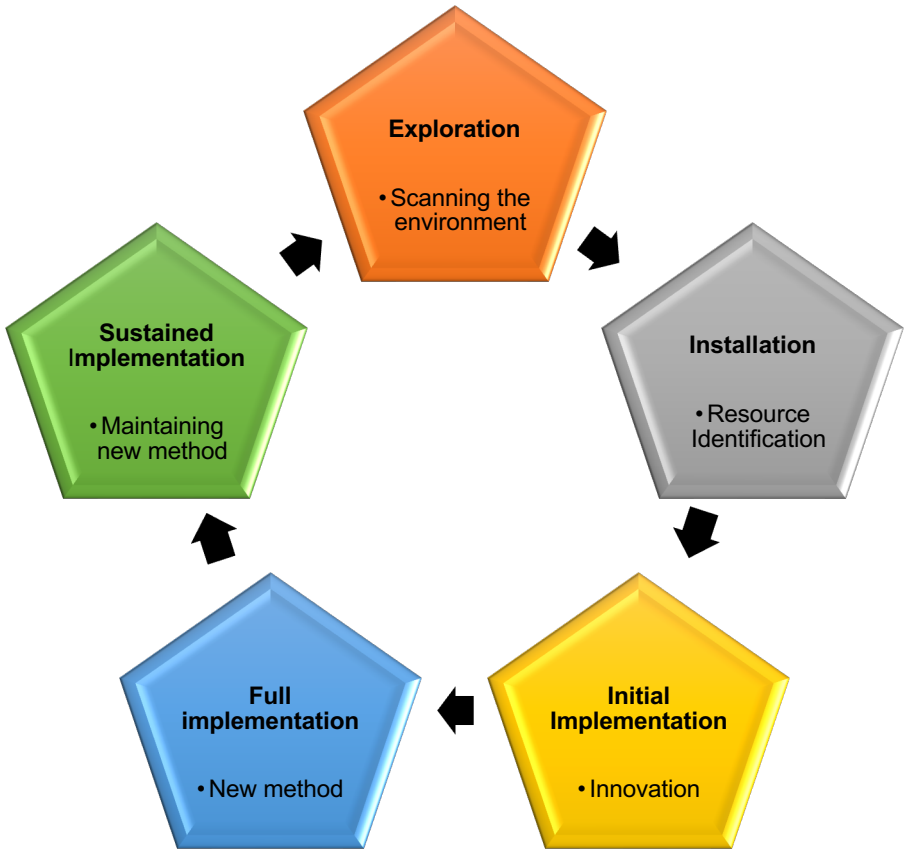
In the development of the policy implementation framework, the need for effectiveness and efficiency have been considered. Effectiveness is described by Burches and Burches (2020:1) as "the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result, and efficacy is the ability to produce a desired or intended result." Furthermore, Bauer, Damschroder, Hagedorn, Smith, and Kilbourne (2015:7); and De Vries (2020:259) explain effectiveness as the method utilised to achieve desired outcomes in the real world. It was aimed to develop the policy implementation framework to be effective when implemented, through a focus on realistic interventions. However, since this is a research study, the effectiveness of the implementation framework has not been assessed in the ‘real world’. The efficacy of the implementation framework will to a great extend be dependent on the cooperation between, and commitment of the relevant departments in the North West Province during the implementation thereof. It is also argued that the active participation of women in the North West Province during all the implementation phases of the framework will affect its efficiency.

According to implementation science, a conceptual policy implementation framework comprises four dimensions, namely: (i) the implementation phases; (ii) the relationship among the different spheres of government; (iii) the relationship among different sectors; and (iv) variables that affect policy implementation. These phases are elaborated upon in the sections below.

5.4.1. Stages of implementation

The stages of implementation of the framework include (Ghate, 2016:817 – 818): (i) exploration; (ii) installation; (iii) initial implementation; (iv) full implementation; and (v) sustained implementation. These are strategically aligned and dependent on each other to realise the desired objective (Ghate, 2016:817 – 818). See Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: Stages of implementation



(**Source:** Researchers own)

Ghate (2016:817-818) outlines the implementation phases as follows:

- **Exploration** is the first stage of implementation, where the environment is scanned to acquire a clear understanding of the situation of poverty of women in the RLM and the GTLM and its associated challenges that are related to standard

of living, guided by the dimensions and indicators of MPI (contained in Figure 2.2). The acquisition of this data is followed by an assessment of the poverty levels of women to obtain information and insight, and an analysis follows to generate conclusions, based on the state and the awareness of the poverty level and the standard of living of women in RLM and GTLM.

- The information acquired during exploration stage and structure development is known as **installation**. The information and the analysis of the poverty levels of women in the RLM and the GTLM identified in the exploration stage will determine the required resources, either physical or financial.
- The **initial implementation** is built via innovation, which involves examining the present condition and identification of areas that require modification to enhance the situation through the introduction of new approaches to execute functions. The poverty levels of women in the RLM and the GTLM should be established, and new mitigating plans should be developed to alleviate their poverty, based on the standard of living of women identified during the exploration stage.
- **Full implementation** includes putting innovative ideas into action, identified at the first stage of implementation through new methods to execute functions which are beneficial to the poor. The plans that are developed, assessed and ratified during the initial implementation stage should be put into practice to alleviate poverty.
- **Sustained implementation** includes monitoring and evaluation and enforcing maintenance of modifications. The plans that are developed are monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that they are aligned to the set objectives of alleviating poverty among women in the RLM and the GTLM.

Compliance with the above implementation stages will be significant in the effectiveness and efficiency of the conceptual policy implementation framework. Furthermore, the relationship among the different spheres of government will also affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the framework.

5.4.2. Relationship among different spheres of government

The Constitution,1996, stipulates three spheres of government, namely: national, provincial, and local (RSA,1996:25). Each government sphere has a responsibility towards poverty alleviation. The local sphere of government is tasked with providing services to the communities by utilising the intergovernmental system to collaborate with other departments as contained in the Housing Act 107 of 1997 and reflected in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.4. However, such collaboration is not only meant for housing but should be practiced with other challenges, such as the poverty alleviation among women in the RLM and the GTLM.

Parliament is obliged to formulate legislation to address the country's challenges such as maintaining economic unity (RSA,1996:28). The national, and provincial departments are the custodians of legislation and policy, because they offer leadership, and monitor the activities of the local sphere of government (RSA, 1996:90). The provincial sphere of government provides meaning by formulating policies that are overseen and coordinated by the district and local municipalities (RSA, 2000e:46).

5.4.3. Relationship among different service sectors

The relationship among various service sectors is dependent on their mutual support. Although intergovernmental collaboration and cooperation amongst government departments is legislated, there has been limited success in practice. The empirical results of this study revealed that various service sectors operate in silos and supply their services independently. The READ collaborates with NGOs to provide poverty alleviation initiatives. Furthermore, the DSD collaborates with local municipalities to create an indigent register that allows services to be delivered to poor households in the community. Cooperation is slightly visible in local government operations but not in provincial government operations.

The IDPs, should be prepared by the entire municipal stakeholder community, including all provincial government departments situated in each local and district municipality since the IDPs are the strategic documents of local and district

municipalities and are utilised to provide services. Both the district municipality and its separate local municipalities are required to formulate their own IDPs, based on extensive community participation, sound communication, and openness. The empirical findings underscored the significance to coordinate the IDPs effectively and efficiently to offer services as expressed in the document. It was revealed that the inability of various service sectors to offer services is due to departments not being assigned defined responsibility and accountability for the delivery of services in the district, despite these being scheduled in the IDPs.

5.4.4. Variables that affect policy implementation

Prior to developing the implementation framework, it is critical to have a thorough understanding of the phenomenon's contributors (Nilsen, 2015:5). It was evidenced by the character and stature of the RLM and the GTLM, that rural areas demonstrate patriarchy and discrimination against women; economic activities evade women due to a lack of infrastructure and employment; and women in rural areas remain unemployed and poor.

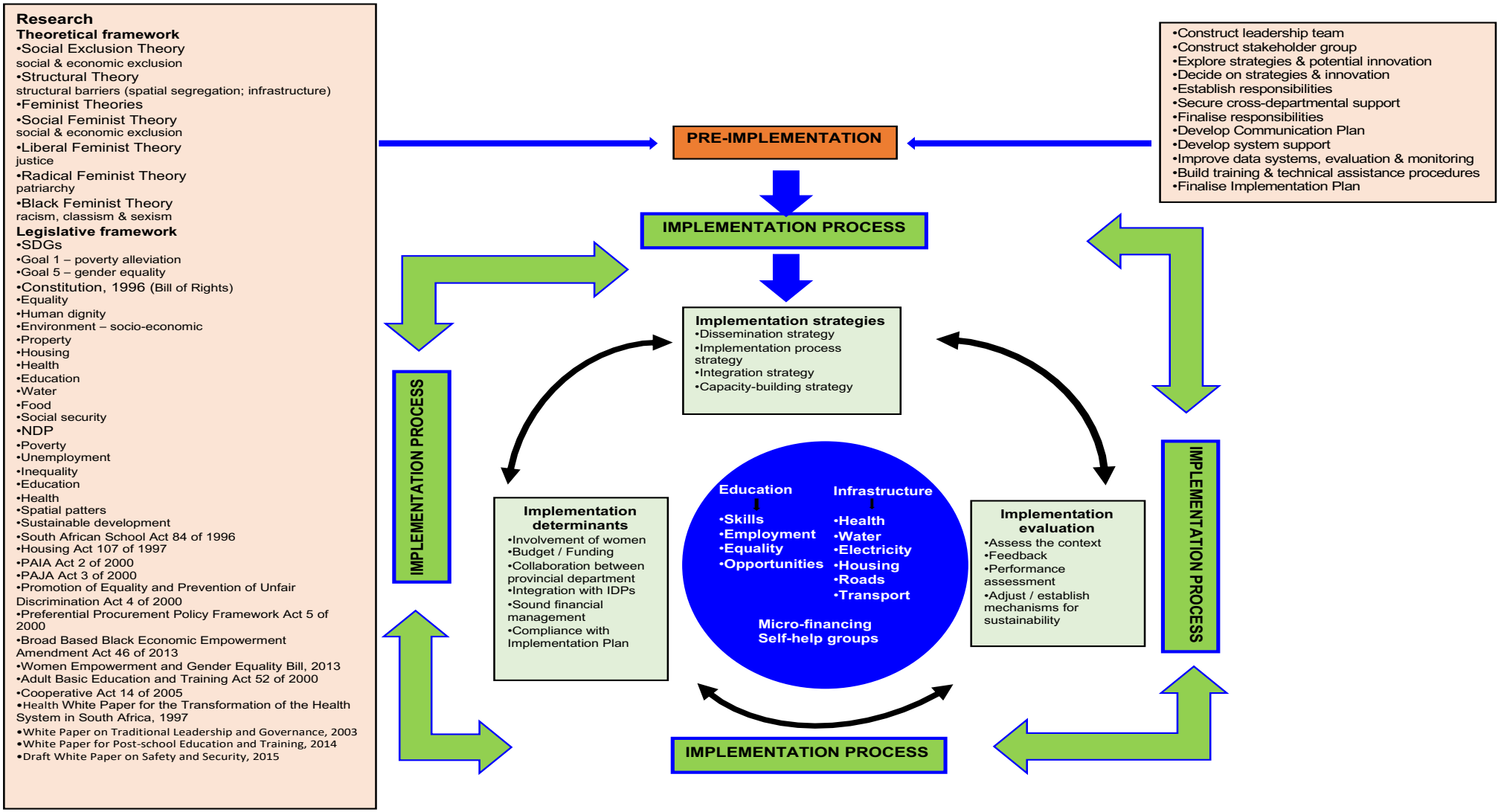
In light hereof, the next section clarifies the conceptual policy implementation framework process illustrated in Figure 5.2 below, which is sequenced into a series of stages, namely: (i) implementation determinants; (ii) implementation strategies; (iii) and implementation evaluation. The empirical findings revealed two critical factors which enhances poverty amongst women as illustrated in the centre of the implementation framework (Figure 5.2): firstly, education encompasses skills, employment, equality, and opportunity; and secondly, infrastructure incorporates health, water, electricity, housing, roads, and transport.

5.4.5. CONCEPTUAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

A conceptual policy implementation framework, such as the one developed in this study, is utilised to demonstrate the relationship between aspects identified in the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed to validate the study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016:8). The results obtained through the empirical investigation was also considered for the conceptual policy framework developed in this study. The

conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province is illustrated in Figure 5.2. below.

Figure 5.2: A conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province



5.4.5.1. Pre-implementation activities

The implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province includes the pre-implementation constructs illustrated in Figure 5.2 above. These pre-implementation activities include the following:

- **Construct a leadership team.** The construction of the leadership team draws its basis from Team Leadership Theory that promotes cohesion and mutual relationship between the members of the team where every member contributes to reaching the objectives of the team (Ryan, 2012:39-40). It is argued that female officials form the province should be in the leadership team and resource providers, due to the responsibility of the provincial departments as custodians of the poverty alleviation programmes. The alleviation of poverty of women is the envisaged goal while also communicating duties and obligations.

- **Construct a stakeholder group.** Constructing the stakeholder group serves the purpose of involving people who are in one way, or another affected by the situation of poverty, being it the women who are poor, or the provincial departments whose responsibility is to alleviate poverty by using the fundamentals of the IDP process such as proper consultation with local municipalities (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3). A stakeholder group should be constructed based on their knowledge and understanding of poverty alleviation. To give effect to the policy implementation framework, the stakeholder group should include women, particularly those who reside in high-level areas of poverty, the RTL and the GTLM. Women will contribute to the implementation of programmes to alleviate poverty by expressing their experiences and understanding of poverty.

- **Explore strategies and potential innovation.** The primary aim in exploring strategies is to alleviate the poverty among women in the North West Province, particularly those in the RLM and the GTLM. The stakeholder group, based on their knowledge (provincial departments) and personal experience (women)

should explore innovative strategies to address the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province**.** This activity involves comprehensive research of both prior strategies employed (with limited success) and potential strategies to employ to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation framework. In the process, benchmarking, both nationally and internationally, should be conducted. Effective collaboration with the RLM and the GTLM communities should take place, while also placing a greater emphasis on women, to avoid the structural impediments excluding women from opportunities (Structural Theory) and to avoid perpetuating the tenets of Social Exclusion Theory which deprive women from social benefits. Women's active interaction is envisaged to result in the identification of and increase in the number of women participating in the policy framework's implementation. The strategies should also increase collaboration and alignment between the provincial departments.

- **Decide on strategies and innovation.** Once the prior step is completed, the best strategies from the alternatives should be selected for implementation.

- **Establish responsibilities.** Provincial departments who serve as the policies' custodians should be responsible for the effective and efficient implementation of the framework. Women are the motivating force behind the framework's development and should hold a considerable degree of responsibility for poverty alleviation by increasing awareness and comprehension of poverty; thus, thereby, recognising the fundamental principles of liberalism which pivots on equality and freedom (Harrison & Boyd, 2018:202), and advocating for equality and justice where the responsibility of the stakeholders is respected and recognised for the success of the poverty alleviation implementation framework.

- **Secure cross-departmental support.** Cross-departmental support will improve the performance of the implementation framework and promote the sharing of experiences and resources. For example, the DSD and the local municipality are responsible for developing an indigent register. The latter would enhance the process to identify legitimate women who are worthy to participate in the implementation framework. Furthermore, the municipality infrastructure is

utilised for workshops on skills development programmes, arranged for women. The Department of Education, as mandated by the Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000, should undertake to focus on socio-economic injustices with specific reference to education for marginalised women to allow women the opportunity to empower themselves.

- **Finalise responsibilities.** Duties and responsibilities should be clearly defined and finalised. The provincial departments are internal stakeholders that address complex community challenges (e.g., poverty) and should support the implementation of the framework. The provincial departments should furthermore provide funding, oversight and monitoring of the implementation process. Clearly defined responsibilities should be outlined in accordance with Role Theory, stating that the duties of different role players are carried out (Kozub-Karkut, 2022:125) to deliver on the policy implementation framework to reduce confusion as every stakeholder is assigned their individual roles and responsibilities.

- **Develop a Communication Plan.** A Communication Plan should be clear, direct, timely, understood by all stakeholders, and should limit confusion about the aim of the implementation framework. Women in the rural areas are the key stakeholders in the implementation of the poverty alleviation framework. Hence, the objectives of the Communication Plan should be clearly communicated to them. This is also congruent with PAJA, according to which public office bearers are held accountable by promoting transparency and openness in their daily operations (RSA, 2000d:2), and supplemented by PAIA, mandating departmental officials to undertake and to ensure that every person has access to state information, or any information kept by the state or other person to realise or protect the rights of the citizenry (RSA, 2000c:2). In doing the aforementioned, the motivation of women to participate in the activities towards their poverty alleviation is likely to be enhanced. In addition, schools, churches, clinics, and SASSA pay points are strategic areas at which information on the implementation of the policy framework should be disseminated. The Communication Plan should also provide clear direction to all the internal

stakeholders involved in the implementation of the policy implementation framework as alluded to earlier in the discussion of constructing of the stakeholder team.

- **Develop system support.** Women in the RLM and the GTLM who experience the same level of poverty should form a support group structure and support each other. Family and friends can provide a system of support when needed while government employees should avail financial and logistic support. However, it is noted the internal system comprises of the provincial, district, and local departments whose mandate is to deliver on the government legislation and policies highlighted above in Section 5.4.2.

- **Improve data systems, evaluation and monitoring.** The data should be managed, and the progress and performance of the implementation framework should be established. Furthermore, the participation of women to achieve the set objectives should also be continuously monitored and an attendance register of women who participate in the implementation of the framework should be held, with documenting taking place daily to establish the number of participants and the activities they perform. The attendance registers should be filed and should reflect reasons for non-attendance and disaggregate these into selected areas. The data should be used to monitor and evaluate the progress to assist in predicting future attendance and prepares a plan for the improvement thereof, if required to adjust the plan.

- **Build training and technical assistance procedures.** These procedures should be informed by the lack of capacity. The procedures should, for instance, include procedures for education, skills and training to develop competencies among women. Coaching, mentoring and workshops are utilised to unlock the capacity of women to prosper and alleviate poverty as supported by the Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.7. Ultimately, technical skills will develop women and the realisation of the significance to support and actively participate in the implementation of the framework. The dedicated funds / micro-financing for special programmes

should focus solely on women, because if these are implemented efficiently and effectively it could enhance training and technical assistance. This is the sole responsibility of the internal stakeholders who also need training to discharge their functions and part thereof is being responsible for the implementation of the poverty alleviation framework. Their training is supported by the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, reflected in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.8, under the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000. Training for internal stakeholders will also assist them in delivering services where it is needed the most by having the capacity and the capability of identifying the relevant stakeholders and in this case poor women in the RLM and the GTLM.

- **Finalise Implementation Plan.** The objectives, strategies and procedures of the Implementation Plan should be clearly defined. The finalised outcomes of the aforementioned activities should be intelligibly and comprehensively included in the Implementation Plan. The departments should avail funding and physical resources to implement the implementation framework. The relevant stakeholders' responsibilities should be communicated to encourage a culture of ownership and participation.

The tenets of the following **theories and the legislative framework** are also useful to explain the pre-implementation constructs depicted in Figure 5.2 above.

5.4.5.2. Research Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the research is embedded in theories that explicate poverty, feminist theories and the legislative framework – all relevant to the poverty alleviation of women. The following theories should guide the implementation of the framework and were considered during the development of the framework:

- **The Social Exclusion Theory** – recognises discrimination, social injustice and focuses on the social exclusion of a group (in this instance, women) and their inability to access education due to the lack of skills, unemployment and

opportunities. The women are deprived of an array of basic needs, for example, health, water, electricity, housing, roads, and transport.

- **Structural Theory** – is based on, for example, tradition and culture, lack of education, including spatial challenges which are unique to the rural areas and enhance poverty amongst selected specific group. To alleviate poverty, the impeding structural barriers must be eliminated. Hence, a collaborative effort is required.

- **Individualistic Theory** – individual decisions that emanate as a result of a low level of intellectual capacity or laziness are considered key fundamentals attributes to poverty in this theory. Notwithstanding, the structural or social barriers which also contribute towards poverty.

- **Social Feminist Theory** – centres on the inequality faced by women and considers class, sexism, and racism as contributing factors. The relief from this inequality is dependent on male support for women. It was revealed that the provincial departments fail to demonstrate equality in their organisational structure, that inability could even impede the implementation of the framework if efforts are not effectively invested in the implementation.

- **Radical Feminist Theory** – strives for women's equality and is rooted in gender disparity perceived from patriarchal tendencies and upheld by the oppression of women to benefit men. Furthermore, women become susceptible and are transformed into inferior human beings who are in turn dominated by men.

- **Liberal Feminist Theory** – pivots on liberty and advances the critical part of gender equality in all public spaces. Women should be granted the same opportunities which benefit men in the workplace and educational settings. This theory is an essential factor for justice and morality.

- **Black Feminist Theory** – considers the variation of race since the primary focus of the aforementioned theories is based on equality, but do not include the

consideration of race. Black women who operate from the premise that fails to represent the correlation of race and the effect of gender is underscored. This theory does not have any bearing on white women because they seldom experience the same racial challenges experienced by black women.

5.4.5.3. Legislative framework

The Constitution, 1996, is the supreme law of the country and enjoins the Bill of Rights to promote access to all basic needs and specifically: access to education stipulated in the South African School Act of 1996 and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000; access to health is given effect by the Health White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System in South Africa, 1997; Housing Act 107 of 1997 for access to housing; access to water is advanced by the National Water Act (NWA) 36 of 1998 and mandates the national, provincial and local municipalities to assist its citizens to acquire water. Equality as a basic human right is stipulated in the Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Discrimination Act 4 of 2000; Preferential Procurement Policy Framework; Broad-Based Economic Empowerment Amendment Act 48 of 2013 supplemented by PAIA Act 2 of 2000; and PAJA Act 3 of 2000.

5.4.5.4. Implementation determinants

The implementation determinants illustrated in Figure 5.2 above are concepts which support, guide and focus on the policy implementation framework. These determinants influence the ability to realise the success of the policy implementation framework process and is identified as follows: involvement of women; budget and funding; collaboration between provincial departments; integration with the IDP; sound financial management; and compliance with the Implementation Plan.

- The **involvement of women** will be empowering, ensure their independence and detach them from patriarchal practices which forces them to be homebound and assume full responsibility for domestic duties. Women have a first-hand understanding of poverty, informed direction of poverty, and should therefore enjoy full participation and assigned clear responsibilities to alleviate poverty.

The failure to involve women to alleviate poverty has led to the continual perpetuation of poverty which is currently evident.

- The **budget and funding** are imperative in the successful implementation of the policy framework**.** The financial support is determined by various departments whose mandate is to ensure a conducive environment for the delivery of services. The departments should therefore fund the poverty alleviation programmes.

- **Collaboration between provincial departments** is imperative and will ensure relevant information sharing and avert duplication which retards service delivery. It is evidenced that the departments operate independently and in isolation to alleviate poverty. The effective collaboration between the departments will support the sharing of resources.

- An **integration of the policy implementation framework with the IDP** could sustain and promote the effectiveness and efficiency of the poverty alleviation programmes for women. The municipal strategic blueprint (IDP) should guide the implementation of relevant services, including the poverty alleviation of women.

  The IDP should serve to resolve problems and attract external stakeholders to implement the poverty alleviation programmes. It should be a consultation and an agreement process between the municipalities and their stakeholders. Women, who are identified as key stakeholders in the policy implementation framework should play a key role in the implementation of the IDP. Therefore, the integration of the policy implementation framework with the IDP provides impetus to alleviate poverty**.**

- **Sound financial management** is informed by clear roles, responsibilities and accountability. It is not the sole responsibility of the department; stakeholders must share the responsibility by ensuring, upholding and maintaining the effective and efficient utilisation of the allocated funds.

- **Compliance with the Implementation Plan** will empower women and reduce their level of poverty. The Implementation Plan aims to realise the desired results, that is, the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province and to bring about change to their lives.

5.4.5.5. Implementation strategies

Strategies illustrated in Figure 5.2 above, guide the implementation process, namely: dissemination strategy; implementation process strategy; integration strategy; and capacity building strategy:

- The **dissemination strategy** will promote the sharing of information. Various methods can be applied, for example, posting information in newspapers, disseminate flyers and placing posters on buildings.

- The **implementation process strategy** will underscore the need to delineate the procedures. Women who are excluded due to their spatial divide and reside in the rural areas (RLM and GTLM) should be identified, prioritised and arranged according to self-help groups. Women who are registered in the indigent register should also be included to participate in the policy implementation framework. These women do not only benefit financially from the policy implementation but are skilled to manage the projects and programmes.

- The fundamentals of the **integration strategy** will ensure effective participation, which is beneficial to relocate women from poverty-stricken areas, and to maximise and align the roles of various role players. Furthermore, barriers which impede their efforts to alleviate poverty can be addressed through this strategy. Skills development is a barrier that excludes women from escaping poverty and constitutes factors that impede the development of young women. This is prevalent in both the RTL and the GTLM. The number of young women in social grant programmes are in most instances unemployed and do not attend school. Through the integration strategy, the social grant beneficiaries who have been in the programme for more than two years can be identified and integrated into a

skills development schedule through the implementation framework as well as capacitated to escape poverty.

- The **capacity building strategy will** uphold the participation of women in the policy implementation framework, since it will develop women and inculcate the sense of responsibility to develop their own capacity. Participation in the poverty implementation framework will alleviate inequality in that women manage poverty and transform their lives.

5.4.5.6. Implementation evaluation

Implementation evaluation, which is linked to four components is utilised to accomplish the goal. For the effective implementation of the policy implementation framework, the following actions should be conducted:

- **The content of the poverty alleviation programmes should be assessed** to ensure that it aligns with the objectives of the Implementation Plan and to ensure that the programmes' content is measurable and contributes towards the outcomes of the Implementation Plan. The specified number of women participating in the implementation framework must be assessed to acquire the target and to show the outcome in the form of a decreased level of poverty of women, particularly in the RLM and the GTLM.

  The socio-economic challenges that women in the North West Province, and in particular, women in the areas of the RLM and the GTLM experience, are at the centre of the policy implementation framework. Therefore, the content of the poverty alleviation programmes should be focused on the socio-economic challenges that have been revealed through the findings of both the theoretical and empirical investigations of the study. Education has been revealed as the primary socio-economic factor, impeding opportunities for women to participate in economic activities. Education is therefore perceived as a primary tool to alleviate poverty among women. The high unemployment rate among women in the North West Province, and especially in the areas of the RLM and the GTLM,

can to a great extend be attributed to their lack of education, lack of skills and illiteracy. Opportunities to education should therefore receive prominence in the poverty alleviation programmes.

The EPWP strategy is already utilised by various spheres of government to promote employment and develop skills to alleviate poverty and specifically target women and the youth. The provincial departments should cooperate to coordinate their activities related to the EPWP strategy to enhance the success of the EPWP.

In addition, socio-economic factors such as health, electricity, water, roads, housing and transport should receive prominence in the poverty alleviation programmes. In advancing access to women to, for instance, health care facilities, an improvement of infrastructure such roads and transport is necessitated. The IDPs should be drafted through a comprehensive consultation process, involving all stakeholders, and be integrated with the policy implementation framework to ensure proper coordination between the provincial departments, the district municipalities and the local municipalities to address service delivery challenges such as water and electricity provision (also see Section 5.4.3). Moreover, housing is identified as a human right in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996) and should therefore be included as an aspect to be addressed in the poverty alleviation programmes.

- **Feedback** should be provided to establish the performance outcomes of the Implementation Plan and should be shared with all stakeholders in relation to the status of the implementation process. Furthermore, the stakeholders should be notified if the Implementation Plan has met its objectives.

- **Performance assessment** should take place to evaluate the performance of the implementation framework and whether the objectives of the Implementation Plan have been achieved. For example, the number of women who participated in the implementation framework's activities should be informed whether the desired results to alleviate poverty were achieved.

- **The mechanisms for sustainability should be adjusted or established.** The need should be identified to either modify or establish the sustainability of the Implementation Plan. Adjusting or sustaining the conceptual policy implementation framework to alleviate poverty is also coupled with revisiting the implementation stages, illustrated in Figure 5.2 for effective implementation. Exploration as the first stage of implementation encapsulates the establishment of changes in the environment which may require modification. Furthermore, the installation stage assesses whether the resources are adequate for the intended purpose or may need to be advanced. The next stage is the initial implementation, that is, an examination of the relevance of the innovation. The full implementation stage assesses the need to either retain or amend the Implementation Plan. Finally, at the sustained implementation stage, the decision should be taken to either amend or sustain the Implementation Plan, based on the analysis of all the four stages.

5.4.6. Relevance of the implementation framework

The following highlights the relevance if the policy implementation framework:

- The empirical findings revealed that the departments' well-crafted and fit-for-purpose policies have resulted in minimal enhancement as evidenced by the large number of people who continue to live in poverty, notably women in rural areas.
- It was revealed that the implementation of policies, as reviewed in Chapter 3, have failed to achieve the alleviation of poverty. However, the current policies require no amendments, as revealed by a comprehensive legislative review and the empirical results. Thus, it can be inferred that the challenge could be the lack of proper policy implementation to alleviate poverty.
- The implementation of the poverty alleviation framework considers the poverty of women, particularly those in rural areas. It is critical to include and prioritise women as the affected party in the implementation framework which is primarily aimed to alleviate poverty. The participation of women in the policy

implementation framework activities is significant since they play a critical role to impart their innate experience to overcome poverty, which is essential to influence the poverty alleviation process.

- The policy implementation framework guides both government officials and women who live in North West Province's rural areas to ensure successful steps towards the alleviation of poverty.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The chapter commenced with a review of the research methodology used for the empirical investigation, followed by the empirical results, which were presented and interpreted. The primary findings from the empirical investigation revealed that the level of poverty in the rural areas is extremely high and it was identified that women experience disproportionate levels of poverty compared to their male counterparts. The results obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the SMS members of the provincial DSD, DREAD and DLGHS also revealed an array of socio-economic circumstances that cause and/or escalate poverty among women in the North West Province, including, culture and tradition; gender-based discrimination; lack of education, illiteracy and a lack of skills; inadequate water and electricity provision; sub-standard public health facilities; unpaid domestic responsibilities; lack of financial power; high rate of child bearing; low household income; and the high unemployment rate. Education is perceived as a primary tool to alleviate poverty among women. The high unemployment rate among women in the province can to a great extend be attributed to their lack of education, lack of skills and illiteracy. Occasionally women forego opportunities or empowerment projects because they are illiterate and do not comprehend, for instance, the tender processes, while in other instances it inhibits employment since they lack the requisite qualifications for employment opportunities.

It was further revealed that the legislation and policies that acknowledge the significance to empower women and subsequently alleviate poverty among women are prevalent at various levels, including international regulatory legislation and policies (UN); international foreign aid (UN, USA, UK, EU); continental legislation (AU); regional legislation (SADC); national legislation and policies to alleviate poverty

amongst women; and national tools and mechanisms to alleviate poverty and empower women. However, these remain ineffective and fail during the implementation phase.

The ineffective implementation of legislation and policies is demonstrated by several municipalities' non-adherence to sections of the IDP. The IDPs of municipalities are directed towards the alleviation of poverty as well as improving socio-economic challenges through the integration of services. However, it seems that the IDPs does not achieve the set objectives. The impression is created that departments and municipalities, in some instances, deviate from their set strategic plans. Furthermore, it is asserted that legislation and policies exist in small pockets and should be consolidated, provide focus, and should be streamlined for proper coordination and successful implementation. Moreover, women ought to be recognised as the key stakeholders in policies. In this respect, it was argued that women should perform a participatory role to ensure the successful implementation of legislation and policies. The participation of women in the policy implementation phase therefore emerged as fundamental since they possess the living experience of poverty and would be committed to ensure that policies succeed for their own benefit.

The empirical results further revealed that the provincial departments are mutually exclusive and implement policies independently to address socio-economic challenges to alleviate poverty. In certain instances, various departments tend to target the same group in the same area. It is argued that the provincial departments involved in the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province should collaborate to alleviate poverty to ensure that the socio-economic barriers that affect women are abolished through the implementation of relevant policies. It is further argued that the poverty alleviation programmes in a particular district should be implemented from one district's coordinated and consolidated plan with input from all the departments involved.

Some of the identified poverty alleviation strategies are embedded in government programmes but emerge as a by-product of the primary programme. The financial benefits enjoyed by the NGOs from government funding assist them to participate in self-help groups where they organise themselves into *stokvels* and contribute a set

monthly amount towards savings. The money that exchanges hands when they buy and sell goods influences the inclusive development of the economic growth, although on a small scale. Therefore, micro-financing, saving (indirectly through the *stokvels*), self-help groups and inclusive development for economic growth takes place within the North West Province programmes, to a greater or a lesser degree. It is argued that these strategies, could however be more effectively organise to reap optimal benefits and is therefore included in the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

The aforementioned empirical results reiterated the need for a policy implementation framework for women in the North West Province. In the development of the implementation framework, not only the results obtained through the empirical investigation were considered, but also the results obtained through the literature review (theoretical framework), established in Chapter 2 of the study, including the tenets of Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; Individualistic Theory; Social Feminist Theory; Radical Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory.

The policy implementation framework identified barriers and provided solutions to the effective and efficient implementation of policy alleviation programmes for women in the North West Province, particularly for those in the RLM and the GTLM. The framework advocates for the involvement of poor women in the implementation framework's activities. Their roles and responsibilities, as well as the roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders in the Implementation Plan were clarified in this chapter.

The policy implementation framework consists of five stages of implementation: exploration; installation; initial implementation; full implementation; and sustained implementation. Compliance with these implementation stages will be significant in the effectiveness and efficiency of the conceptual policy implementation framework. The significance of the cooperation between the various spheres of government and the relationship among various service sectors; and successfully managing the aforementioned to ensure the effective implementation of the framework were also highlighted in the chapter.

The pre-implementation activities for the policy implementation framework have been clarified (the construction of a leadership team; the construction of a stakeholder group; the exploration of strategies and potential innovation; decisions on strategies and innovation; the establishment of responsibilities; the securement of cross-departmental support; the finalisation of responsibilities; the development of a Communication Plan; the development of system support; the improvement of data systems, evaluation and monitoring; training and technical assistance procedures; and the finalisation of the Implementation Plan) have been clarified. The framework's stages, namely: (i) implementation determinants; (ii) implementation strategies; (iii) and implementation evaluation, were also highlighted and explained in the chapter.

The next chapter provides a summary on the primary results obtained through the literature review and the empirical investigation. Furthermore, the primary findings of the study are reiterated in Chapter 6 and recommendations towards the implementation of the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province are made. Chapter 6 concludes this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this study was to formulate a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province. The development of the framework was necessitated by the high level of poverty in two rural municipalities, namely the RLM and the GTLM, rated among the municipalities that experience high poverty levels in the country. The poverty of these two municipalities is experienced more by women. However, the framework is designed in a manner that it can be implemented in the entire North West Province.

To achieve the aim of this study, a theoretical framework to alleviate poverty and the empowerment of women was established (Chapter 2). Theories that explicate poverty were identified as follows: Social Exclusion; Structural; Individualistic; and Feminist Theory (Radical Feminist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, Social Feminist Theory, and Black Feminist Theory). The review of these theories was aimed to demonstrate the relationship between poverty and women and how it can contribute towards the drafting of a policy implementation framework to alleviate poverty amongst women. Chapter 2 also expounded on the phenomenon poverty, specifically among women, and reflected on the methods utilised to measure poverty, with a view to establish effective ways to alleviate poverty levels among women in South Africa

Chapter 3 reflected on the statutory and regulatory framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women. It included a review on the policies and mechanisms of the UN to address poverty in member states and foreign aid provided by developed countries (e.g., USA, UK, EU, and France) to developing countries for specific causes, including the alleviation of poverty and the empowerment of women.

In addition to the theoretical and legislative frameworks, certain socio-economic factors and causes to poverty were established and considered in the development of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province (Chapter 4). The poverty enhancing socio-economic factors, particularly as they materialise in the North West Province and more specifically, in the jurisdictions

of the RLM and the GTLM, were reviewed in Chapter 4. As part of the contextualisation of the socio-economic factors and causes to poverty, a profile of the broader North West Province was provided, with particular focus to the profile of and circumstances in the RLM and the GTLM.

Chapter 5 of the study presented and interpreted the empirical findings of the study. The results obtained from the empirical investigation were underpinned, analysed, and expounded on by the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2, the statutory and regulatory framework established in Chapter 3 and the socio-economic factors and causes that contribute towards poverty levels amongst women in the North West Province in Chapter 4 of the study. Finally, the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province was developed.

In this chapter a summary of all the chapters in the thesis is provided, based on the research objectives set for the study. Furthermore, recommendations are made towards the implementation of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province.

6.2. SUMMARY AND PRIMARY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and background to the study through a delineation of the poverty experienced by women globally, more specifically in developing countries, and particularly in the rural areas. Subsequently, the parameters of the study were demarcated and a rationale for the focus on women in the North West Province specifically was provided and particularly those residing the jurisdictional areas of the RLM and the GTLM.

It was further established that the member states of international organisations, for instance the UN, continental organisations, such as the AU and regional organisations, for example, the SADC have a duty to implement the legislation and policies of these organisations to achieve its objectives of which poverty alleviation, particularly for women, is one such objective. South Africa is a signatory to all three of the aforementioned organisations. However, the international, continental, and

regional regulatory frameworks do not exonerate member states from establishing their own legislation and policies to alleviate poverty. At the national level South Africa utilises the binding directives of the UN the AU and the SADC to formulate its own legislation and policies to address poverty and empower women. South Africa thereby demonstrated its commitment to the UN's legislation and policies by aligning the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision for 2030 (2011), hereafter referred to as the NDP (RSA, 2011) with the SDGs, 2015 (African Union, s.a.:120; RSA, 2019:24).

It was further established that, in addition to the Constitution, 1996 (especially the Bill of Rights – Chapter 2), the NDP (RSA, 2011) and other legislation and policies aimed at poverty alleviation for instance, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000; Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000; Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act 46 of 2013; and Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013, have been promulgated at part of the government's commitment to eradicate poverty in South Africa. Most notably of these is the NDP (RSA, 2011), the government's leading socio-economic policy. The NDP indicates that, to reduce poverty with the aim of eradicating it by 2030, the economy of the country must show significant growth (more or less 6%) (RSA, 2011:14). Furthermore, the NDP acknowledges that current poverty levels are still ubiquitous, and that measly progress has been made in terms of inequality since 1994 (RSA, 2011:1).

The context of North West Province as one of the former TBVC states was established, including the high poverty levels among women in the North West Province. The South African poverty trends furthermore revealed that 64.3% of citizens in the North West Province live below the poverty line (RSA, 2017b:64). An array of socio-economic circumstances contributing to poverty among women in the North West Province have been presented, including, culture and tradition; gender-based discrimination; inadequate water and electricity provision; sub-standard public health facilities; low household income; and the high unemployment rate.

The NDP (RSA, 2011) is a strategy utilised by the government to address poverty, presented by socio-economic circumstances such as those revealed above.

Regrettably, the NDP's efforts do not match the results, since the majority of South African citizenry lives in poverty (RSA, 2017b:14).

The available literature places emphasis on identifying and confirming the factors that perpetuate gender poverty, but not on involving women in poverty alleviation programmes. Thus, the study aimed to focus on ensuring that women play a fundamental role in the implementation of poverty alleviation in the development of the policy implementation framework to alleviate the poverty of women in the North West Province. In consideration of the aforementioned, the problem that this study investigated could be formulated as follows: Despite an array of international, continental, regional and national attempts made towards the alleviation of poverty among women; the myriad of legislation and policies formulated for the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women; and several mechanisms and programmes developed for this purpose, women in the rural areas of the North West Province continue to experience grave poverty. This study therefore developed a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province to give effect to the legislation, policies, mechanisms, and programmes drafted for this purpose.

To address the problem statement as the primary focus of the study, the following research objectives were formulated for achievement:

General research objective

- To develop a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

Specific research objectives

- to establish the theoretical framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women;
- to establish the international, continental, regional, and national statutory and regulatory frameworks that promote poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women;
- to determine the socio-economic factors and causes that contribute to the poverty levels of women in the North West Province; and

- to make recommendations for the implementation of a policy framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

The remainder of the thesis' chapters are summarised below, based on the research objectives.

- **To establish the theoretical framework for the poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women**

The theoretical framework for the poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women was established in **Chapter 2** of the study. In this chapter it was accentuated that poverty more adversely affects women than men, especially women in rural areas. The chapter expounded on the phenomenon of poverty as primary variable of this study with a view to establish effective ways to alleviate the level of poverty among women in South Africa and specifically the North West Province

The review on poverty as phenomenon revealed that the definition of poverty is as complex as poverty itself. It affects the economic, social and the political environment. Although it is not selective, people perceive and comprehend poverty differently. For example, the differences identified between the rich and poor countries and governments who have their own classification of poverty. Furthermore, men and omen also have a varying understanding of poverty.

Poverty is viewed as relative and not static. People decide to move away from poverty in search of better opportunities, especially men. The freedom to easily relocate is not an option for women due to the double burden of their own poverty, as well as that of their children and since they often remain in their destitute circumstances to remain with their children. These differences in opportunities demonstrate the inequality and injustices between men and women because of tradition and culture that serves both genders differently. It was argued in the chapter that women are often deprived of their human potential to develop and reach self-actualisation due to the reality of their poverty, although the Constitution, 1996, mandates that citizens be treated fairly and equally.

The chapter also revealed that poverty can be categorised according to qualifiers that can either be perceived as absolute poverty or relative poverty. Absolute poverty is a deprivation of the basic needs such as shelter, water, health, sanitation. It was further revealed that the rural areas (the locus of this study) have sustained absolute poverty in the 21st century. Since relative poverty is objective and gauged in relation to other citizens who reside in the same community or society, it was not found to be entirely relevant to the locus and focus of this study, given that the inhabitants that are focused upon in this study (those residing in the RLM and the GTLM) who live in equitable absolute deprivation. In the context of this study, relative poverty can only be considered when a comparison is made between the poverty levels between rural and urban areas and when other factors (e.g., race or gender) are considered. It is therefore argued that the poverty in South Africa can be considered absolute poverty, especially poverty experienced in the rural areas of the North West Province. Thus, the poverty alleviation strategy developed in this study for women in specific municipal areas in the North West Province, focused predominantly on the alleviation of absolute poverty, but also considered relative poverty when comparing poverty experienced by women to that experienced by men.

Measuring poverty supports the decision-making process, assists to approach poverty accordingly and develops relevant methods to address issues related thereto. In this respect, three approaches to the measurement of poverty were reviewed: the consensual method; the income poverty method; and the subjective method. The consensual method is considered the most relevant poverty level measurement to this study since it indicates the target population's low standard of living and low income. Furthermore, it supports both methods of poverty measurement: direct method (to satisfy the basic need); and the indirect method (alignment of the income level to the poverty line).

Measuring poverty levels relates to the poverty dimensions of education, health and living standards and provides for the multidimensional nature of poverty to cover various issues that cause poverty. The measurement of poverty levels should be followed by the adoption of approaches to alleviate poverty from an informed perspective. This would enable government decision-makers to align policies related to poverty and develop suitable methods and address it as a priority.

A review on the theories that clarify the concept poverty was conducted, including, Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; and Individualistic Theory. The Social Exclusion Theory posits that established barriers marginalise and exclude people from social activities that other people enjoy (Figueroa, 2018:10). It is regarded as the best theory to explain poverty since it covers poverty in its totality, explains its forms, causes and effects (Sameti, Esfahani & Haghighi, 2012:46). Structural Theory predicts that there is a correlation between the life of people who struggle and the system which denies them the opportunity to move out of poverty and to take charge of their lives (Brady, 2006:154). The Individualistic Theory acknowledges that poverty is caused by individual deficiencies and the lack of a concerted effort to overcome poverty (Kura *et al.*, 2020:49). From the review of Social Exclusion Theory, Structural Theory, and Individualistic Theory, it was revealed that Social Exclusion Theory supersedes the other theories, because social exclusion does not focus on the individual, but primarily on the holistic society, while deprivation attributes towards the community and its actors. However, Structural Theory and Individualistic Theory also remain relevant to this study. Women remain the marginalised group and it is imperative that they be prioritised in the policy implementation process. Social Exclusion Theory is relevant in justifying the recognition of women as the primary stakeholders in the alleviation of poverty. Furthermore, the social structures which are hostile in the emancipation of women was also addressed in the policy implementation framework to alleviate poverty. Research conducted on Social Exclusion Theory and Structural Theory (Bak & Larsen, 2015:2; Danaan, 2018:27; Egwea, 2019:2) confirmed that it is unjustifiable for individuals to be held accountable for poverty that manifests itself structurally and difficult to change, *e.g.,* the traditional and cultural role of women. Thus, the premises of the three aforementioned theories were considered in the development of a poverty alleviation framework for women in selected municipal areas in the North West Province.

Feminist Theory, grounded in the liberation of women from oppression, dominated by patriarchy and characterised by gender, race and class that undermines women's rights, was also reviewed (Ellehleh, 2019:2817). The four relevant Feminist theories, namely Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and

Black Feminist Theory were also reviewed to demonstrate the relationship between poverty and women:

- It was argued that **Radical Feminist Theory** highlights the patriarchal tendencies of power domination from one gender over the other, resulting in gender inequality and the oppression of women. It was inferred that to address this situation, women themselves should take responsibility and play a leading role to enhance their lives through initiatives that bring about the envisaged change. The poverty alleviation framework developed in this study concentrated on how a patriarchal system would counteract and inhibit oppression amongst women. The framework included initiatives which women could adhere to in alleviating oppression.

- **Liberal Feminist Theory**, derived from Liberal Theory, primarily focuses on gender equality and gratification of the same rights such as education and employment benefits, irrespective of the biological difference (Enyew & Mihrete, 2018:60). Failure to align equality and freedom due to any form of group differences misses the liberalism compliance mark (Kymlicka, 1995:165).

  It was further revealed the Liberal Feminist Theory is rooted in justice and liberty. It could be assumed that if future social operations are based on justice, it would be difficult to continue with any form of unethical or inequitable practices. It could also be inferred that if liberation is another important component of liberalism, justice and liberty would strengthen the future of liberalism and, by implication, the tenets of Liberal Feminist Theory. It was revealed that liberal legalism is a medium for making male dominance both invisible and legitimate by adopting the male point of view in law at the same time as it enforces that view of the society if “law becomes legitimate and social dominance becomes invisible (Mackinnon, 1989:237).

  The underlying factor is that social justice is a basic human right for all. However, the liberal approach expounded by Feminism is primarily aimed at institutional changes, which is a concern because women’s feelings and efforts are

discounted (Holmstrom, 2003:4). Nevertheless, the focus of equality and justice proclaimed by Liberal Feminist Theory makes it relevant to this study and the framework for the alleviation of poverty among women in the North West Province. Thus, the call for the rejection of inequality and the enforcement of freedom of choice to demonstrate women's worth could shape and benefit projects to alleviate poverty.

- **Social Feminist Theory** is aimed at inclusivity to act against challenges to which women are exposed instead of viewing these from one perspective. It incorporates inequality that relates to class, sexism, and racism (Sands & Nuccio, 1992:490). Furthermore, Social Feminist Theory denotes that women have the right to relinquish their socially constructed responsibilities of being home-bound to establish an avenue to operate in the public space (Donovan, 2012:31). Thus, economic equality provides women freedom and independence to discharge their domestic responsibilities effectively because the drivers of this chore are financial in nature (Lipschultz, 1989:136).

- **Black Feminist Theory** underscores inequalities amongst women in general but accentuates the woe experienced by black women. It was revealed that race, gender, and class are triple oppressions which black women endure in their daily lives to survive, resulting in them being unnoticed and marginalised (Carby, 1996:111; Chapagain, 2020:117; Brahmbhatt and Kaushik, 2021:2794). The strength of these three barriers (race, gender, and class) could enhance the challenges faced by black women more difficult compared to their white counterparts who have race discounted from their battle for equality (Hooks, 2014:21).

It was argued that gender equality (Radical Feminist Theory) is the starting block of Feminist Theory followed by societal freedom (Social Feminist Theory), justice and liberty (Liberal Feminist Theory) and lastly race, which is equally important but initially languished when the above-mentioned feminism theories were discussed and was not given the attention it deserved to benefit black women.

It was revealed that both the radical and social feminists concur with the criticism levelled by Liberal Theory that poverty is a shortcoming of economic emancipation. Radical Feminist Theory found its origin in the negative treatment by men of women when they raised their concerns about the unacceptable way they are treated. Moreover, the reaction displayed by men is tantamount to patriarchy. Thus, it was argued that the focus of Radical Feminist Theory is based on discrimination that is practised by men on the social front. Women strive to improve their lives and move away from the bondage by changing the balance of power that favours men and promotes inequality. Furthermore, Social Feminist Theory, similarly to Radical Feminist Theory, focuses on the inequality faced by women. Moreover, other inequalities that did not play a major role in the tenets of Radical Feminist Theory were incorporated, for example, racism and classism suffered by women in both the workplace and the family-setting where their work is undervalued and solely meant for them while men take no form of responsibility in discharging household responsibilities. The inclusion of gender equity, race, and class in the development of the policy implementation framework was critical to support women to alleviate poverty.

The final section of the chapter focused on techniques employed to reduce the level of the suffering that emanates from poverty – poverty alleviation, either completely or partially. It is argued that poverty is a multi–dimensional phenomenon that requires a poverty alleviation strategy that employs various methods to realise the objective of poverty reduction. Using one method to address poverty alleviation defeats the purpose because it would be a narrow approach and likely neglect interrelated factors to address the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. Hence, it was established intense critical thinking should form part of developing a poverty alleviation framework.

It was further revealed that a poverty alleviation framework should encompass strategies to: (1) allow women to reclaim their dignity through equal treatment (eradicate the patriarchal system and ensure gender equality); (2) increase social justice and liberty for women; (3) improve women's access to basic needs; and (4) enhance the economic capability of women. Equal participation of women in generating income also increases the level of equality and various methods should be used to ensure that the economic status of women contributes towards the alleviation

of poverty. These methods can include: (1) micro-financing; (2) a culture of saving; (3) economic growth, consistent with equality; and (4) self-help group strategies. All the aforementioned poverty alleviation strategies play a role in the development of a poverty alleviation framework for women in the North West Province.

- **To establish the international, continental, regional, and national statutory and regulatory frameworks that promote poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women**

Chapter 3 reviewed global, continental, regional and national legislation and policies that endeavour to alleviate the poverty of women and introduce mechanisms to empowerment them by addressing various socio-economic challenges.

The UN member states have a duty to implement its legislation and policies to achieve its objectives of which poverty alleviation, particularly for women, is but one such objective. In addition to the UN legislation, developed countries bear the responsibility to support developing countries by formulating poverty alleviation policies that are binding to enhance developing countries. However, the International Regulatory Framework does not exonerate developing countries from establishing their own legislation and implementation of empowerment mechanisms to alleviate poverty.

The AU's member states subscribe to the UN legislation and policies which, among others, target poverty alleviation amongst women and empowerment in the continent, regions and ultimately the respective countries. At the national level South Africa utilises the binding directives of both the UN and the AU to formulate its own legislation and policies to address poverty and empower women but strictly operate from the premise of the mentioned frameworks. All the legislation and policies reviewed in this chapter refer to challenges associated with inequality and highlight that women are the primary target audience based on the poverty levels they experience daily, surpassing the poverty levels of men (Munoz Boudet *et al.,* 2018:4).

The mechanisms established through the international regulatory framework have a focus on human rights and in particular, the human rights of women. A regulatory framework, such as the UN's SDGs (UN, 2015) are aimed at finding resolutions to the

direst socio-economic challenges experienced by global citizens. Furthermore, the above mechanisms have a focus on the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women, with some giving particular attention to the struggles of women in rural areas. Several of these mechanisms (e.g., First World Conference of Women, 1975; and CEDAW) present women with the opportunity to meaningfully engage with each other and actively get involved in finding solutions to their own problems. The CSW is geared towards gender equality and the emancipation of women. Gender equality is a factor expressed by the mechanisms reviewed above. Therefore, the international regulatory framework addresses the concerns of women pertaining to poverty alleviation, inequality, their empowerments and all the related socio-economic challenges.

The review on the foreign aid provided by developed states and organisations such as the UN and the EU, revealed that the support is primarily geared towards the socio-economic upliftment in the developing countries, with a particular focus on poverty alleviation and the enhancement of equality (e.g., USAID). The USA's Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Setting Act, 2017, directs the aid to the education of girls and women, especially relevant to this study. In Chapter 2, Section 2.2, education has been identified as one of the primary determinants of poverty. It was argued that education results in economic emancipation and is regarded as a tool to alleviate poverty. Furthermore, in South Africa, education forms part of the constitutional rights of every citizen (see Chapter 1, Section 1.6; and Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). For women, education is beneficial to manage their responsibilities and provides them the power to make appropriate decisions when the need arises, that is, either on the home front or personal (Zhu, 2020:658). Thus, access to education for women was found to be amongst the universal poverty alleviation tools that could empower them socially and economically (Munoz Boudet *et al.,* 2018:33; Doroba, 2018; Tagar *et al.,* 2019:96; Zhang, 2020:1; Wei *et al.*, 2021:14).

The USA's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, 2012, envisages to see women and girls alongside men and boys enjoying the same social, political, and economic benefits. However, gender inequality is demonstrated by the state of inequality in South Africa which is regarded as the most unequal in the world (Gumede, 2021:12).

The USA's Growth and Development Act, 2014, focuses specifically on economic growth, undeniably relevant to South Africa. It should, however, be cautioned that using economic growth as sole strategy in an unequal environment is not benefitting the community in its entirety. For the economic growth to be fair and just, every person should be afforded the opportunity of active economic participation and enjoy the benefits thereof. Inclusive development should therefore be a precursor to inclusive growth if the poverty reduction process is to succeed in its endeavour (Ngepah, 2017:52) and women should be given the same economic opportunities as men. Furthermore, the social class strata also hamper the distribution of resources depriving the poor from moving out of poverty. It was argued that the foreign aid with all its good intentions operate from a hostile environment that serves people differently diminishing the efforts of foreign aid to alleviate poverty. It was further argued that the improvement of the aforementioned is at a slow pace. In spite of the intentions of foreign aid aimed at benefitting the developing countries South Africa seems to be slow in alleviating poverty, especially the poverty experienced by women in the rural areas (such as the North West Province, in the case of this study). In this respect, it is envisaged that a targeted implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province will assist.

In consideration of the review on the AU's legislation and policies, aimed at poverty alleviation, it became evident that the support that AU member states render to each other demonstrates the potential to accomplish more than would have been the case in the absence of the envisaged partnerships. It was therefore argued that the AU partnerships would also provide the confidence to negotiate with, for instance foreign countries that provide aid to developing countries; thereby, enhancing the probability of securing aid to give effect to its legislation and policies aimed at poverty alleviation in its member states.

It was furthermore argued that women continue to find it difficult to enjoy and realise the articles of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003. As contended in the sections above, it became evident that the focal points of the human rights, enshrined in these (e.g., the right to work, health, education, equality, etc.) are however, also elucidated in the NDP (RSA, 2011) as the

primary socio-economic challenges faced by South Africa. It is therefore evident that, despite the statutory and regulatory prescripts from both South Africa and the AU, these human rights are still elusive to many South African citizens. As argued from the onset of this study, the human rights (also emerging in the South African landscape as socio-economic challenges), in the absence thereof, are related to poverty. Poverty thrives mostly in an area that is disadvantaged and is characterised by socio-economic deprivation (SAHRC and UNICEF, 2014:37; Midgley,2021:9). Especially relevant to this study is that, according to Group (20122:3); the South Africa Women's Month Status Report on Women and Girls (2015b:2); and Picard (2021:10), women are classified as a vulnerable or disadvantaged group and are therefore excluded from accessing socio-economic benefits that relieve people from the hardship of poverty.

The support of various structures to support the empowerment of women was underscored in the review on the mechanisms established by the AU and SADC. However, the implementation of the regional structures' plans should not be dealt with in a stand-alone manner but should rather find expression in the national structures' directives to assert that the alleviation of poverty amongst women is streamlined, achieved, and cascaded further to all the AU member states, including South Africa.

The review on the mechanisms established by the AU and SADC also revealed that, like poverty, equality is multi-dimensional and that women often experience overlapping social, economic, cultural, and psychological causes of poverty that influence each other. Therefore, the utilisation of various poverty alleviation tools that supplement each other, and involving various role-players, are critical when addressing poverty among women. This sentiment was echoed in the SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development, 2008. Moreover, the premise is included in the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, developed in this study.

It became evident that the Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997, acknowledges the importance of using gender mainstreaming to promote sustainable development in the SADC region. Some of the members in a community benefit at the expense of the others, displayed by the difference between the rich and the poor. The Gender and Development Monitor 2022 (SADC, 2022:11) confirms that the gender

equality pace is slow as identified in the political leadership where women lag behind men in senior positions. It is the responsibility of women to initiate the change they want to see. However, with the inequality observed in leadership positions it can be argued that gender mainstreaming is not reaching most of the women and promotes inequality that in some instances lead to poverty. Thus, failing to promote sustainable development.

Aligned to the intentions of the Declaration on Gender and Development, 1997, the Protocol on Gender and Development, 2008, stipulates that programme designs must incorporate equality to protect against discriminatory practices and tendencies that undermines legislation and policies. SADC legislation should therefore be scrutinised to verify if these achieve the set objectives and to corroborate whether equality forms part of these programmes.

Government's efforts are noticed in the development of the IDP strategies which are based on community consultation and partnership to address the socio-economic challenges, but, regrettably, despite the mechanisms to promote the empowerment of women, poverty in South Africa continues unabated. In this respect, the study aimed to contribute to a solution through the development of the implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

The review of the national legislation and policies for the poverty alleviation of women revealed that the Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011) serve as the primary interventions to address, among others, the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. However, the implementation does not demonstrate the expected outcomes, evident in the levels of poverty that women continue to experience (Moletsane *et al.,* 2010:1; Merten, 2017:1; Ndalamba, 2019:37). The level of poverty among women is visibly high in the country which could be attributed to the large number of women. Consequently, the registered progress is insignificant because poverty alleviation is taking place at an extremely slow pace.

In addition to the Constitution, 1996, and the NDP (RSA, 2011) various legislation and policies promulgated by the government and reviewed above focus on the poverty alleviation of women. These legislation and policies address pivotal issues relating to

the poverty alleviation of women, including, education (South African School Act, 1996; Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000; and White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2014); health (White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System, 1997); equality (Promotion of Equality and Discrimination Act, 2000); housing (Housing Act, 1997); safety and security (Draft White Paper on Safety and Security, 2015); access to information (PAIA Act, 2000); and cooperation between the role players in the efforts to alleviate poverty and empower women (Cooperative Act, 2005).

The statutory and regulatory framework reviewed above, particularly relate to particular socio-economic challenges experienced by the citizens of South Africa, and especially those that live in poverty, for instance, women residing in the rural areas of the North West Province. It is argued that the exclusion of socio-economic opportunities deprives citizens of their human rights, enshrined in the Constitution, 1996. Research has also revealed a direct correlation between exclusion from socio-economic opportunities and poverty (Kabeer, 2016:3). In this respect, Social Exclusion Theory postulates that established barriers marginalise and exclude people from social and economic activities that other people enjoy (Figueroa, 2018:10). These so-called barriers are observed in the rural areas of the North West Province where citizens experience a lack of opportunities to education, health, housing, adequate infrastructure, and sufficient water and electricity provision, to name a few. Specific to the objectives of this study, the focus is placed on women in these communities and their poverty. Relevant to this focus is Radical Feminist Theory that is defined by its focus to discard oppressive behaviour suffered by women and allow them to enjoy justice in all their social dealings without an intent to destroy men (Effiong & Inyang, s.a:12-13). The tenets of Radical Feminist Theory are therefore rooted in gender equality.

The legislation and policies promulgated by the government, focussing on the empowerment of women, recognise that the empowerment of women should include strategies to alleviate the poverty of women. These legislation and policies address pivotal issues relating to the empowerment of women, including, preferential procurement of government tenders (Preferential Procurement Policy Framework, 2000); access and opportunities to women within the BBBEE framework (BBBEE Act,

2013); and the promotion of gender equality (Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013). Furthermore, it was determined that the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework, 2000, in its current form unintentionally excludes women who are uneducated due to the processes put in place in procuring goods and services of government. It is difficult for most women who are uneducated to read and comprehend documents. Thus, proper implementation of the framework in accordance with the set standards of PAJA (2000) and PAIA (2000) could benefit the illiterate.

It was argued that the BBBEE Act, 2013, is progressive and targets disadvantaged people including women. However, it is a challenge for women to benefit from the BBBEE because of their education level which hampers them from understanding how to use BBBEE to their benefit. In addition, the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013, gives impetus to the Constitution, 1996, since it is aligned to address socio-economic challenges to promote gender equality as human right.

- **To determine the socio-economic factors and causes that contribute to the poverty levels of women in the North West Province**

Chapter 4 of the study provided a profile of the North West Province, particularly reviewing the socio-economic challenges experienced in the province and relevant to the poverty alleviation of women. It was established that the North West Province was part of one of the former TBVC-homelands, Bophuthatswana. These homelands lacked basic amenities (Becker, 2017:30; Alexander, 2018:4) and sustained negative socio-economic factors (Sewell & Desai, 2016:17). Thus, it is not surprising to find that poverty continue to be exacerbated by socio-economic factors in the North West Province. Furthermore, according to Quarter 1 of Quarterly Labour Force Survey (RSA, 2021d:13), the North West Province's unemployment rate amounts to 32,2 %, and the South African poverty trends reveal that 64,3% of citizens in the North West Province live below the poverty line (RSA, 2017b:64).

It was revealed that approximately 261 693 households in the North West Province benefit from RDP dwellings with the NMMD and the RSMD respectively accounting for 48 824 and 29 556 of these (Stats SA, 2016d:44). A total population of 229 544

households live in informal dwellings). In this respect, it was argued that it is likely that people resort to reside illegally in informal settlements with no basic infrastructure services to avoid paying for municipal services.

It was further revealed that the North West Province operates below the national average household income and has the second lowest household income nationally with an average of R64 177 per annum that increases to R89 926 when other income (e.g., social grants) are added (RSA, 2016:16). Certain households depend on the social security/grant as their sole household income that benefits the recipients and the entire family (Mathebula *et al.,* 2017:9; Chipfupa & Wale, 2020:10). The North West Province has a social grant beneficiaries' population of 1 224 919 Stats SA, 2018b:1). Regrettably, the social security grant is sometimes the sole income for some households (Mathebula *et al.,* 2017:9; Chipfupa & Wale, 2020:10).

It became evident that local municipalities in South Africa find it difficult to implement the IDP despite the directives of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000, compelling municipalities to utilise the IDP as guide in delivering services to their communities. Moreover, studies conducted by Makalela (2017:14); and Aklilu and Makalela (2020:3) revealed that the IDPs of municipalities do not contain details associated with the alleviation of poverty. In addition, the MIG that should be used as a financial avenue for municipalities to increase the social and economic in their jurisdictional areas and to address the imbalances of the past are not adequately spent on infrastructure. In addition, municipalities underspend their grant allocation, negatively influencing service delivery and irregular expenditure increase on an annual basis.

Evident from the contextualisation of the RLM was that it is the poorest municipality in the North West Province with 75,43% of its residents living below the poverty line. The residents in the RLM also experience a high unemployment rate. It was furthermore asserted that not only the unemployed, but also the employed can be considered as poor in consideration of the measurement of absolute poverty, stating that absolute poverty refers to the deprivation of the basic needs such as shelter, water, health, sanitation, which is the case with residents of the RLM. Moreover, the multi-dimensionality of poverty became evident in the RLM in respect to the residents'

unemployment rate, their socio-economic conditions and geographical locale (in a rural area).

A further concern in both the RLM and the GTLM is the gender-neutral language used in these municipalities' official documents pertaining to poverty alleviation programmes. Since black women as the marginalised group experience triple jeopardy based on race, class, and gender, and taking in consideration the larger population of women than men in the jurisdictional area of the RLM, based on a feminist philosophical perspective, it is argued that specific reference should be made to women and the prioritisation of their poverty alleviation.

Regarding the review on the GTLM's IDP, it was revealed that its poverty reduction and gender equity plan, as well as the HIV/AIDS plan programme are outstanding. Consequently, failure to plan and implement programmes or projects relevant to the alleviation of poverty might promote and sustain the perpetual life of poverty amongst residents of the GTLM and specifically relevant to this study, women in the GTLM. It was further revealed that the GTLM's LED plan would indirectly compensate for the unplanned programmes (GTLM, 2017:93); thereby, failing to allocate the necessary funding to LED projects. In addition, the AG reported that the GTLM's achievements were not reliable and failed to be supported by relevant source documents to ensure that the reports are credible (Makwetu, 2017:62).

The review on the social challenges experienced in the North West Province, and particularly in the jurisdictional areas of the RLM and the GTLM, revealed several obstacles to flourish, including the following:

- The unattainable goal of social justice.
- The continued prevalence of classism and racism, especially among black women who are exposed to both these categories of discrimination.
- The practices of tradition and culture as remnants of a patriarchal system that often places women on the peripheries of development.
- Poorly located and inadequate infrastructure that, combine with the social challenges are inherited from the apartheid era and further exacerbated by the

government's inability to provide adequate infrastructure to rural communities. These infrastructure challenges include insufficient water systems, inadequate electricity provision, and sub-standard road and transport services in the rural areas.

- Inadequate health facilities, depriving especially residents in the rural areas from effectively experiencing this constitutional right.

In addition to the social challenges the RLM and the GTLM also experience economic challenges. Social and economic challenges are mutually dependent and especially relevant in the context of poverty alleviation. The review on the economic challenges experienced in the North West Province revealed two primary obstacles to prosperity experienced by these communities, including the following: (1) unemployment as one of the primary causes of poverty. The unemployment rate among women is especially concerning, being the highest of any group in the country; (2) the low level of household income, the second lowest in the country. The high unemployment rate in the RLM and the GTLM could be a contributory factor in the low household income rate; and (3) education, with women the least educated.

In consideration of the grave poverty experienced in the communities of the RLM and the GTLM, it is argued that the socio-economic challenges significantly contribute to the poor living standard of residents in these communities. As highlighted throughout this study, considering the focus of this research, women as the marginalised group more intensively experience these challenges due to their unique circumstances, as well as historic patriarchal discriminatory practices.

The North West Province's poverty alleviation initiatives include the RRR strategy and the CRDP. The RRR strategy seeks to initiate a process of a radical socio-economic programme (North West Province, 2017:3) to address poverty, inequality, and unemployment by stimulating an encompassing economic growth in the province; and to pursue cooperate governance and promote effective and efficient service delivery. In pursuit of delivering the aims of the NDP (RSA, 2011) to alleviate poverty the implementation of the RRR strategy is anchored in five pillars and geared towards changing the socio-economic circumstances of the citizens of the North West Province: (1) ACT (Agriculture, Culture & Tourism); (2) VTSD (Villages, Township and

Small *Dorpies*); (3) RHR (Reconciliation, Healing and Renewal); (4) *Setsokotsane* (comprehensive and integrated service delivery campaign); and (5) *Saamtrek Saamwerk* call for unity of purpose above race divisions. All five pillars aim to confront poverty distinctively. The strategies, however, do not take cognisance that women are in the majority and experience poverty more severely. Furthermore, the broad implementation of the strategies ignores the importance of moving away from gender neutral programmes, also alluded to in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, that stated that in most instances the inequality between men and women is intensified.

The focus of the CRDP is on partnership between the community and departments, access to basic needs, social cohesion among community organisations and affording people the opportunity to fashion their own destiny (RSA, 2009:1). Furthermore, the CRDP identifies rural sites which are in dire need of economic enhancement.

Against this background, it was established in this chapter that a poverty alleviation programme for women in the North West Province should be prioritised.

- **To develop a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province**

Chapter Five presented and interpreted the findings of the empirical investigation, based on the data gathered from the North West Province's SMS members from the READ, DSD and DLGHS who participated in the study. The chapter outlined the research methodology that was adopted to get a detailed understanding of the challenges that were experienced. The gathered data from the interviews was examined and subjected to coding and grouped in a logical manner. The primary findings of the empirical investigation revealed that the level of poverty in the rural areas is extremely high, and it was identified that women experience disproportionate levels of poverty compared to their male counterparts. The results obtained also revealed an array of socio-economic circumstances that cause and/or escalate poverty among women in the North West Province, including, culture and tradition; gender-based discrimination; lack of education, illiteracy and a lack of skills; inadequate water and electricity provision; sub-standard public health facilities; unpaid domestic responsibilities; lack of financial power; high rate of child bearing; low

household income; and the high unemployment rate. Education was perceived as a primary tool to alleviate poverty for women. The high unemployment rate among women in the province can to a great extend be attributed to their lack of education, lack of skills and illiteracy. Occasionally women forego opportunities or empowerment projects because they are illiterate and do not comprehend, for instance, the tender processes, while in other instances it inhibits employment since they lack the requisite qualifications for employment opportunities.

It was further revealed that the legislation and policies that acknowledge the significance to empower women and subsequently alleviate poverty among women are prevalent at various levels: international regulatory legislation and policies (UN); international foreign aid (UN, USA, UK, EU); continental legislation (AU); regional legislation (SADC); national legislation and policies to alleviate poverty amongst women; and national tools and mechanisms to alleviate poverty and empower women. However, these remain ineffective and fail during the implementation phase. The ineffective implementation of legislation and policies is demonstrated by several municipalities' non-adherence to sections of the IDP. The IDPs of municipalities are directed towards the alleviation of poverty as well as improving socio-economic challenges through the integration of services. However, it seems that the IDPs does not achieve the set objectives. The impression is created that departments and municipalities, in some instances, deviate from their set strategic plans. Furthermore, it is asserted that legislation and policies exist in small pockets and should be consolidated, provide focus, and should be streamlined for proper coordination and successful implementation. Moreover, women ought to be recognised as the key stakeholders in policies. In this respect, it was argued that women should perform a participatory role to ensure the successful implementation of legislation and policies. The participation of women in the policy implementation phase therefore emerged as fundamental since they possess the living experience of poverty and would be committed to ensure that policies succeed for their own benefit.

The empirical results further revealed that the provincial departments are mutually exclusive and implement policies independently to address socio-economic challenges to alleviate poverty. In certain instances, various departments tend to target the same group in the same area. It is argued that the provincial departments

involved in the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province should collaborate to alleviate poverty to ensure that the socio-economic barriers that affect women are abolished through the implementation of relevant policies. It is further argued that the poverty alleviation programmes in a particular district should be implemented from one district's coordinated and consolidated plan with input from all the departments involved.

Some of the identified poverty alleviation strategies are embedded in government programmes but emerge as a by-product of the primary programme. The financial benefits enjoyed by the NGOs from government funding assist them to participate in self-help groups where they organise themselves into *stokvels* and contribute a set monthly amount towards savings. The money that exchanges hands when they buy and sell goods influences the inclusive development of the economic growth, although on a small scale. Therefore, micro-financing, saving (indirectly through the *stokvels*), self-help groups and inclusive development for economic growth takes place within the North West Province programmes, to a greater or a lesser degree. It is argued that these strategies, could however be more effectively organise to reap optimal benefits and is therefore included in the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province.

The aforementioned empirical results reiterated the need for a policy implementation framework for women in the North West Province. In the development of the implementation framework, not only the results obtained through the empirical investigation were considered, but also the results obtained through the literature review (theoretical framework), established in Chapter 2 of the study, including the tenets of Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; Individualistic Theory; Social Feminist Theory; Radical Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory.

The policy implementation framework identified barriers and provided solutions to the effective and efficient implementation of policy alleviation programmes for women in the North West Province, particularly for those in the RLM and the GTLM. The framework advocates for the involvement of poor women in the implementation framework's activities. Their roles and responsibilities, as well as the roles and

responsibilities of other stakeholders in the Implementation Plan were clarified in this chapter.

The policy implementation framework consists of five stages of implementation: exploration; installation; initial implementation; full implementation; and sustained implementation. Compliance with these implementation stages will be significant in the effectiveness and efficiency of the conceptual policy implementation framework. The significance of the cooperation between the various spheres of government and the relationship among various service sectors; and successfully managing the aforementioned to ensure the effective implementation of the framework were also highlighted in the chapter.

The pre-implementation activities for the policy implementation framework have been clarified (the construction of a leadership team; the construction of a stakeholder group; the exploration of strategies and potential innovation; decisions on strategies and innovation; the establishment of responsibilities; the securement of cross-departmental support; the finalisation of responsibilities; the development of a Communication Plan; the development of system support; the improvement of data systems, evaluation and monitoring; training and technical assistance procedures; and the finalisation of the Implementation Plan) have been clarified. The framework's stages, namely: (i) implementation determinants; (ii) implementation strategies; (iii) and implementation evaluation, were also highlighted and explained in the chapter.

- **To make recommendations on the implementation of a policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province**

The recommendations made in this chapter are aimed at facilitating the implementation of the policy implementation framework that was developed in Chapter 5 and are based on the theoretical framework to alleviate poverty and the empowerment of women identified (Chapter 2); the national and international statutory and regulatory framework for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women (Chapter 3); the socio-economic factors and causes which contribute to poverty levels of women in the North West Province (Chapter 4); and the results obtained from the

empirical investigation (Chapter 5). The following recommendations are made for the policy implementation framework for the policy alleviation of women in the North West Province, particularly women in the RLM and the GTLM:

- **Recommendation 1: Women should be placed at the centre of poverty alleviation as key role players**

The policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation for women in the North West Province disregards cultural beliefs that exclude women from institutions, for example, in social and economic areas. Women are identified and included as key role players in the policy implementation framework since they present vast knowledge of lived experiences relevant to the effective implementation of the policy implementation framework. Furthermore, the involvement of women in the framework's activities would be empowering to them by providing them with responsibilities and accountability. The inclusion of women as key role players in the policy implementation framework's activities furthermore provides them authority and the opportunity to craft their circumstances.

- **Recommendation 2: Provincial departments should take leadership in the implementation of the policy implementation framework**

Policy implementation is the responsibility of multiple integrated stakeholders (Hudson *et al.*, 2019:4). However, it is crucial to ensure that stakeholders are properly prioritised, interlinked, and assigned qualitative responsibilities. Supplementary to engaging multiple stakeholders, the OECD DAC Guidelines for gender equality and empowerment of women in development cooperation hold that effective leadership is particularly key if the entire staff, including management, takes full accountability for the successful implementation of policy (OECD DAC, 1999:24; Khan, 2016:10). In this respect, the provincial departments as the custodians should take a leadership role in the implementation of the framework through policy alleviation programmes.

It is furthermore also the responsibility of the provincial departments to ensure that an approved budget and sufficient funding for the implementation of the framework are

available. Sound financial management is informed by clear roles, responsibilities and accountability. It is, however, not the sole responsibility of the departments; stakeholders must share the responsibility by ensuring, upholding and maintaining the effective and efficient utilisation of the allocated funds, although the provincial departments should take leadership in this regard.

As part of their leadership role, the provincial departments should also draft a Communication Plan. A Communication Plan should be clear, direct, timely, understood by all stakeholders, and should limit confusion about the aim of the implementation framework and communicated to all the stakeholders.

Moreover, it is evidenced that the departments operate independently and in isolation to alleviate poverty. It is imperative that the provincial department cooperate with each other to ensure effective leadership is taken. Cooperation will also ensure relevant information sharing and avert duplication which retards service delivery. The effective collaboration between the departments will furthermore support the sharing of resources.

Recommendation 3: The IDPs should be integrated with the policy implementation framework

The IDPs of municipalities should guide the implementation of relevant services, including the poverty alleviation of women. An integration of the policy implementation framework with the IDPs of the RLM and the GTLM could sustain and promote the effectiveness and efficiency of the poverty alleviation programmes for women.

The IDPs should serve to resolve problems and attract external stakeholders to implement the poverty alleviation programmes. It should be a consultation and an agreement process between the municipalities and their stakeholders. Women, who are identified as key stakeholders in the policy implementation framework should play a key role in the implementation of the IDPs. Therefore, the integration of the policy implementation framework with the IDPs provides impetus to alleviate poverty**.**

Recommendation 4: The policy implementation framework should be targeted to contribute to the socio-economic development of women and eradicate factors that contribute towards the social exclusion of women

Socio-economic factors that challenge women in the North West Province to escape poverty should be addressed through the policy implementation framework and the poverty alleviation programmes that will be steered by the framework. The empirical findings suggest that it would be disingenuous for the government to continue to use the same poverty alleviation programmes that fail to yield the envisaged results. In this respect, the policy implementation framework promotes an all-encompassing process to effectively plan these programmes according to comprehensive and systematic stages, including pre-implementation activities; an implementation process with stages of implementation; implementation strategies; determinants to be considered during the implementation process and sound implementation evaluation. The structured and scientifically based implementation framework is envisaged to deliver better results with the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes than was the case prior to the implementation framework.

The policy implementation framework also advocates for the content of the poverty alleviation programmes to be assessed to ensure that it aligns with the objectives of the Implementation Plan and to ensure that the programmes' content is measurable and contributes towards the outcomes of the Implementation Plan. The specified number of women participating in the implementation framework must be assessed to acquire the target and to show the outcome in the form of a decreased level of poverty of women, particularly in the RLM and the GTLM.

The socio-economic challenges that women in the North West Province, and in particular, women in the areas of the RLM and the GTLM experience, are at the centre of the policy implementation framework. Therefore, the content of the poverty alleviation programmes should be focused on the socio-economic challenges that have been revealed through the findings of both the theoretical and empirical investigations of the study. Education has been revealed as the primary socio-economic factor, impeding opportunities for women to participate in economic activities. Education is therefore perceived as a primary tool to alleviate poverty among

women. The high unemployment rate among women in the North West Province, and especially in the areas of the RLM and the GTLM, can to a great extend be attributed to their lack of education, lack of skills and illiteracy. Opportunities to education should therefore receive prominence in the poverty alleviation programmes.

The EPWP strategy is already utilised by various spheres of government to promote employment and develop skills to alleviate poverty and specifically target women and the youth. The provincial departments should cooperate to coordinate their activities related to the EPWP strategy to enhance the success of the EPWP.

In addition, socio-economic factors such as health, electricity, water, roads, housing and transport should receive prominence in the poverty alleviation programmes. In advancing access to women to, for instance, health care facilities, an improvement of infrastructure such roads and transport is necessitated. The IDPs should be drafted through a comprehensive consultation process, involving all stakeholders, and be integrated with the policy implementation framework to ensure proper coordination between the provincial departments, the district municipalities and the local municipalities to address service delivery challenges such as water and electricity provision (also see Section 5.4.3). Moreover, housing is identified as a human right in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution, 1996) and should therefore be included as an aspect to be addressed in the poverty alleviation programmes.

Strategies such as micro-financing, saving (indirectly through the *stokvels*), and the self-help group strategy should be incorporated in the poverty alleviation programmes. These strategies are already to a greater or lesser degree implemented within the North West Province's poverty alleviation programmes. It is, however, argued that these strategies, could be more effectively organise to reap optimal benefits.

Should the aforementioned recommendations be implemented and the all-encompassing steps in the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province be diligently followed, it is envisaged that it would yield positive results, viz., the poverty alleviation and empowerment of women.

6.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In spite of the multitude of international, continental, regional, and national legislation, policies, mechanisms and programmes available for the poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women, the prevalence of poverty among women in the North West Province continues unabated, especially for those residing in rural areas. It was therefore inferred (supported by the theoretical framework and the empirical investigation) that the root of the problem could be found in the implementation of the legislation, policies, mechanisms, and programmes, rather than the formulation thereof. In this respect, the study's contribution is found in the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province that was developed. The implementation framework will assist in improving the effect of poverty alleviation initiatives for women in the North West Province by readjusting the programmes, methods, and interventions to include women as the primary key driver for the poverty alleviation programmes.

6.4. FUTURE RESEARCH

The study identified the need for future scientific research on the inclusion of targeted groups, in this instance women, and their role and responsibility in the poverty alleviation process. Furthermore, a comparative study can be conducted to compare the levels of poverty among women in rural and urban areas to gather diverse knowledge, consistent with the broad implementation of poverty alleviation strategies; and alignment with opportunities to avoid the impact of spatial bias and to promote equality amongst women.

6.5. CONCLUSION

Poverty is a global and multi-dimensional phenomenon. However, women are more severely affected by poverty than their male counterparts. Furthermore, in developing countries, women carry the burden of poverty to a greater extent than those in developed nations with most residing in rural areas. Subsequently, the study focused on the poverty alleviation among women and, coincidentally, the empowerment of women. The North West Province was the locus of this study and, more specifically,

the RLM and the GTLM, both located in rural areas and regarded as some of the poorest municipalities in the North West Province.

The following research problem was investigated: Despite an array of international, continental, regional and national attempts made towards the alleviation of poverty among women; the myriad of legislation and policies formulated for the empowerment of women; and several mechanisms and programmes developed for this purpose, women in the rural areas of the North West Province continue to experience grave poverty.

The study was embedded in a theoretical framework of Feminist theories, *viz*. Radical Feminist Theory; Liberal Feminist Theory; Social Feminist Theory; and Black Feminist Theory. The Feminist theories explicated the oppression, inequality, patriarchy, socio-cultural barriers, and intersectional challenges experienced by women and how these relate to poverty among women. In addition, the theoretical framework guiding the study included theories that explain poverty, *viz*., Social Exclusion Theory; Structural Theory; and Individualistic Theory. These three theories respectively clarified social barriers, systemic impediments and individual deficiencies that intensify poverty. In addition, a statutory and regulatory framework of international, continental, regional and national legislation and policies, aimed at poverty alleviation and the empowerment of women were reviewed. Furthermore, socio-economic factors and causes that contribute to the poverty levels of women in the North West Province were considered, including challenges such as unpaid domestic responsibilities, household income, educational opportunities, poor healthcare services, housing variables, inadequate access to basic amenities (e.g., water, electricity, proper roads, and efficient transport); economic opportunities, and spatial challenges unique to rural areas.

The study adopted a constructivist ontology, an interpretivist epistemology and a qualitative research approach. For the empirical investigation, semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with the SMS members form the selected provincial departments, that is, Social Development; Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development; and Local Government and Human Settlements. By means of the constructivist approach, the research, through a rigorous theoretical analysis,

explored the multi-dimensional nature of poverty as social reality. It was argued that poverty cannot be objectively viewed from a single perspective. Thus, value was be placed on the differing views on poverty held by social role-players (individuals, communities and policy makers). These views were analysed and interpreted to construct meaning to poverty in the context of the broader South African society and in particular, the North West Province. The interpretive approach allowed for the collection of "soft" data such as experiences, perceptions, opinions, values, meanings, and beliefs. The different views on the same phenomenon, as well as the various definitions found on poverty (due to varying experiences and perspectives), were incorporated in the study. The study interpreted and integrated the personal perspectives, opinions, attitudes, insights and experiences of the role-players in the social environment in the quest to ascribe meaning to *poverty* as phenomenon in the North West Province.

The primary findings of the empirical investigation revealed an array of socio-economic circumstances that cause and/or escalate poverty among women in the North West Province, including, culture and tradition; gender-based discrimination; lack of education, illiteracy and a lack of skills; inadequate water and electricity provision; sub-standard public health facilities; unpaid domestic responsibilities; lack of financial power; high rate of child bearing; low household income; and the high unemployment rate. Education was perceived as a primary tool to alleviate poverty for women. The high unemployment rate among women in the province can to a great extend be attributed to their lack of education, lack of skills and illiteracy.

It was further revealed that the legislation and policies that acknowledge the significance to empower women and subsequently alleviate poverty among women are prevalent. However, these remain ineffective and fail during the implementation phase. The ineffective implementation of legislation and policies is demonstrated by several municipalities' non-adherence to sections of the IDP. An impression was also created that departments and municipalities, in some instances, deviate from their set strategic plans.

The empirical results further revealed that the provincial departments are mutually exclusive and implement policies independently to address socio-economic

challenges to alleviate poverty. It was argued that the provincial departments involved in the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province should collaborate to alleviate poverty to ensure that the socio-economic barriers that affect women are abolished through the implementation of relevant policies.

It was found that some of the identified poverty alleviation strategies (e.g., micro-financing; self-hep groups and saving) are embedded in government programmes but emerge as a by-product of the primary programme. It was argued that these strategies, could however be more effectively organise to reap optimal benefits.

Subsequently, this study developed a conceptual policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province to facilitate the implementation of the legislation and policies pertaining to poverty alleviation. The policy implementation framework promotes an all-encompassing process to effectively plan poverty alleviation programmes according to comprehensive and systematic stages, including pre-implementation activities; an implementation process with stages of implementation; implementation strategies; determinants to be considered during the implementation process and sound implementation evaluation. The structured and scientifically based implementation framework is envisaged to deliver better results with the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes than was the case prior to the implementation framework. Significantly, the policy implementation framework advocates for the involvement of women living in poverty in the implementation of poverty alleviation efforts.

Finally, recommendations towards the implementation of the policy implementation framework for the poverty alleviation of women in the North West Province, particularly women in the areas of the RLM and the GTLM, were made. The following primary were made: (1) women should be placed at the centre of poverty alleviation as key role players; (2) provincial departments should take leadership in the implementation of the policy implementation framework; (3) the IDPs of the municipalities should be integrated with the policy implementation framework; (4) the policy implementation framework should be targeted to contribute to the socio-economic development of women and eradicate factors that contribute towards the social exclusion of women.

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ANNEXURE A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the factors that contribute to poverty among women in the North West Province?
2. Which income level and/or standard of living are categorised as *poor*.
3. What is the relation between rural areas and poverty among women in the North West Province?
4. What are the socio-economic results of poverty among women in the North West Province?
5. Which legislation and/or policy are in place to alleviate poverty among women and how successful are they?
6. Which poverty alleviation strategies are in place in the Province/District and how successful are they?
7. Are any of the following poverty alleviation strategies applied to alleviate poverty among women in the North West Province:
    - Micro-financing
    - Education to teach women who live in poverty to save
    - Inclusive development for economic growth
    - Self-help group strategy
8. Which strategies can be put in place to *reduce poverty* among women in the North West Province and to improve their socio-economic circumstances?

ANNEXURE B

CONSENT FORM

Interviews

I, _____(name and surname), agree to participate in the research for a doctoral degree in Public Administration, titled ***A conceptual policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province***.

I give my consent to participate in the study with the following understanding:

- The purpose of the interview was explained to me.
- My participation is voluntary.
- My anonymity is ensured. Feedback on the responses obtained through the interviews will be reported as a collective; therefore, I will not be identified by name in the study.
- I may withdraw from the study at any given time.
- The information I provide will be used for the purpose of this research study only.
- I will answer questions honestly, based on my personal expertise, experience and views.

Participant:

Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Researcher:

Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

ANNEXURE C

NWU®
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ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Arts Research Ethics Committee (AREC)** on 24/08/2018, the Arts Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Aconceptual policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of womenin selected municipalities in the North West Province.
Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: L Vermeulen
Student: C Motjuwadi

Ethics number: N W U - 0 0 7 6 1 - 1 8 - A 7

Application Type:
Commencement date: 22/10/2018 **Risk Category:** Low
Expiry date: 23/10/2019
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the AREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the AREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the AREC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the AREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-RERC and AREC reserves the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*

ANNEXURE D

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa, 2520

Tel: +27 18 299-1625
Email: Luni.Vermeulen@nwu.ac.za
Date: 11 February 2019

The Administrator: Mr S Mpanza
Office of the Premier
North West Provincial Government

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – MS CR MOTJUWADI

Ms Carol Rankotsane Motjuwadi is a PhD student in Public Management and Governance at the North-West University (NWU) under my supervision. The title of her thesis is registered as *A conceptual policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province*.

As part of Ms Motjuwadi's study, an empirical research component should be conducted. In this respect, she wishes to interview a total of five (5) senior managers from each of the following North West provincial departments:

- The Department of Rural, Environmental and Agricultural Development
- The Department of Social Development
- The Department of Local Government and Human Settlement

It is believed that the information which will be obtained from these interviews will provide insight in the strategies for poverty alleviation in the North West Province and will therefore be valuable to the study. Ms Motjuwadi also plans to hold focus groups with a total of 20 women who live in poverty in the two poorest municipalities of the North West Province, namely Ratlou and Greater Taung.

Ms Motjuwadi's study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities. She will comply with ethical guidelines, as determined by the NWU and the Office of the Premier. Interview and focus group responses will be treated anonymously and no person will be identified in the research. The data gathered through the interviews will be used for the purpose of her PhD study only and will not be shared with any third party. On completion of the study, a copy of the thesis can be provided to the Office of the Premier, should it be requested.

It will be greatly appreciated if permission can be granted to Ms Motjuwadi to conduct her empirical research at the aforementioned municipalities. Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you need any additional clarification.

Kind regards

Prof Lumi Vermeulen
Director: School of Government Studies

ANNEXURE E

Office of the Premier
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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ADMINISTRATOR

Tel: +27 (18) 388-4276
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Enq: Mr. D. Miya
Tel: 018 388 5608

MS CR MOTJUWADI
NWU School of Government Service
Private Bag X1290,
Potchefstroom
South Africa,
2520

Dear Ms. C.R. Motjuwadi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Kindly be advised that your request for permission to conduct research study within the Provincial Government of North West titled: **"A conceptual policy implementation framework for poverty alleviation of women in selected municipalities in the North West Province"**, has been acceded to.

It must however be noted that: Certain information in the Public Service is classified and you will not be favoured with such. Relevant officials to be interviewed will have to be consulted well in advance to negotiate interview dates/times as well as information to be required.

Further, the Provincial Government through the Office of the Premier will require a copy of your endorsed thesis or dissertation. For further assistance, please be at liberty to contact Mr. Molutsi Mothibi, Deputy-Director of Research in the Office of the Premier on the details: Tel: 018 388 3391 email: MolutsiMothibi@nwpg.gov.za

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

On behalf of the Provincial Government, we would like to wish you all the best with your research project.

Regards,

MR. S. MPANZA
ADMINISTRATOR: OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

DATE 06/03/2019