

CHAPTER 4

LOCAL RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION AND HOW DELIVERY CAN BE IMPROVED

4.1 Introduction

The first part of the chapter deals with the design of the research. The sample size, the research population and the profile of respondents, are also analysed. The process of interviewing participants, using questionnaires and consolidating the information in the Musa Oral Archive (MOA), formed part of the project's methodology of data gathering. The findings are presented in a manner intended to convey the perceptions of residents on service delivery. Their perceptions actually reflect their frustrations, survival strategies and some of their reactions to the circumstances under which they have lived. This chapter concludes with strategies residents feel will alleviate the challenges they face on water supply and sanitation in their area.

4.2 Qualitative research

The study used mainly the qualitative research method to collect data. The quantitative part of the study shed some light on the demographics of the 100 respondents, as well as their perceptions on water and sanitation issues in the study area. According to Hennik, Hunter and Bailey, (2011:10), qualitative research is useful for exploring new topics or explaining complex issues, as well as explaining people's beliefs and behaviour. It actually provides information about the 'human' side of an issue. Qualitative research will enable the study to present the perceptions of Boiketlong informal settlement residents on the provision of water and sanitation. Hennik *et al.* (2011:10) assert that the main purpose for conducting qualitative research is to –

- understand behaviour, beliefs, opinions and emotions from the perspective of the study participants themselves;
- understand and explain people's views and behaviour;
- understand the processes, such as how people make decisions, or negotiate about something;
- uncover the meaning that people give to their expectations;

- understand the social interactions among people, and the norms and values shared by them;
- identify the social, cultural, economic or physical context in which activities take place;
- give voice to issues of a certain study of population;
- provide depth, detail, nuance and context to the research issues;
- examine in detail sensitive issues such as sexuality, violence and personal relationships; and
- study complex or hidden issues to be easily disentangled by qualitative research.

The researcher is supposed to establish a good rapport with the respondents in order for them to 'open up'. It was for this very reason that the current study was conducted in Sesotho. There are high levels of illiteracy in the area, and the majority of the residents of Boiketlong speak and understand only that language.

4.2.1 Sample size

The estimated population of the study area determines the sample size of the study. Brynard and Hanekom (2006:54) posit that sampling techniques assist in selecting a small group, with a view to determining the characteristics of a large group. The estimated population at the study area is 3 000 residents, and the research should, as a rule, involve at least 3% of the community members. The sample size for the current study is made up of 100 respondents. Questionnaires were used as the primary method of gathering the required data.

4.2.2 Research population

A population is a group of all subjects who possess the attributes which the researcher is interested in, for the study (Brynard & Hannekom, 2006:55). The residents of Boiketlong informal settlement come from rural as well as urban areas. People collecting water at communal taps were the targeted population for this study. The ELM personnel from Metsi-a-Lekoa water utility were part of the population relevant for the study. In addition to the selected population, the deputy principal and seven learners from Boiketlong Christian Primary School were also interviewed. Two learners, at the time of the interviews, lived in Boiketlong, but attended secondary school at a nearby township. They were also selected as participants in the study. One water vendor was selected as part of the study. There was also a focus group of eight adults interviewed in the course of conducting the research

fieldwork. Lastly, the ward councillor and two community leaders were included as participants in the study.

4.2.3 Research instrument

The objective of the empirical study was to obtain information from residents of Boiketlong informal settlement, schoolchildren in the area, ELM personnel and Metsi-a-Lekoa personnel, as well as to gather perceptions of the research population on water supply and sanitation in the study area.

4.2.4 Structured questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study consists of two parts (see Annexure A). This questionnaire is made up of 44 questions. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the demographics of respondents. Brynard and Hanekom (2006:46) indicate that the advantage of using structured questionnaires is that respondents will take the time to think about the answers to the questions. Also, a large number of respondents, distributed over a large geographical area, can be reached. The challenge with regard to questionnaires used, was that the respondents were reluctant to give their names and home addresses for fear of intimidation or repatriation, as some were foreign nationals.

4.2.5 Musa Oral Archive

This was a research instrument that used to obtain information from the respondents with regard to water supply and sanitation. It allowed the respondents to give specific or general information on the question under discussion. It reflected the status or name of the respondent, and the date of the particular interview. It is recorded as (MOA) within the text, and in the bibliography of the study under 'Primary references'.

4.2.6 Data analysis and interpretation

This section focuses on data processing and reporting of interview results. The reporting of the results will follow the format of the questionnaire, as well as additional research instruments used. The findings of the research will assist in understanding the perceptions of residents, and the responses of ELM personnel, on water supply and sanitation in the informal settlement. The analysis and interpretation of data is inclusive of all participants in the study.

4.3 Demographics

4.3.1 Gender of the respondents

Table 1: Gender of respondents

GENDER	FREQUENCY
Male	32
Female	68
TOTAL	100

Figure 1: Gender of respondents

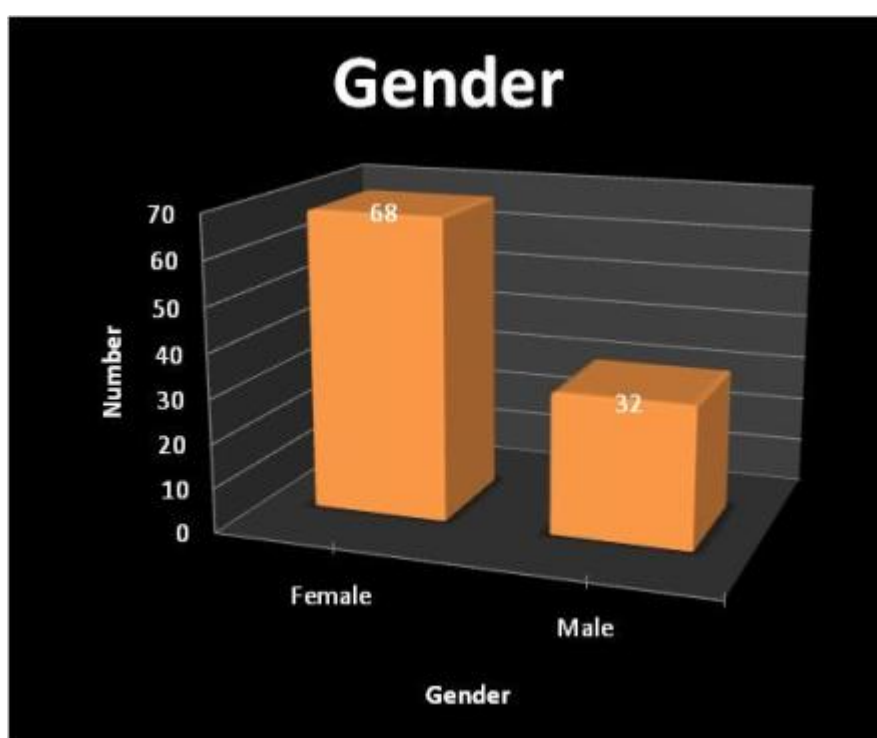


Table 1 and Figure 1, above, depict that the majority of the respondents in the study were females. This is attributed to the fact that most of the interviews were conducted at the communal taps during peak hours. This is the time when the majority of residents, particularly women and girls, fetch water for the evening meal and hygienic purposes.

In terms of the gender of respondents, 68% were females and 32% were males. This information is in line with the generally accepted view that the role of securing water normally falls to women and girls. Women are regarded as “water managers” in that they need water for cooking, cleaning, laundry, childcare and for sanitation needs.

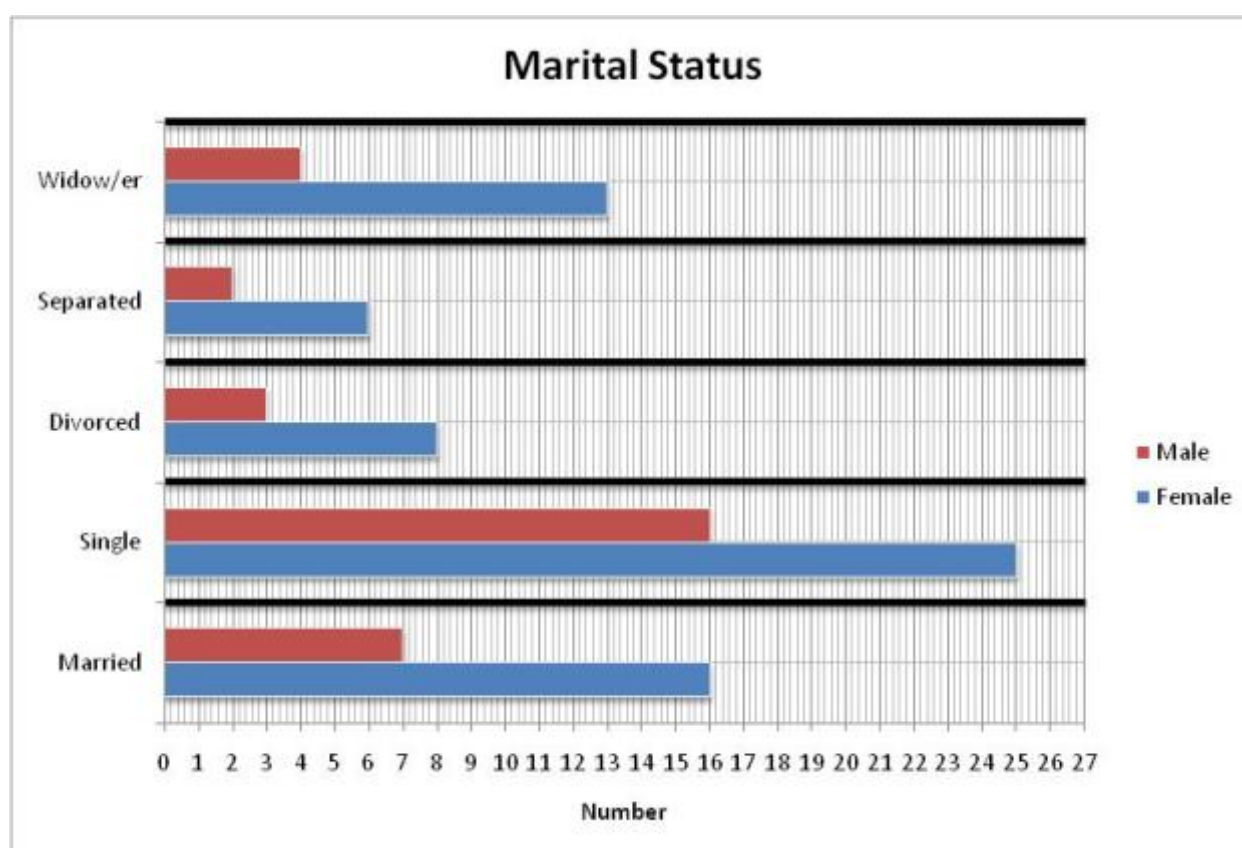
Contrary to the conventional belief that women and girls are responsible for collecting water, the situation at Boiketlong informal settlement proved that men and boys are also involved in collecting water for domestic use. It is evident that for their survival and livelihood, the roles of males change in accordance with the prevailing living conditions.

4.3.2 Marital Status

Table 2: Marital Status

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	
	FEMALES	MALES
Married	16	07
Single	25	16
Divorced	08	03
Separated	06	02
Widow/er	13	04
TOTAL	68	32

Figure 2: Marital Status



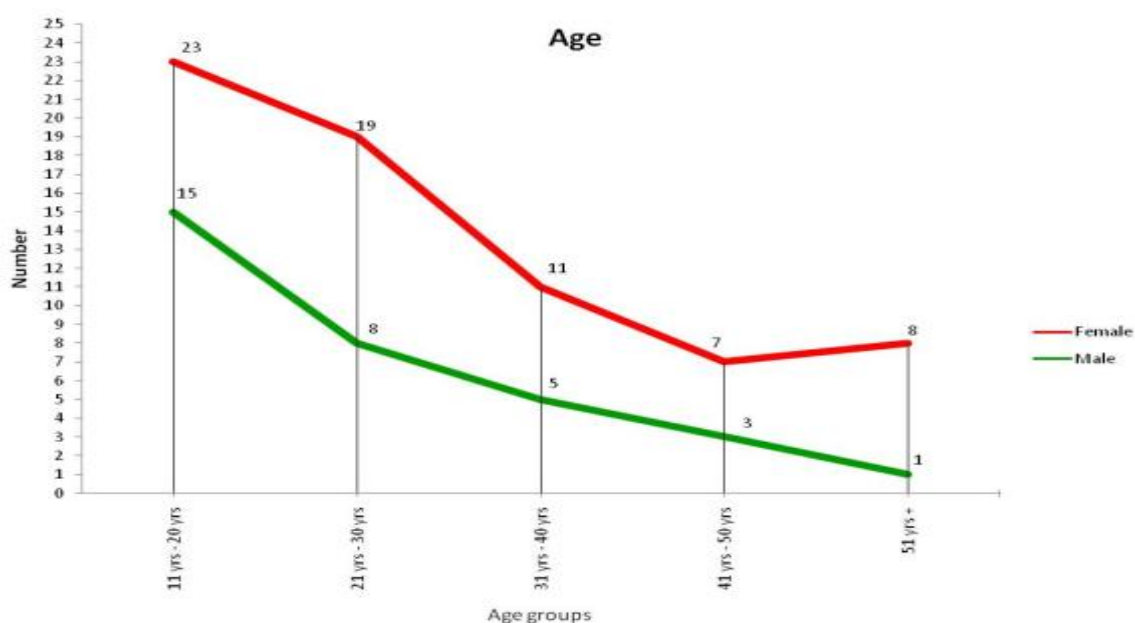
In terms of marital status, 16% of females were married, compared to their male counterparts who accounted for only 07% being married. Some marriages in the area were of cohabitation (common law) in nature, in that some residents were migrants to the area. Other forms of marriages were conventional/official marriages, whereas others were customary marriages; 25% of respondents were single females, and 16% were males. For the separation category, 06% females were separated, whereas 02% of males were separated from their loved ones. The percentage of female respondents divorced was 08%, compared to their male counterparts – which stood at 03%. Those who were widowed were 13% females and only 04% males.

4.3.3 Age of respondents

Table 3: Age of respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY OF FEMALES	FREQUENCY OF MALES
11 – 20	23	15
21 – 30	19	08
31 – 40	11	05
41 – 50	07	03
51+	08	01
TOTAL	68	32

Figure 3: Age of respondents



The age group of the respondents is depicted as follows:

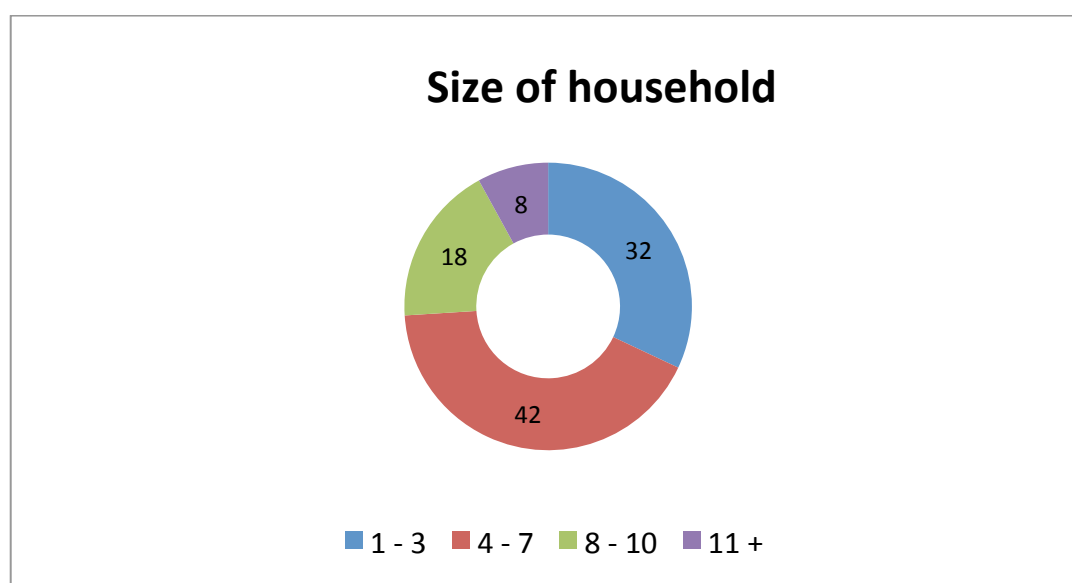
Between the ages 11 – 20 years, 23% were females and 15% were males. This was the highest age category of respondents responsible for collecting water in both genders. The majority of respondents in this age category were school children who collected water for their families –some of whom were working. At the range of 21 – 30 years, 19% were females and 08% were males. In the range of 31 – 40yrs, 11% were females and 05% were males. In the range of 41 – 50 years, 07% were females and 03% were males. From 51 years onwards, 08% were females, and only 01% male. The data confirmed the fact that women and girls of all ages are responsible for household chores that need water. The 68% of females responsible for fetching water confirmed that water collection is purely the responsibility of women and girls, more than that of men and boys.

4.3.4 Size of the household

Table 4: Size of household

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD	FREQUENCY
1 – 3	32
4 – 7	42
8 – 10	18
11+	08
TOTAL	100

Figure 4: Size of household



The data reflects the size of households, ranging from 3 to 11 people within the same household. From the population of the study, 1-3 people occupied 32% of the household.

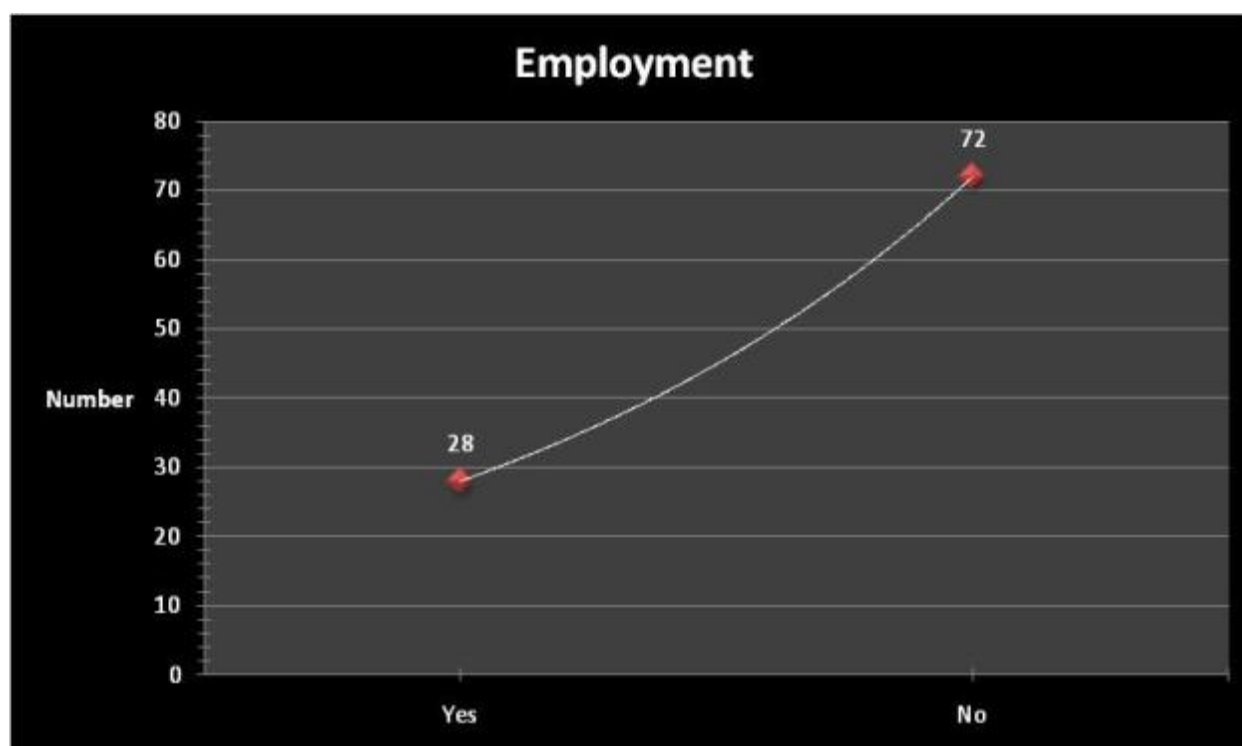
A population of 42% reflected households as being occupied by 4-7 people, and 18% of the population represented households occupied by 8 – 10 people. A total of 08% of the survey population reflected a population of 11 or more people resident in a single dwelling. From the interview, it was gathered that every room in such houses is used for sleeping by the occupants or family members. Observations of one household revealed that the house was occupied by a mother and her three daughters, and each daughter had her own child as well. The owner, spouse, children and/or extended families predominantly occupy each household.

4.3.5 Employment status of respondents

Table 5: Employment status of respondents

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	FREQUENCY
Employed	28
Not employed	72
TOTAL	100

Figure 5: Employment status of respondents



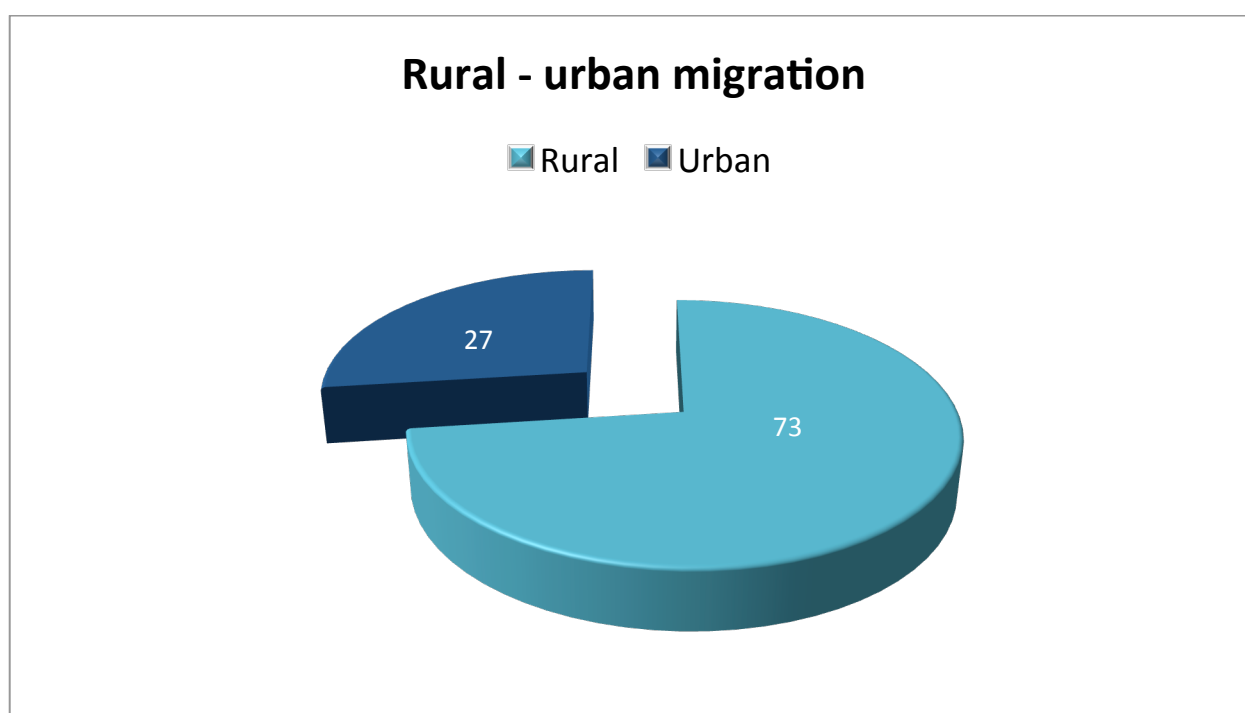
In terms of the data collected, 72% of the respondents did not work. Some from that sector relied on social grants for survival, and also casual jobs – which they sometimes secured after a long time. Some residents survived by selling beer, vegetables and scrap metal, and some worked as nannies, cleaners, gardeners and also water vendors. Some respondents said that some ladies were involved in sexual transactions at the nearby Masiza and Sebokeng hostels. Even within the area, there were some ladies who were operating from the shebeens at night. It was also alleged that there were a group of young men and women who were selling illegal “nyaope” drugs at shebeens where most youth go for entertainment. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents were working, and most of them earned meagre salaries – between R650 and R1 200.

4.3.6 In-migration to the area

Table 6: Rural – urban migration

IN MIGRATION	FREQUENCY
Rural – urban migration	73
Urban – urban migration	27
TOTAL	100

Figure 6: Rural – urban migration



According to the data collected, 73% of the sample size was made up of rural – urban migration, whereas 27% was made up of urban – urban migration. The majority of the residents of Phase 1 of the study area relocated to Boiketlong informal settlement from another informal settlement that was next to Masiza hostel, Sebokeng (MOA, P. Radebe 13.04.2012). The reason for relocation to Boiketlong, was that they were forced to vacate that area due to the construction of new RDP houses (MOA, P. Radebe 13.04.2012). According to Erasmus and Nkau (2009:28), this type of movement is not only motivated by access to housing, but also by opportunity to make a living and to have access to other social services. Some residents claimed that they were tenants at other people's properties, and they heard about the easy way of getting their own sites at Boiketlong through friends and relatives. Despite those who migrated to Boiketlong from other South African rural areas, some residents migrated from Lesotho, Eastern Cape, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. However, there are a few Somali nationals owning spaza shops in the area. As Lohnert (1998:380) correctly observes, the South African urban areas are facing an immense in-migration of poor rural populations from former homelands which were economically and socially neglected during the apartheid era.

In relation to the question of why they chose to come to Boiketlong, 100% of the respondents from the rural areas confirmed that better job prospects, better education for their children, better health care, better quality of life, and hope of owning RDP houses, were reasons which motivated them to relocate. Some residents, particularly in Phase 2 and Phase 3, claimed that the reason for their migration to Boiketlong was the cheap sites that were sold for R10 by four community leaders whom they did not want to mention by name.

The usual procedure was that the community leaders would provide the newcomer with a site number, and allow the new owner to erect the shack. One respondent in a group confessed that he fetched his in-laws and younger sister from the farms, due to easy procedures of ownership and cheap payment to acquire a site. One Lesotho national also confirmed that he was staying at Sebokeng male communal hostel, but in view of the fact that it was so easy to become a property owner, he even acquired a site in Boiketlong in addition to the one he already owned, paid R10 to the community leader, and then fetched his family from Lesotho.

From the interview with the Metsi-a-Lekoa technician, about six households made illegal connections to their yards. His concern was that those connections affect the pressure of water to other taps in the area (MOA, C. Nyathi 12 08 2012).

4.5 Similarities in water supply between rural areas and Boiketlong

100% of residents from the rural areas were not happy about water supply and sanitation. Some residents felt that they travel long distances to fetch water as they did in the rural areas. This was particularly the case in Phase 2 and Phase 3. Women and girls still carried water on their heads for household usage. The communal taps in rural areas are attached to a windmill that draws water from a subterranean water source.

Methods of collecting water differed, in that some carried buckets, or a 25ℓ container, to fetch water. Some residents used wheelbarrows, grocery trollies or self-made trollies to fetch water, whereas others bought water from water vendors. In relation to the question of how they keep water, 100% of residents indicated that they keep drinking water for a day, and washing and laundry water for more than a day, in containers. With regard to water treatment, 100% claimed to know that they should boil water, or use Jik for contaminated water.

Concerns from residents with regard to water supply in the area, were that some taps have leakages; some are dysfunctional; and others are perpetually stolen. During the visit to the area on 16 June 2013, only two taps were leaking and one tap was damaged. The pleasing aspect about water supply in the area is that when compared to the rural areas where some of the residents came from, is that they travel a reasonable distance to fetch water and there has never been a point where they spent the whole day without water. The method of collecting water is still the same as in the rural areas, in that women carry water on their heads or they use wheelbarrows as well.

4.6 Similarities in sanitation between rural areas and Boiketlong

In terms of sanitation, 100% of residents from the rural areas felt that there is no difference in their daily lives between the rural areas and informal settlement. The common sanitation facility is still the pit latrine or the veld. Some residents without sanitation facilities either shared it with neighbours or resorted to the veld. The pit latrines in most households are self-constructed by the owner or a traditional beer is prepared for individuals who will construct the pit latrine. In some instances the service of individuals charging R100 or R150 is required, to dig a hole and build a structure.

4.7 Community representatives

100% of respondents agreed that they have a councillor who calls meetings to give feedback and listen to their concerns around water supply, sanitation and housing. The outcry of residents was that the councillor uses the service of particular residents to invite only African National Congress (ANC) members to the meeting. Some residents who are members of the ANC receive sms messages and letters delivered to their households by selected ANC members who happen to be close to the councillor. Naidoo and Chidley (2009:10) remark that instead of councillors being labelled as corrupt, the reality in most areas is the prevalence of in-fighting, political differences and turf wars. The expectation is that the councillors should know the communities they represent well, and consult with them at all times.

Some residents revealed that some community leaders promised them that the government was going to build them houses if they voted for the ANC. One resident from the group indicated that one resident invited her friends and a few neighbours when political representatives of the Democratic Alliance (DA) were coming to the area. On the day of the meeting they gathered at the sports field, and were encouraged to vote for the DA so that their conditions in the area could change. The lady who was making invitations for the meeting provided her friends with the DA's blue t-shirts and caps. Most residents indicated that they were confused as to whom to trust, because when their votes were needed they were promised so many things by their councillors and by political parties – only to be forgotten after the elections. It was only in April 2013 when the current area councillor was driving in her car with loudspeakers, inviting all residents to attend a meeting on the sports field. Residents who attended that meeting were encouraged to register for the 2014 national elections. They were informed by the councillor that the government was going to build houses for them and provide services such as water supply, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal, once the negotiations for the land were finalised with the owners.

4.8 Expectations of residents on water supply and sanitation

There have been promises of houses and basic services in the area for the past few elections, from the previous councillor to the current councillor. Residents further indicated that, as in other areas of the Vaal Triangle, they too expected to have conventional RDP houses with the entire necessary infrastructure such as running water, proper sanitation and electricity.

100% of respondents indicated that they expected their newly elected structure to represent them well at the ELM, and to give them correct and timely feedback. The general feeling was that information that affects them should reach them all, and not only the few privileged residents who happen to be card-carrying members of the ANC, and those 'rubbing shoulders' with the ward councillor.

4.9 Interviews with respondents

The interviews were used as an instrument to collect data from the research population. The following respondents were interviewed on their perceptions toward water supply and sanitation at Boiketlong informal settlement. These interviews were captured verbatim, and are transcribed below for easy reference.

4.9.1 Interview with a girl learner

The respondent was a grade 10 girl aged 16 years, attending school at Moshate Secondary School in Zone 17 township, Sebokeng. The school is situated in a formal settlement township not far from Boiketlong. The respondent was a resident of Boiketlong, staying with both parents and her two siblings. Below is a narrative account of her impressions of service delivery of water and sanitation in Boiketlong.

The respondent wished that the government could fast-track the service delivery issue in terms of building houses for their parents, so that they could enjoy the use of running water, flushing toilets, electricity, and the collection of refuse in their residential area (MOA, LQ1 14.09.2012).

The respondent also indicated that she was much happier at school than at home, in that at school there were water taps on the school premises, and they used flushing toilets. The taps at school were always in good condition, as well the toilets. She indicated that they were taught about using water sparingly. With regard to hygienic behaviour, they were also taught to wash their hands with soap, after using the toilet. If a toilet was not in a good condition, it was the responsibility of learners to report it to the groundsman, who ensured that the problem was attended to (MOA, LQ1 14.09.2012).

She indicated that she was responsible for fetching water as part of her daily home chore, particularly after school. Both of her parents were working. The respondent's father was a security guard in Meyerton, and her mother was a domestic worker in Sonland Park, a suburb near Vereeniging. Both parents arrived late from work, hence it was her responsibility to fetch water and make fire for the evening meal. She carried a bucket on her

head to fetch water, although sometimes she seized the opportunity of helping her friend to push the grocery trolley when she fetched water for her family. This allowed her to load two 25ℓ containers for her family. She indicated that the good thing was that on weekends her mother usually fetched water, herself, for laundry. She further indicated that in terms of a sanitation facility, they used a pit latrine, and they knew that to keep the stench under control, they needed to use Jeyes Fluid. The respondent indicated that she did not like using pit latrines at night, or when it was raining. The respondent also indicated that her worst nightmare was if she suffered from a running stomach, because one had to go outside, and she felt that it was not safe at night, despite the fact that the shacks were close to one another. For urinating purposes, they used a bucket half-filled with water, at night. The only people who used the bucket were herself, her two siblings and her mother. She indicated that the only person who went out at night was her father. The respondent also indicated that she sometimes visited her aunt on weekends or during school holidays, because she enjoyed a hot bath and using the toilet inside the house, without using a bucket or going outside. The respondent concluded by saying that it was her wish that the government could build houses for her parents, so that they could enjoy the opportunity of a “nice life” like other privileged citizens of South Africa (MOA, LQ1 14.09.2012).

4.9.2 Interview with a boy learner

The respondent was a grade 11 boy aged 17 years, attending school at Thuto Tiro Comprehensive School in Zone 10 township, Sebokeng. The respondent was a resident of Boiketlong informal settlement, and he was staying with a single parent, his aunt, four cousins and his grandfather. Below is the narrative account of his perceptions on service delivery of water and sanitation in Boiketlong.

The respondent indicated that life at school was much better than at home, in that at school there were taps on the school premises. He indicated that they were sensitised about using water sparingly, particularly during Water Week. He indicated that during Water Week they were also taught that water is a valuable resource, and South Africa was a water-scarce country. He indicated that they were also instructed to look after school toilets and taps (MOA, LQ2 14.09.2012)

The respondent indicated that he now knew that they did not have to leave taps running, and that they should also make sure that when they closed the tap there was no leakage. If there any leakage was observed, it had to be reported to the groundsman. He indicated that

with regard to sanitation facilities, they used flushing toilets, and they did not experience the problem of a stench similar to that of a pit latrine. The respondent also indicated that despite the fact that he was used to pit latrines, he still did not feel comfortable with them (MOA, LQ2 14.09.2012)

He indicated that his discomfort was caused by the fact that sometimes there were rats in the pit latrine, and at other times, sometimes, the stench was unbearable. Under such conditions, Jeyes Fluid was used to control the stench, because the toilets were not far from the houses. He indicated that one disturbing factor with regard to sanitation facilities at Boiketlong, was the fact that one had to go out at night to pass water or relieve oneself. The respondent indicated that what he hated most was to accompany his mother or cousin to the toilet at night (MOA, LQ2 14.09.2012).

In terms of access to water, the respondent indicated that he did fetch water with a wheelbarrow when he arrived home earlier than his mother or one of his cousins. The respondent indicated that he usually collected two 25ℓ containers to fetch water from the communal tap. The respondent further indicated that he did not travel a long distance to collect water, because in their street their parents contributed R10 per household to buy the pipes, the tap, as well as money to buy food for the volunteers to dig a furrow (MOA, LQ2 14.09.2012).

He indicated that he was part of those community members who were installing the tap, and on the first day, the gentleman who was tasked with the installation bought brown bread and chips for them. He also indicated that they offered their assistance to the plumber by digging the furrow and unrolling the pipes. On the second day, the job was completed and they had a braai (MOA, LQ2 14.09.2012).

The respondent finally indicated that what he wished to see happening in their area was that the municipality would provide chemical portable toilets, and collect waste on specific days, before proper houses were built. He further indicated that he had a relative in Zone 20 informal settlement, and they had chemical portable toilets which they shared with their neighbours. The Zone 20 informal settlement is situated along the Golden Highway, next to Polokong township (MOA, LQ2 14.09.2012).

4.9.3 Interview with a group of seven learners

An interview was conducted with a group of learners at Boiketlong Christian Primary School, with regard to their perceptions about water supply and sanitation. All the learners

were children staying in Boiketlong with their families. The responses of learners were guided by eight questions in a structured interview. The group comprised four girls and three boys who were in grades 4 – 7. Out of seven learners, three were from Phase 1, two were from Phase 2, and the remaining two were from Phase 3. Their age group was between 10 and 15 years. Their responses to the questions are reflected below:

Q1. How do you feel about water supply at school, compared to your area?

The respondents indicated that they were happy at school, because the water taps were on the premises and all of them were in good working condition, and they enjoyed a clean water supply every day. They also indicated that at home they did not have water in the yard, and they had to travel to fetch water. They all indicated that their bad experiences were on rainy days when some of them had to fetch water. They also indicated that one boring experience was queuing for water – particularly in the late afternoons.

Q2. Do you travel 200m or more to fetch water?

After the researcher demonstrated a distance of 200m to them, they managed to give a response – which proved to be authentic. Five learners confirmed that they travelled a distance longer than 200m. Only two learners responded that they stayed next to the communal taps. One learner from Phase 1 confirmed that a group of residents connected a new tap next to her house during the 2013 June school holidays.

Q3. Are you satisfied with the situation of water supply in your area?

All of them said 'no'. Their dissatisfaction was based on the fact that they travelled a distance to fetch water for their families. Some respondents indicated that some of the communal taps were too high for their height; as such, a pipe did need to be attached to the tap to enable them to fill their water containers without any spillages. Their concern was over the theft of taps, leaking taps, and queues at the communal taps – particularly in the late afternoons during the week. The respondents indicated that disconnection of water was another frustration, although it did not occur regularly. The respondents complained about the impatience of some older residents, if they filled more than one container with water. One learner pointed out that they did not have a wheelbarrow; therefore, he had to go to the communal tap several times to fill water containers.

Q4. What type of a toilet do you use at home?

The answer was a pit latrine.

Q5. How do you feel about the sanitation facility at home, compared to your school?

The respondents indicated that the sanitation facility at school was far better than at home. They pointed out that they were using flushing toilets at school, compared to the pit latrine at home. They further indicated that they felt that they could be very happy if they could use flushing toilets at home as well. They stated that the stench coming from the neighbours was sometimes unbearable, especially if it had rained a lot. They stated that the best way to get rid of the stench was to use Jeyes Fluid or coal ash. Some of the respondents indicated that some neighbours shared a pit latrine, instead of going to the veld.

Q6. What do you wish to see happening, in terms of water supply and sanitation in your area?

The respondents stated that as the picture on the wall of the school toilet depicts, their wish was to see what is depicted in the picture, happening at their homes. They indicated that they hope one day the government will build houses with water taps and flushing toilets.

They stated that the picture in Illustration 1 was a picture drawn by a grade 7 learner, as an indication of their wish for water supply and flushing toilets in their area. One learner said that the picture depicts protection from the health risk they face at home every day, whenever they use a toilet.



Illustration 1: A picture of a learner flushing a toilet at Boiketlong Christian School toilets. (Photograph: CT Musa).

Q7. Do you know about proper hygiene after using a toilet?

The answer was 'yes'. The respondents indicated that they washed their hands after using the toilet. They also stated that they knew that they should use soap, but at school they were not provided with soap: "It is only at home where we use soap, only if it is available and there is a rag to dry our hands."

Q8. Are you taught about water and sanitation at school?

The respondents said 'yes'. In terms of water, they seem to know that water is scarce and "we must not play with water – which actually means we must use water sparingly." In terms of water treatment they were taught that contaminated water must be boiled, or Jik used, before using it for cooking, drinking, etc. To control stench, Jeyes Fluid was mixed with water, and poured into the pit latrine and around the hole on the surface. The other method used to control stench was by pouring coal ash into a pit latrine. They were also taught to keep their school toilets clean, and ensure that a toilet was flushed, at all times.

4.9.5 The focus group views on service provision

Six adults were interviewed at the communal taps at Phase 2 of Boiketlong. Their perceptions with regard to water supply and sanitation in the area, were captured verbatim as follows:

We have been struggling with water supply in this section of Boiketlong. We used to travel long distances to Phase 1 communal taps to collect water. As time went by, the municipality supplied residents with water from a water truck, particularly in the afternoons when the majority of people fetched water for the evening meal and for hygienic purposes. We would ensure that we fill all containers available in the house. We would then have enough stored up for washing and laundry. The good news is that at the moment we have communal taps in our area and we do not experience water cut. Because of different distances travelled to fetch water, some residents have made water connections closer to their houses so that they travel shorter distances. Some residents have lockers on the taps for residents who to prevent access to those who did not contribute towards purchasing of material for the water connection. The main concern with communal taps is that there are isolated cases of vandalism of

taps, leakages and some residents with the necessary skill sometimes repair the taps (MOA, AQ 30.06.2013).

With regard to sanitation, we still use pit latrines as a sanitation facility. These pit latrines are not good because they are closer to our houses, and that is a risk to our health. The other challenge with pit latrines is that even if one is trying to use Jeyes Fluid or coal ash to control the stench, some neighbours do not care [about] the unbearable stench from their pit latrines. Some of our neighbours do not have toilets, and they either share with other neighbours or resort to the veld at night (MOA, AQ 30.06.2013).

One member of the focus group indicated that her neighbour was an old lady who stayed with her grandchildren. They did not have a pit latrine at the moment, and the old lady had serious walking problems due to indisposition. The older grandchild was responsible for ensuring that the sanitation needs of the old lady were met. She actually put a nappy on the old lady, and changed it when she returned from school. She further indicated that houses with toilets inside would be very helpful to sick, as well as elderly, people (MOA, AQ 30.06.2013).

4.9.6 The services protest march in Boiketlong

The same group of adults was interviewed on the protest march that took place in May 2013, and their views on the incident were as follows:

In response to the recent protest march, they indicated that protests and demonstrations were the order of the day in most informal settlements. The main cause of these conflicts was poor service delivery, unfulfilled promises from their leaders in the local government sphere, and favouritism. Other than the May 2013 protest, the residents indicated that they had demonstrated their dissatisfaction in 2007, and to date they still did not have RDP houses and proper water supply and sanitation (MOA, AQ 30.06.2013).

In response to what could be a contributing factor to violent protest marches in Boiketlong, the respondents expressed their opinions thus:

Our councillor and community leaders have a tendency of telling us conflicting stories with regard to issues of land and the RDP houses for Boiketlong informal settlement. We were given assurance by the previous councillor that RDP

houses will be built by 2010, but to date there is still no progress in this regard. Our concern is that in some areas within ELM, the RDP houses have been built because the councillor and community leaders fight for the residents. We no longer have trust in our councillor, ELM and political party leaders, because they always promise us better housing and improved services toward the elections. This has been happening ever since we came to this area.

Dithagiso and Mathebula (2013:1) indicate that residents are tired of empty promises, and they claim that they do not have proper water, sanitation, toilets and electricity. People lose lives because they use paraffin (Dithagiso & Mathebula, 2013:1). In this regard residents indicated that they wanted to meet either Tokyo Sexwale or President Jacob Zuma, to address them on the issue of land in Boiketlong, RDP houses and proper service delivery in their area (MOA, AQ 30.06.2013).

Illustration 2: The cover page of *Sedibeng Ster* at the aftermath of the protest march for service delivery.



The unfortunate part is that neither of them came, and the residents vented their anger at the councillor by burning her shack and two cars. One member of the group claimed that had the councillor abstained from favouritism when it comes to small projects, she would not have been attacked. The other member of the focus group indicated that the councillor was staying in a shack like they did, and experienced what they were going through – hence they felt that she was not supposed to be attacked. The attack took place at night, in Boiketlong. The Waterdal Road, next to Boiketlong, as well as Potchefstroom, Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging and Sebokeng fourways stop, were barricaded (MOA,AQ 30.06.2013).

Some of the unfortunate incidents of Boiketlong violence protest which took place in June 2013, were captured by the local newspaper, *Sedibeng Ster*, dated 29 May – 06 June 2013. The illustration of a newspaper report is an example of community responses to water and sanitation service delivery issues and their implicit social ramifications.

4.9.7 Interview with water vendor

A respondent, in an interview, had the following to say:

The access to water is a challenge to households who are a far distance from the communal taps. The majority of people who purchase water from us are employed people who arrive late from work, elderly people staying with young children, and sick people. I sometimes collect water containers from my regular customers and return containers filled with water. With some customers I use my own containers and pour water in their own containers at their respective houses.

My unemployment status made me resort to collecting water for people who are unable to do so. The section of Boiketlong where water vendors operate is Phase 3. There are some of us who even dig toilet pits and construct toilets for residents who cannot do that for themselves (MOA, WVQ 30.04.2012).

4.10 Improvement strategies for water and sanitation

From the findings as captured above, the community felt that there was room for improvement, in terms of water supply and sanitation in Boiketlong informal settlement. The community felt that the following should be done to improve water supply and sanitation:

4.10.1 Revival of ward committees

The existence of ward committees should be enforced in informal settlements. In terms of the role of ward committees, communication channels will be opened, to enable the residents to report their challenges, as well as successes, to the relevant structure. The recommendation for the revival of ward committees is in line with the critical role played by ward committees in decisions about provision of municipal services, and communication, as well as the dissemination, of information (DPLG, 2003:1). The community has a firm belief that their water supply and sanitation needs, as well as housing, can be negotiated in a good spirit once there are indications of transparency and regular meetings. The general view is that most protests in the country are the result of a communication gap between the municipality and the community. Lack of transparency is another concern.

4.10.2 Water committee

The water committee should be made up of residents staying in the same street or those close to certain points of communal taps. The advantage of such committees at street level would ensure that vandalism of taps and leaking taps would be attended to as soon as they are noticed. The committee will come up with water management strategies to look after their water sources. One of the strategies would be to lock the tap to prevent theft of the washer, wasteful use of water, and damage to the tap.



Illustration 3: A locked tap. (Photograph: CT Musa).

Illustration 3, above, shows one of the few locked taps in Boiketlong informal settlement. This is a water connection made by residents of a particular street. The cover is made of a can that is locked to cover the tap. Only residents who contributed R10 have access to the key so that they can draw water. Looking after the tap is the responsibility of residents staying in that street. Mathipa and Le Roux (2009:258) argue that the issue of challenges with water can be properly addressed if community members report all water-related issues to the democratically elected water committee. This committee is in line with the stipulation of the National Water Act that promotes community participation in water management and conservation. From the discussions with residents, it is clear that they do have an idea of their role in the water management of their area.

4.10.3 The construction supply of VIP latrines

The local government should come up with the introduction of VIP latrines before RDP houses are built. The feeling is that the VIP toilets will also create jobs for people who construct them and those who will be contracted to empty them. This sanitation facility should be at a subsidised cost which every resident will be able to pay for emptying. It is believed that this programme will improve the level of sanitation facilities in the area, and also generate local employment for those who will be maintaining and emptying the latrines. Preference for employment should be given to local residents, and proper training and monitoring should be done by ELM. On the other hand, it should be cautioned that frequent emptying of these toilets usually places a significant financial burden on households and/or municipalities (AMCOW:25). Despite the costs, it is imperative to plan that costs for emptying are kept under control.

According to Mashinini (MOA, B. Mashinini 15.04.2014), an employee of Metsi-a-Lekoa, ELM is currently not offering any form of sanitation to informal settlements (MOA, B. Mashinini 15.04.2014). He further stated that the Department of Human Settlement is the one that is responsible for providing sanitation to informal settlements. If VIP toilets happen to be provided in the informal settlement in future, Van Vuuren (2008b:11) asserts that such toilets should have specific features that qualify them as acceptable and safe VIPs. They should comply with certain requirements, and should –

- provide hygienic separation of human waste from contact with people;
- have a vent pipe fitted with a fly screen to minimise odour and flies;
- be built on a secure slab that will resist collapse of the superstructure; and
- provide privacy and dignity for the user.

Incidents from other parts of the country have shown that VIP toilets pose a high risk to children, who are likely to fall into them. The other disadvantage of the VIP toilets is the contamination of ground water – which pit latrines still contaminate.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the perceptions of local residents on water supply and sanitation, and how delivery can be improved. Residents took it upon themselves to devise strategies which assisted in terms of accessing water and using the sanitation facilities such as pit latrines. From the interview discussions with respondents, it was clear that residents were not happy with their living conditions in the area. The community was frustrated by the fact

that political parties' representatives make promises which they fail to fulfil, in terms of providing better services.

It is a fact that despite the strategies used by residents to access water and sanitation, not all of them enjoy such services as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. The residents expect ELM to play its role in ensuring that the community receives the improved services in a sustainable manner. The next chapter will focus on the summary, findings and recommendations arising from the study.